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FROM THE AMERICAN PEOPLE

**Amendment No. 1**

**Issue Date:** February 7, 2023  
**Issuance Date for Amendment No. 1** **March 7, 2023**  
**Deadline for Questions:** February 24, 2023 17:00 hrs. Beirut local time  
**Closing Date/Time for Applications:** March 23, 2023 and 17:00 hrs. Beirut local time

**Subject:** USAID/Lebanon Notice of Funding Opportunity (NOFO)  
Number: **72026823RFA00001**

**Program Title:** Quality Instruction Towards Access and Basic Education Improvement (QITABI) 3

Federal Assistance Listing Number: 98.001

Dear Interested Applicants:

The United States Agency for International Development (USAID) is seeking applications for a cooperative agreement from qualified entities to implement the **Quality Instruction Towards Access and Basic Education Improvement (QITABI) 3** program. Eligibility for this award is not restricted.

Subject to the availability of funds, USAID intends to make an award to the applicant who best meets the objectives of this funding opportunity based on the merit review criteria described in this NOFO subject to a risk assessment. Eligible parties interested in submitting an application are encouraged to read this NOFO thoroughly to understand the type of program sought, application submission requirements and selection process.

To be eligible for award, the applicant must provide all information as required in this NOFO and meet eligibility standards in Section C of this NOFO. This funding opportunity is posted on [www.grants.gov](http://www.grants.gov), and may be amended. It is the responsibility of the applicant to regularly check the website to ensure they have the latest information pertaining to this notice of funding opportunity and to ensure that the NOFO has been received from the internet in its entirety. USAID bears no responsibility for data errors resulting from transmission or conversion

process. If you have difficulty registering on [www.grants.gov](http://www.grants.gov) or accessing the NOFO, please contact the Grants.gov Helpdesk at 1-800-518-4726 or via email at [support@grants.gov](mailto:support@grants.gov) for technical assistance.

USAID may not award to an applicant unless the applicant has complied with all applicable unique entity identifier and System for Award Management (SAM) requirements detailed in Section D.6.e. The registration process may take many weeks to complete. Therefore, applicants are encouraged to begin registration as early as practicable.

Please submit your questions and application by email to [lebanonproposals@usaid.gov](mailto:lebanonproposals@usaid.gov).

The deadline for questions and application submission is shown above. Responses to questions received prior to the deadline will be furnished to all potential applicants through an amendment to this notice posted to [www.grants.gov](http://www.grants.gov).

Issuance of this NOFO does not constitute an award commitment on the part of the Government nor does it commit the Government to pay for any costs incurred in preparation or submission of comments/suggestions or an application. Applications are submitted at the risk of the applicant. All preparation and submission costs are at the applicant's expense.

Thank you for your interest in USAID programs.

Sincerely,



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Amy McQuade  
Regional Contracting Officer

**Annex I. Mandatory Budget Template (UPDATED)**

**Annex II. USAID Partner Information Form**

**Annex III. USAID/Lebanon Vetting Mission Order**

**Annex IV. Marking and Branding Template**

**Annex V. Additional Resources**

**Annex VI. USAID Local Compensation Plan Summary**

**Annex VII. QITABI-2 mid-term evaluation preliminary findings**

**CONTENTS**

SECTION A: PROGRAM DESCRIPTION ..... 4

SECTION B: FEDERAL AWARD INFORMATION ..... 38

SECTION C: ELIGIBILITY INFORMATION ..... 47

SECTION D: APPLICATION AND SUBMISSION INFORMATION..... 49

SECTION E: APPLICATION REVIEW INFORMATION ..... 66

SECTION F: FEDERAL AWARD ADMINISTRATION INFORMATION ..... 70

SECTION G: FEDERAL AWARDED AGENCY CONTACT(S) ..... 81

SECTION H: OTHER INFORMATION..... 82

## SECTION A: PROGRAM DESCRIPTION

This funding opportunity is authorized under the Foreign Assistance Act (FAA) of 1961, as amended. The resulting award will be subject to 2 CFR 200 – Uniform Administrative Requirements, Cost Principles, and Audit Requirements for Federal Awards, and USAID’s supplement, 2 CFR 700, as well as the additional requirements found in Sections A, B, F and H.

### I. PROGRAM DESCRIPTION

**Title:** Quality Instruction Towards Access and Basic Education Improvement (QITABI) 3 activity

#### A. PROGRAM SUMMARY

Lebanon’s educational system is in desperate need of reform to modernize the curriculum and improve the quality and delivery of education so that Lebanese children and youth at all levels are well-equipped with the essential skills to learn, secure employment and contribute to Lebanon’s human, social and economic recovery. Building on nearly a decade of investments in the education system under Quality Instruction Towards Access and Basic Education (QITABI) 1 and 2, the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) in Lebanon seeks to further strengthen education service government systems to yield student learning improvements across all of Lebanon’s public schools (first and second shifts) and in select low cost private schools that are vulnerable and economically disadvantaged. This activity will be measured by its ability to ensure students acquire grade level competencies in key primary grade subjects (Arabic, French, English and Math); social and emotional skills; and life skills to prepare them for the future. While the primary focus of this activity will be service delivery at the primary grades, additional grades (e.g. pre-primary, intermediate and/or secondary grades) will be selected during an initial inception period post-award, based on a literacy landscape analysis that the Recipient will conduct. The activity will target an estimated 350,000 girls and boys in over a thousand of Lebanon’s public schools and vulnerable, economically disadvantaged low-cost private schools.<sup>1</sup>

The activity will support the education system’s overall capacity to plan, budget, deliver, monitor, evaluate and institutionalize quality educational services by

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<sup>1</sup> This target will include Lebanese and non-Lebanese students in primary and schools that have an afternoon shift for Syrian students.

providing in-depth technical assistance to the Center for Educational Research and Development (CERD) and the Ministry of Education and Higher Education (MEHE) based on identified needs and gaps identified in the Human and Institutional Capacity Development (HICD) assessment<sup>2</sup> conducted under QITABI 2. Furthermore, the recipient will take a systems level approach to ensure that MEHE and CERD capacity building institutionalizes curricular interventions and engages educators, including teacher trainers, teacher coaches, teachers, principals, and local, regional and national level administrators beyond training as beneficiaries to contribute to an MEHE and CERD owned approach to improving learning outcomes, including teacher competencies, skills, and classroom management. This activity will ensure that classroom level interventions, teacher training, curricular materials, and teaching and learning materials are inclusive and enable children with disabilities to benefit from these interventions and that they promote greater levels of inclusion regarding representation of gender, and the socio-cultural diversity within Lebanon. Improved school management will engage parents and the community as both partners and as an accountability mechanism supporting system-wide improvements from the ground up and not solely from a top-down approach. Social and emotional learning (SEL) skills will be incorporated into the teaching and learning process in order to promote well being and enhance the teaching and learning experience. This activity will work in partnership with the MEHE and CERD to ensure national ownership through joint planning and monitoring.

## **B. BACKGROUND**

### ***Weak education sector***

The Lebanese public school system suffers from deep structural challenges and lacks the human, financial and management resources necessary to provide quality education and to improve learning outcomes. USAID has invested in education system reform since 2016, beginning with QITABI. This program focused on kindergarten and cycle 1 (grades 1-2-3), strengthening teachers' pedagogy in foundational skills, production and dissemination of age-appropriate materials and parental and community strategies for supporting children's success. QITABI 2, currently being implemented until March 2024, aims to build on these investments to improve learning outcomes (reading, math and writing) for 334,000 students from 913 public primary schools, including 300 second shift schools.

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<sup>2</sup> See Annex V. "Additional Resources".

Early in the implementation of QITABI 2, however, Lebanon faced acute consecutive crises, with devastating consequences on the education sector. This includes civil unrest in October 2019, followed by the economic crash and currency crisis, shrinking household incomes, political uncertainty, the COVID-19 pandemic school closures, multiple teacher strikes, and finally the explosion at the Beirut Port in August 2020 leading to uncertainty and rampant food insecurity. QITABI 2 interventions pivoted amidst crisis to ensure continued learning and protect past education dividends.

Notwithstanding these pivots to retain learning gains, public school students nationwide have experienced a disastrous two-year learning loss as a result of intermittent access to learning. These factors have put a heavy strain on an already struggling education system. By not having access to full time learning during these two years, students have lost precious classroom time and have poorly acquired the basic learning competencies to enable them to make advancements in the foundational skills of reading and basic math. Students in the early grades have suffered the most, given that the most basic literacy and numeracy skills are taught in grades 1 and 2.

Confidence in Lebanon's public school system has long been low, with about 70 percent of Lebanon's 1.25 million student population enrolled in private schools. According to an October 2019 citizen perception survey, only 11 percent of respondents were very satisfied with the public education services while 38 percent were dissatisfied to very dissatisfied. In 2019, the high cost of private education was mentioned as a top three household expense. However, with private schools' tuition becoming unaffordable due to the current economic crisis, parents are increasingly compelled to send their children to public schools. Approximately 55,000 students - eleven percent of public sector students - from the private sector have reverted to public sector institutions due to current economic conditions. That parents are less able and/or committed to pay for schooling could imply greater shifts or worse, dropouts. A July 2021 UNICEF report noted more drastic measures of parents sending their children to work in agricultural fields, garages, or construction sites; marrying off their young daughters and skipping meals.<sup>32</sup> These difficult circumstances have led to increased urgency to effectively reform and improve the quality of the education system and support students' wellbeing, emotional health, and even on occasion, their nutritional needs. The Lebanese public education system lacks adequately trained teachers, much curriculum and textbooks require updating, foreign language instruction requires improvement, and there is still much work required for modernizing educational approaches. Many teachers

have not received specific training before entering the classroom on the particulars of teaching reading, writing or social and emotional skills. Teacher professional development, recruitment, placement and monitoring systems are weak in the public sector as well. The public system has an estimated 40,000 teachers, but not all of them are actively instructing. The excess teachers, inactive but still on official payrolls, constitute a significant burden on the Government and represent inefficiencies within the system. Public school teachers are inadequately trained and qualified; only about 4 percent have a specialized degree. This negatively affects the quality of instruction in the classroom as teachers specialized in one subject often teach in another, with minimal CERD and MEHE oversight or corrective action. At the same time, CERD and MEHE offer few professional development incentives for teachers and school staff. Industrious teachers have limited opportunities to thrive. With the persistent economic crisis, teachers' salaries have lost over 90 percent of their value. Since 2020, teachers have spent substantial effort navigating an environment that has included intermittent strikes protesting the dire financial and economic conditions that teachers face.

In spite of recent efforts made to upgrade the Lebanese curriculum, more work is required, particularly in the dual language system where schools teach English or French as official languages of instruction in addition to Arabic from kindergarten. Early grade subjects taught in English or French include basic math and exploratory science. As has been well documented, teacher capacity is central to a child's experience of a quality education. In the early grades, USAID's early grade reading and math assessments conducted in 2022 have shown that in grade 2, for example, approximately 95 percent of students are reading Arabic at the beginner level while only 1 percent are reading at the proficient level or above. Similar trends have been noted for English and French and basic Mathematics tasks. Weaknesses in foundational reading skills for grades 2, and 3 and 6 highlight significant room for improvement on all reading and math reading skills.

While the public sector severely suffers from decades-long systemic inadequacies, the private sector also has its own set of challenges. Though the majority of Lebanese students, an estimated 70 percent, attend private schools, private schools are not synonymous with quality. Apart from the few top performing schools (many which are also struggling financially), private schools in Lebanon are generally owned and managed by faith-based organizations. Most of these schools cater towards students coming from economically disadvantaged communities and many of them operate on the basis of

donations. Therefore, in addition to public schools, this activity will also include selected low-cost private schools in targeted geographic areas.

### ***Institutional Capacity***

There is a continuing need to build the technical and administrative capacity of CERD and MEHE to deliver quality education services, with the overall objective of improving student learning outcomes at the school level and support improved completion rates across grade levels. Given CERD and MEHE's numerous structural weaknesses, they are unable to effectively deliver and monitor the quality of education provided in public schools, let alone correct deficiencies. Both institutions have an inadequate number of professional technical specialists, planners, advisors and data analysts. The quality of education in public schools is generally poor and inconsistent from one area to another. Factors including socio-economic conditions in the community, the level of parental involvement, the degree of teacher preparation for instruction in subject-matter expertise and teaching pedagogy and the dedication of school leadership play a major role in the quality of education being offered from school to school. Many public schools seriously struggle to place qualified teachers who can offer children even basic learning opportunities. Also central, is the need to improve CERD and MEHE's capacities to further develop accountable, decentralized and inclusive governance systems and deliver equitable and high quality education services in a sustained and inclusive way.

Coherence is lacking within the units responsible for teacher performance. Three units are responsible for training and observing teachers in the classroom; namely CERD, the Departement d'Observation Pédagogique Scolaire (DOPS, Department for Guidance and Counseling) and the Inspectorate. While these three units work towards the same goal, the relationships among them and their individual effectiveness requires attention and strengthening. For instance, while the CERD is responsible for teacher training, it is not mandated to observe teachers in the classroom, as this is the official domain of DOPS and the Inspectorate. Such structural weaknesses, combined with staffing shortages and budget constraints and, generally, a lack of necessary skills, constitute roadblocks to effective monitoring and achievement of long-term improvements in the system<sup>3</sup>.

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<sup>3</sup> See Annex V. "Additional Resources".

### ***Effects of the Economic Crisis on Education System***

Complex and intertwined drivers have resulted in an economic crisis that in April 2022 the World Bank described as among the three worst crises in the world. The magnitude of the economic crisis began years ago and manifested in October 2019, when the cabinet announced new tax measures to address the Government of Lebanon's (GOL) significant fiscal deficit. Since October 2019, the economy has been on a downward trajectory, which has significantly undermined the income levels of vulnerable populations, such as public servants, including school teachers. The Lebanese Pound (LBP) has lost 95 percent of its value against the United States Dollar (USD) as of October 2022. As a result of the crisis, a wide segment of the Lebanese and non-Lebanese population has fallen below the poverty line, with livelihoods of those already living in poverty worsened due to inflation, a decline in employment opportunities, and a reduction in basic social service provision. Teachers, like other public sector servants, are amongst the worst hit by the economic crisis and struggle to make a living. This situation has led to multiple teacher strikes in 2020 and 2021 who demanded an increase in their living wages. In response to the strikes, the Government of Lebanon has taken action to increase teacher salaries, and the level of transportation allowance, however, the local currency continued to lose its value by the day, negatively offsetting any wage improvement. As a result of the economic crisis, more than half of Lebanese households and 90 percent of Syrian refugee households are in need of some form of food assistance, as food security has become a real concern in Lebanon.

### ***Build on USAID's past and current achievements***

This activity will use the existing data and information shared, including insights from QITABI and QITABI 2. Resources include QITABI's EGRA report and final report, QITABI 2's mid-term evaluation<sup>4</sup>, EGRA, EGMA and CBA reports, HICD assessment reports and Performance Implementation Action Plans, the Social and Emotional Learning (SEL) framework, the national framework for student learning assessments and others, to design a more focused, informed and stronger version of QITABI 3. QITABI 2 is carried out in partnership with CERD and MEHE. This activity is required to make use of available resources, data, and materials and leverage the partnerships established with CERD, MEHE and other key education partners. This partnership advances USAID's goals to assist Lebanon in building a strong education foundation that will improve learning outcomes on a continual basis, while addressing the critical needs for safety, equity, inclusion and well-being.

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<sup>4</sup> The QITABI 2 mid-term evaluation is currently under way. USAID will publicly share the report as soon as it becomes available.

QITABI results in grades 1-4 in all primary public schools nationwide include the implementation of an Arabic early grade reading assessment (April 2018) and the development of reading benchmarks for the first time for grades 2-3 in Lebanon; the development of an early grade reading intervention; the establishment of universal screening assessments in the classroom, the establishment of an early warning system to identify struggling readers; the piloting of parent reading circles; the provision of books and educational materials to classrooms; the development of teachers' portfolios, e-stories and digital content; the creation of technology resource rooms in schools; the training of teacher trainers and coaches on the Balanced Literacy Approach and the Learning Recovery Program and instructional methodologies; and technical assistance to the Ministry of Education and the Center for Educational Research and Development to improve the national service delivery of education.

QITABI 2 results include the implementation of a literacy intervention in Arabic and other foreign language of instruction (English, French), the development of a numeracy intervention, the development of educational content, the training of teacher trainers and coaches, the development of a Human and Institutional Capacity Development assessment for MEHE and CERD, the implementation of a summer school for the first time in Lebanon, the development of a learning recovery program, the implementation of an early grade reading assessment, an early grade math assessment and a curriculum-based assessment in April-May 2022, the provision of books, educational materials and technology to schools and regional training centers and the distribution of food parcels to the families of public school students. USAID/Lebanon has commissioned a performance evaluation of QITABI 2 and related research diagnostics. This document will be available in 2023. Other planned reports relate to tolerance education and an updated gender analysis.

There are many sector reports by USAID and others that inform how best to respond to educational challenges in Lebanon<sup>5</sup>. A few of these reports (though certainly not all) include:

[Early Grade Reading Assessment, Lebanon, 2022](#)

[Enhancing Quality in Pre-Primary Education in Lebanon in Times of Crisis, July 2022](#)

[Resilience in Return to Learning During COVID-19: Lebanon Case Study, Oct. 2021](#)

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<sup>5</sup> See Annex V. "Additional Resources".

[Practitioners Toolkit: Humanitarian-Development Coherence, July 2022](#)  
[Donor Toolkit: Humanitarian Development Coherence, July 2022](#)  
[Investigating Humanitarian-Development Coherence for Education in the Middle East and North Africa Region, July 2022](#)  
[USAID's Gender Assessment, 2019](#)

### **C. PROGRAM OBJECTIVES**

This activity is designed to build on the success of past USAID investments through the QITABI and QITABI 2 mechanisms that had significant MEHE support. This activity will strengthen MEHE's ownership, and desire for the development and strengthening of national level evidence-based quality education. QITABI 3 will build upon past partnership and collaboration with the MEHE and leverage the MEHE commitment to bring the quality early grade learning to national scale while providing the requisite technical assistance and financial resources to support the MEHE and relevant partners. This activity will maximize the current successes and leverage other stakeholders' programs toward achieving a sustained positive impact on student learning outcomes at scale. The Recipient is therefore expected to engage with MEHE and CERD from the beginning and throughout the life of the activity.

Literacy and numeracy assessments conducted under QITABI 2 in Lebanon in 2022 have shown that students in the early grades are not effectively learning basic reading and math skills due to a combination of factors including: fragmented policies on language of instruction; weak and inefficient systems for teacher performance and oversight; outdated textbooks; the absence of a unified evidence-based approach to reading in the early grades and the prevailing circumstances in the country (COVID-19 pandemic and economic situation) that have caused school closures and consequently a learning loss of over two years. Therefore the Recipient will work with MEHE and CERD to design and implement targeted interventions to improve reading, math and social and emotional learning outcomes for students, including children with disabilities by building the institutional capacity of government counterparts to deliver quality education services.

Per the Mission's Country Development Cooperation Strategy, USAID will continue to support the education sector within the context of the following Development Objective and Intermediate Results:

Development Objective 2: Effectiveness of Educational Institutions Improved  
Intermediate Result 2: Learning outcomes improved, and  
Intermediate Result 3: Capacity to provide quality educational management systems improved

#### **D. THEORY OF CHANGE AND ACTIVITY OUTCOMES**

USAID’s theory of change for this activity holds that:

*if* education systems, administrators and providers have the capacity to develop, implement and monitor policies and curriculum, and sustain teacher capacity to support learning outcomes; and

*if* pre-service and in-service teacher training systems and teaching and learning materials integrate evidence-based methods for effective literacy, numeracy and social and emotional learning instruction guided by Universal Design for Learning principles<sup>6</sup>; and

*if* teachers acquire effective literacy, numeracy and social and emotional learning instruction skills guided by Universal Design for Learning principles;

*then* students, including children with disabilities, will have improved learning outcomes.

#### **E. ACHIEVING RESULTS**

Activity logical framework

##### **Goal (CDCS)<sup>7</sup>:**

Improved effectiveness of educational institutions

##### **Purpose:**

Improved learning outcomes for students in primary and other targeted grades through quality education

**Outcome 1:** Improved national-level service delivery of inclusive education

**Output 1.1:** Technical and administrative support provided to MEHE and CERD based on HICD and other relevant assessment results

**Output 1.2:** Improved inclusive curriculum, research and assessment capacities

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<sup>6</sup> More on the Universal Design for Learning can be found later in this Program Description under the General Parameters and Required Approaches.

<sup>7</sup> USAID/Lebanon’s CDCS can be accessed here: <https://www.usaid.gov/sites/default/files/2022-05/CDCS-Lebanon-December-2026.pdf>

**Outcome 2:** More children and youth receive improved instruction resulting in gains in literacy, numeracy, and social emotional skills, and higher proportions of students completing school

**Output 2.1:** Improved cadre of educators who deliver evidence-based instruction guided by principles of Universal Design for Learning (including gender and disability sensitive approaches)

**Output 2.2:** Students have access to social and emotional learning, life skills and youth programs to prepare them for the future

**Output 2.3:** Schools adopt mechanisms that promote the engagement of caregivers in their children's learning and leverage the community as part of improvement efforts

### **Outcome 1: Improved national-level service delivery of inclusive education**

The principal goal of this component is to support primarily CERD and MEHE in becoming modern, professional, state-of-the-art institutions able to provide and oversee quality education for all and who prepare students nationwide for the future. This component seeks to advance the capacity of both institutions in a systemic and collaborative approach in order to address the sector's challenges in a sustainable manner.

The assistance will target departments and units that have been identified by the Human and Institutional Capacity Development (HICD) conducted under QITABI 2. These will be selected based on their relevance to USAID's achieving its overarching goal of improving the effectiveness of educational institutions. Potential institutional areas where assistance may be provided include but are not limited to the following: curriculum development and roll out, institutional capacity building, staff professional development, research and data collection for informed decision-making, assessments for improved learning, evidence-based policy development, teacher training and coaching, institutional strengthening, administrative and support of core operations, technical expertise, strategic planning, digital transformation and e-governance.

USAID may support initiatives that will result in:

**Output 1.1:** Technical and administrative support provided to MEHE and CERD based on HICD and other relevant assessment results to strengthen education systems and support mechanisms that enable the MEHE and CERD to scale up and implement the inclusive numeracy and literacy learning program across grades 1-6; strengthen assessment systems that track student learning; and

strengthen MEHE capacity to effectively plan, manage, implement, and monitor inclusive learning interventions and develop relevant and responsive education policies for children with disabilities.

Building on QITABI 2's work on the HICD assessment of departments and units at both CERD and MEHE, the activity is expected to use the available findings, gaps analysis and Performance Implementation Action Plans (PIAPs) to propose meaningful interventions to improve the technical and administrative operations of both institutions. The activity will need to start with a comprehensive review of the institutional assessments and PIAPs that have been completed under QITABI 2 in order to update them as necessary, adapt them to the institutions' most current needs, and identify priority institutional, technical and administrative areas of improvement. Review of USAID commissioned performance evaluation and research diagnostic results related to QITABI 2 is a key and essential component for developing the work plan.

Support to CERD and MEHE may include but will not be limited to: developing institutional strategies, action plans, budgets, monitoring, and policy development, including the capacity to establish a national strategic approach to education in line with the national strategic plan; updating the institution's organizational chart, staff roles and responsibilities; training on administrative subjects (such as technology, secretarial skills, managerial skills, etc.); training on technical subjects (such as research skills, training methodologies, subject-matter expertise, etc.); and automating processes aligned with USAID activity goals, assigning short-term and long-term experts, study tours, updating teacher standards, collecting and analyzing data, and providing office equipment, furniture, hardware, software systems and associated training.

As part of developing a fully operational monitoring system to track performance of interventions, the activity will need to assess needs, resources and identify, together with MEHE and CERD, along with other civil society stakeholders, priority schools, focus areas, and focus interventions to be monitored.

Based on available funding, the activity may seek to expand assistance to CERD's regional teacher training centers that are located in all six Lebanese governorates in order to enhance their operations in the delivery of public education. Assessments of the targeted regional centers need to be conducted in order to identify priority institutional, technical and administrative needs. Assistance may include the provision of office equipment, furniture, hardware,

software systems and associated training, as well as the establishment of model instructional spaces. The assistance may also include the provision of regional focal points at each of the targeted CERD centers to act as a technical resource for all activities, as well as serve as a technical liaison between the regional center and the central CERD administration on activity-related issues.

#### *Capacity development of CERD trainers*

In order to become a competitive national institution with international-level standards, CERD needs to revamp the way it provides training to its teacher cadre. The activity will support CERD in developing a comprehensive framework of teacher competencies that will guide the work, assessment and evaluation of teacher performance. This activity will also work to align the in-service teacher training and pre-service teacher training for literacy and numeracy to expand support to CERD to modernize its teacher workforce by introducing new pedagogies, instruction skills and methodologies that are evidence-based, at par with international practices and that promote student-centered learning and critical thinking skills. The integration and alignment of the in-service and pre-service system will be important to institutionalizing the in-service modules into the pre-service system.

#### *Professional development of CERD and MEHE staff*

CERD and MEHE are large institutions that lack the most basic technical and administrative skills to run their daily operations. Staff at all levels and in all departments need to improve their skills in order to better perform at their jobs. These needs have already been identified in the HICD assessment report that was completed under QITABI 2 and this activity will test and determine the most appropriate approach to enhance their business operations and service delivery, in relation to customer service, internal and external communications skills, transparency and accountability, business processes and others.

#### *Strategic vision planning and development*

While MEHE has recently developed its five-year plan and its related annual work plan, CERD still lacks an institutional strategic framework. The activity will build on the work that has been achieved by QITABI 2 to develop mission and vision statements, in order to collaboratively develop a full fledged institutional strategy for CERD that will set its educational priorities with the goal of improving student learning outcomes. It is important to support CERD in articulating its vision for education and how it will go about implementing this vision. Initiatives may include the provision of technical assistance and consultants to support CERD to develop a national strategy that is aligned with

MEHE's five-year plan and the Sustainable Development Goals for education, with accompanying annual work plans and budgets to operationalize the strategy, as well as mechanisms to monitor the plan. This work may entail collaboratively engaging with different education stakeholders, including donors, local and international non-governmental organizations, think tanks, researchers, academia and others in order to develop a full fledged vision for the sector.

*Digital transformation and e-governance for improved student learning outcomes*

The activity may need to engage with the national education providers in order to modernize their systems and processes with the ultimate objective of improving student learning outcomes in schools. This support may include engagement in consolidating data on student learning outcomes and establishing processes for data analysis that informs the adaptation of teacher instruction. The activity may propose to work with CERD on their various digital platforms to consolidate them and render them more effective in providing teacher training, digital learning and tools for teacher trainers, teachers and students. Initiatives may include the development of e-books and other educational resources, as well as enhance CERD's digital tool production capabilities, and creating teaching and learning materials that are accessible for children with disabilities.

*Classroom learning assessment processes*

Reliable, current and accessible data at the classroom and central-level on education-related outcomes, especially on early grade reading and writing, is sparse. There is no systematic and solid approach to data collection; current data is neither reliable nor analyzed for meaningful programming or policy interventions. Further the public education system does not yet have national standards and systemic tools for the measurement of learning achievement contributing to a lack of knowledge on student skills and competencies. Education data needs to be coherently stored and presented for all stakeholders and actors in the sector. To be able to continue to track student progress throughout the school year, teachers should be supported to use formative and summative assessment tools for reading, numeracy, and language acquisition subjects, in addition to other core subjects. Additionally, given the need for CERD and MEHE to build their capacity in the area of data collection and analysis, interventions in this area will need to have a clear goal of guiding literacy and numeracy instruction practices, orient teacher training, coaching and professional development.

### *Non formal education*

To the extent possible, the activity may propose initiatives that support the MEHE and CERD to monitor the non-formal education sector as current activities are geographically disparate and often uncoordinated. MEHE and CERD have a role to play in the type of content that is being disseminated in non formal education (NFE) programs, the certification being offered to students and the ultimate education pathway that students have access to upon completing such NFE programs. The activity may support MEHE and CERD in developing a framework for NFE programs that includes identifying key student learning competencies for NFE programs, essential indicators for monitoring and measuring impact of NFE programs and teachers' technical and pedagogical skills needed, modalities for recognizing and providing education credentials for students who complete NFE programs, as well as mechanism to transition and reintegrate back into the formal education system, among other priorities.

### *Inclusion of students with disabilities and special needs*

The public education system severely lacks capacity to effectively include students with disabilities and special needs so that they engage in meaningful learning. A new decree has recently been issued to accommodate the need of students with special needs in official national exams. However, there is little support for these students outside the framework of the official exams and throughout the school year. This activity will work with the national education providers to help them create a national framework for the inclusion of students with disabilities and special needs beyond the few inclusive schools that are already in place. This activity will also seek to integrate best practices and approaches for the implementation of an effective inclusive education plan in the in-service and pre-service system, focusing particularly on the improvement of learning outcomes for students with disabilities. Interventions may include conducting a national needs assessment to determine existing needs, devising a plan for accommodating these needs, training educators, integrating these approaches into the national curriculum, textbooks, teacher guides, and training teachers and principals on this new pedagogy, creating effective and fast referral systems for students and others.

USAID may support initiatives that will result in:

**Output 1.2:** Improved curriculum, research and assessment capacities

### *Curriculum design and implementation*

The Lebanese curriculum is severely outdated as the latest revision to the

curriculum has been done in the year 2000. Over the past few years, several efforts have been made to develop the curriculum and make it more interactive. Efforts have resulted in the development of a curriculum framework that the Minister of Education has officially announced in 2021. Following this announcement, subsequent working groups have been formed to further elaborate on the framework's components as a basis for the new curriculum. The activity will work with CERD and relevant stakeholders to develop the curriculum's guiding principles, philosophy and all other components for the sector to start operating under an updated, modern curriculum that responds to 21st century needs, and integrates approaches that support children with disabilities. The necessity to conduct this work stems from the fact that a curriculum revision and updating is required based on the changing context in the Lebanese public primary system as well as advances in brain and behavioral sciences that improve understanding of how children learn. In the past decade there has been an upwelling of developments featuring research-based, classroom-proven "best practice" teaching strategies — accompanied by pioneering discoveries about learning and learners — which are simply too compelling to ignore. The stand-and-deliver model of teaching and learning, with the teacher at the center of instruction is giving way to more varied methods founded on research about how children learn. Specific interventions may include but will not be limited to regular workshops to develop curriculum and educational content, revision and development of textbooks and educational content, technical meetings, provision of technical expertise, policy papers, developing quality control processes, support to CERD and MEHE in conducting testing and other important resources that both institutions can make use of to improve the quality of public education.

*Research and assessment for evidence-based policy development*

The Recipient will be expected to build on the work that has been achieved under QITABI 2 in relation to the national framework for student learning assessments and expand it to improve the national education providers' capacity to conduct educational research and collect evidence that will be used for decision-making and the development of national education policies. The implementation of the literacy and numeracy assessments and the development of grade-level literacy benchmarks under previous USAID activities constitute a solid basis for this work, and may be used as a starting point to expand work in this area. Activities may include developing the capacity of CERD and MEHE to collect relevant and useful student learning data on a national scale, support MEHE and CERD to effectively manage curricular reforms at the classroom level; improved learning outcomes for students; and to the extent possible tested and costed models to improve

learning outcomes for students with disabilities, and data analysis that the MEHE can use to inform policy and decision-making for improved learning outcomes.

**Outcome 2: More children and youth receive improved instruction resulting in gains in literacy, numeracy, and social emotional skills, and a higher proportion of students completing school**

This outcome focuses on improving student performance in primary grades and other targeted grades in public schools (both morning and afternoon shifts) and select vulnerable and economically disadvantaged private schools and based on a literacy landscape analysis that the Recipient will conduct.

To achieve this result, the Recipient is expected to partner with stakeholders that are responsible for educational content development, teacher training and teacher coaching. At CERD, the Recipient will work with the curriculum department, the department of professional development, the department of research and the President's office, among others. At MEHE, the Recipient will work with the General Directorate for Education, the Department d'Observation Pedagogique et Scolaire (DOPS) and the Department of Primary Education, among others. USAID/Lebanon has committed to improving literacy and numeracy skills under its current QITABI 2 activity and recognizes the value of measuring learning outcomes. It is imperative that the Recipient coordinates with QITABI 2 in order to ensure a smooth and complete transfer of all curricular interventions, including early grade learning interventions, psychosocial support, remedial programs, including all associated training materials or supplemental materials already developed and endorsed by CERD and MEHE.

The activity is expected to support initiatives that will result in:

**Output 2.1:** Improved cadre of educators who deliver evidence-based instruction

- *Improve knowledge of inclusive, evidence-based teaching and learning materials (TLMs) by teachers and school leaders.*
- *Strengthen and develop tools for assessing effective instruction and learning outcomes used by teachers, school and Ministry administrators.*
- *Strengthen teacher capacities and competencies in reading, writing, mathematics, and inclusive education*

Potential interventions that may be considered during the inception period include:

*Development of teacher competency framework:*

Initiatives may support CERD's efforts to modernize the teaching workforce by developing a framework for teachers' academic competencies for teachers' performance evaluation. Initiatives may be tailored to support the efforts of CERD to develop its training centers as centers of excellence where teachers acquire advanced skills in subject-matter expertise, instructional delivery, classroom management, formative assessment and personal competencies to deliver quality instruction. Any proposed initiatives and approaches to teacher training and capacity development will need to take into account fidelity to concepts at the school level through coordination with DOPS coaches and built in feedback loops.

*Early grade literacy and numeracy for learning recovery*

The activity will adopt and build on the Basic Literacy Approach (BLA) that is currently being used by USAID under the QITABI 2 activity. Given that the Lebanese educational system teaches students Arabic and uses a foreign language (English or French) as means of instruction for a number of subjects as early as in kindergarten, the component is expected to focus on improving reading and math outcomes in these languages as well, as they are the primary means of instruction. This component could include related support to pre-primary education programs that contribute to higher academic skills in older children and youth. The Recipient may have to adapt the BLA approach as needs evolve and based on collected evidence. The QITABI 2 early grade reading assessment, early grade math assessment and curriculum-based assessment (attached to this solicitation), may provide useful information as to what reading and math skills most need improvement for the target population. Teacher training may focus on ensuring that teachers accurately identify the level of skill of students and the corresponding place in the curriculum where they should begin instruction regardless of the official grade-level of students.

*Retention support and access*

One of the key elements of the literacy and numeracy activity is to avoid student drop out and promote retention. The activity will develop tools that will track retention rates in public schools, especially the survival retention rate over multiple years and the grades where dropout peaks. Targeted survival retention rates help focus the selection of longer-term planning related to support and incentives.

### *Classroom formative assessments*

Building on QITABI 2's work with DOPS and CERD on universal assessments and student-centered learning approaches, the activity will develop a teacher training program that promotes formative assessments as ongoing tests to gauge the level of competency acquisition in students and adapt their teaching approach accordingly, and develop a process that can be adopted by the Government through pre-service and in-service systems, in order to institutionalize and standardize the way assessments are conducted in the classroom.

### *Remedial and enrichment programs*

The Recipient will develop and pilot institutional structures for the delivery of remedial and enrichment programs to students who need them as part of the school's delivery of education and not as an extra-curricular, stand alone intervention.

*Training of trainers, teachers and coaches:* The activity must build on the work accomplished by QITABI 2 in the area of reading and math instruction. The intervention might include reviewing/developing in consultation with CERD and DOPS reading instruction materials, teacher training modules, data and lessons learned from QITABI 2, to support the delivery of evidence-based instruction at all grade levels. Revisions and updates might also be needed to ensure that existing training and other materials are guided by Universal Design for Learning principles and are accessible for children with disabilities. USAID will work with CERD and MEHE/DOPS to ensure that materials developed and associated training become integrated into existing pre-service and in-service government systems to ensure sustainability.

### *Reading and Math Benchmarks*

Building on the work that has already been accomplished by QITABI 2, including Arabic reading and math benchmarks in grades 2 and 3 the Recipient should work with CERD and MEHE to ensure that reading and math benchmarks are available for grades 1 to 6. The Recipient should work with CERD and MEHE to develop their capacity in all the stages of implementing and monitoring classroom based interventions to support numeracy and literacy in all three languages, including data collection, analysis and reporting.

### *Development of an early warning system*

The activity might expand the early warning system to as many schools as

possible, based on the framework that has been agreed upon with GOL. Tools and resources should then be made available for teachers in order to help them identify early warning signs of struggling students and take appropriate measures to remedy them.

*Provision of teaching and learning materials, including supplemental educational resources and materials*

The activity might provide educational materials and technology equipment that are needed by teachers, educators and teacher trainers in order to advance quality instruction at all grade levels, and work with the MEHE to strengthen the book supply chain to ensure teaching and learning materials reach the intended users. Classrooms may receive teaching and learning materials, equipment, technology, related e-content and interactive tools to help them deliver better quality of instruction. All teachers should then receive adequate and sufficient training to operate and maintain the received equipment and effectively use the teaching and learning materials effectively in the classroom. Following the initial training, follow up support models including coaching for teachers should be identified to ensure that teachers are able to adequately and effectively use these resources. Teaching and learning materials and the corresponding teacher training should include summative and formative assessment tools to help teachers with periodic, on- the-spot assessment to better support student learning outcomes.

*Training of principals*

As the schools' gatekeepers, school principals and headmasters have a crucial role to play in ensuring that school-level interventions are well implemented and followed up on. The activity may be expected to engage training to principals and headmasters on the different teaching and learning materials and classroom instructional approaches in order to enable them to support teachers implementing these approaches in their schools and in the classroom.

USAID may support initiatives that will result in:

**Output 2.2:** Students have access to social and emotional learning, life skills and youth programs to prepare them for the future.

In parallel to the academic interventions taking place as described in Output 2.1, it is important for students, especially in the public sector, to have access to life skills and activities that are key to their academic success.

### *Social and emotional learning*

Enhanced wellbeing provides learners with the tools to focus, regulate their emotional responses, interact with others and cope with stress and challenges. Research suggests that academic, social and emotional skills are interrelated; when students' wellbeing is enhanced, their academic achievement is improved. The activity will develop tools and materials in line with the SEL framework that has been developed under QITABI 2 and endorsed by MEHE. Skills will include higher order thinking, problem solving skills, relationship skills, self-awareness, social awareness, self-management and decision-making, to name a few. These competencies are crucial in preventing potential aggressive or conflict-inducing behavior at later stages. SEL activities are expected to be incorporated into all aspects of interventions, namely teacher training, books, literacy and numeracy curriculum, educational materials and principal training. Well-trained teachers and school personnel support are essential to create an environment in which all students feel safe and capable to learn – ensuring that the classroom is safe, caring and predictable. Within a safe and caring learning environment, students are enabled to engage in positive SEL activities inside the classroom and are better able to learn. Students have clear and consistent structures, rules and consequences for their behavior, which gives them a sense of control.

All proposed school-led SEL initiatives will need to be coordinated with the involvement of parents and caregivers, to the extent possible, as they are the most important and immediate layer of support to children's wellbeing and development. It is important to fortify SEL's core competencies in the home to ensure they are promoted and practiced, through home-based educational programs and content that is accessible to children. Therefore, the activity should seek the involvement of mothers, fathers and caregivers in the school's SEL curriculum/activity planning, implementation and evaluation and consider linkages to related child protection activities. This component could include related support to pre-primary education programs that contribute to higher academic skills in older children and youth<sup>8</sup>.

Potential interventions that may be considered during the inception period include:

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<sup>8</sup> Also see Global Child Thrive Act.

### *Life skills and youth programs*

Life skills programs aim to develop young peoples' abilities and motivations to make use of all types of information. The approach should be interactive, using role plays, games, puzzles, group discussions, and a variety of other teaching techniques to keep the participant wholly involved in the sessions. These interventions are most suited for the intermediate and secondary levels.

### *Career and vocational orientation*

At the intermediate and secondary level, students have limited career options. The activity may engage with school principals to create regional career centers that can help schools in each region organize career fairs, science competitions or other events to expose and increase student interest in a diverse set of career and vocational opportunities. Interventions may help schools in identifying individuals at the school, community, and where relevant at the regional levels who can serve as focal points for these initiatives and liaise with vocational training centers, universities and the private sector. These activities should help expose students and their families to understand potential career paths after high school and assist students and their families to be able to better determine academic and non-academic training and career opportunities. Interventions may include soft skill development including: CV writing and interviewing skills, leadership and internship training to enhance one's employability, helping youth identify their skill sets as related to opportunities in the job market. The Recipient is strongly encouraged to review and evaluate USAID's past vocational and technical education program, in order to build on past work and ensure that interventions under this activity are consistent with available career training opportunities and market needs.

### *Foreign language acquisition*

Foreign languages are key to meaningful future employment and students who do not master a second language, especially English, are at a serious disadvantage on the job market, whether local or international. The activity may deploy resources to support intermediate and secondary level students in their effort to acquire a second language. Interventions may include the development of extra-curricular language classes, the provision of educational resources that are language-specific, English or French discussion groups, supporting the school in recruiting an additional language teacher, and others in order to provide more opportunities for students to develop their language skills.

USAID may support initiatives that will result in:

**Output 2.3:** Schools adopt mechanisms that promote the engagement of caregivers in their children’s learning and leverage the community as part of improvement efforts

This activity should look for opportunities to engage communities and parents in literacy and numeracy and school activities, as well as build the schools’ management’s capacity to engage parents and caregivers in their children’s learning and learning-related school activities.

It will be important to continue to build the understanding and capacity of parents and community members to support learning by improving school-community and parent-child engagement efforts. Such opportunities may include parental involvement in literacy and numeracy activities, engagement in the school’s social and emotional learning efforts, peer mediation groups and initiatives on conflict resolution and positive citizenship. The success of parental engagement programs often depends on how parents are invited, how the requested engagement relates to parental perceptions of their own role understanding and perceptions of their own efficacy (and any related efforts to equip parents with necessary competencies to succeed), and the range of choices related to invitations to engage. Parental engagement efforts should consider key determinants and obstacles in the context of social behavior change communication and evidence in this area.

As part of efforts to support localization of accountability mechanisms at the community and school level, an illustrative intervention could include the organization of mixed community groups associated with the school (e.g., caregivers, private sector, community and traditional leaders) who are trained to plan, advocate for those plans, and then monitor results. Such programs can support efforts supporting vulnerable groups such as disabled students and other educationally-disadvantaged children. Research has shown that building on existing programs, such as school-based management committees or other community coalitions that are linked to parental engagement groups can improve communication and support accountability. These mechanisms place schools within communities and the broad community participation can play an important role in the delivery of education services. Evidence from low-income contexts points to how enhanced community monitoring can increase teacher and student attendance and result in statistically significant increases in test scores. Increased community participation and training also can boost demand for education and reduce dropout.

## **F. GENERAL PARAMETERS AND REQUIRED APPROACHES**

The following parameters, guidance and required approaches will be applied to the activities to be implemented:

*Progress beyond programs:* To prioritize progress beyond programs, the activity will seek more inclusive partnerships in the sector to effect long-lasting progress through collective action and creative problem-solving. The activity will act as a catalyst for a more coordinated response to the identified needs in order to maximize the impact of USAID's assistance beyond this activity's interventions.

*Strengthen systems and develop capacity in local institutions:* As per USAID's Education Policy, all work to be conducted will need to use local systems and build on existing local structures. Collaboration with CERD and MEHE's relevant departments will be critical to the success of the activity. The Recipient will provide technical assistance to CERD and MEHE in all activity areas and will use existing government systems and processes, to the extent possible, in implementation, with the objective of developing the country's education system.

*Relief and Development Coherence (RDC):* The activity will continuously explore the operational context in search of a response that seeks to coordinate and ensure complementarity between humanitarian and development assistance efforts. Given Lebanon's complex and constantly evolving development scene, the activity will take into account arising humanitarian needs that arise from crises as they unfold, including food security, alternative energy, and others—within the limitations of the basic education directive or through other programs or funding. The activity will propose new RDC approaches that take into account these humanitarian needs as they become apparent and the extent to which they are combined with other interventions directly focused on measurably improving learning and other educational outcomes and include measurement of educational outcomes.

*Explicit disability and inclusion focus:* Approaches to implementation will be deliberate about including people with disabilities (PWDs), non-gender binary individuals, women and other marginalized groups. This involves more than simply accounting for PWDs in program activities, but rather ensuring that the activity's approaches are actively seeking the full participation of PWDs and other socially marginalized groups in the program's activities. Inclusion will lead to increased participation of these groups and ultimately a wider impact of

USAID’s assistance across all community members. The activity will approach all interventions using principles of Universal Design for Learning<sup>9</sup> (UDL), based upon the premise that all children and youth learn differently and as a result, the activity needs to provide learners with pathways to (1) be engaged, motivated and to learn through multiple means, (2) receive information in various ways, and (3) express their learning in multiple ways.

*Adhere to the programmatic priorities for Basic Education:* USAID’s Education Policy<sup>10</sup> provides general guidance for establishing programmatic priorities for basic education activities. 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, social emotional learning, 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, the intent of Congress and USAID is that basic education funds should to the extent possible 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 project activities that do not have advancement of basic education objectives as the primary, overarching objective.

*Achieve measurable learning results:* The new activity is designed to accomplish the results indicated for each outcome (component), through close collaboration among all stakeholders, e.g., CERD, MEHE, targeted schools, Recipient, USAID, other donors, community groups and other partners.

*Conflict Sensitivity:* USAID/Lebanon requires partners to take into account conflict dynamics in all activities, and to demonstrate in their applications how they will do so throughout the implementation of the activity. An effort to

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<sup>9</sup> [Universal Design for Learning \(UDL\)](#) is a framework to improve and optimize teaching and learning for all people based on scientific insights into how humans learn. UDL’s goal is to support learners to become “expert learners” who are purposeful and motivated, resourceful and knowledgeable, and strategic and goal driven. Instead of changing the learner, UDL aims to change the design of learning environments to reduce barriers so that all learners can engage in rigorous, meaningful learning. The UDL Guidelines provide a set of concrete suggestions that can be applied to any discipline or domain to ensure that all learners can access and participate in meaningful, challenging learning opportunities.

<sup>10</sup> [https://www.usaid.gov/sites/default/files/2022-05/2018\\_Education\\_Policy\\_FINAL\\_WEB.pdf](https://www.usaid.gov/sites/default/files/2022-05/2018_Education_Policy_FINAL_WEB.pdf)

minimize negative effects of activities is very relevant in the complex and dynamic Lebanese context. It will be vital to understand the context operating in, the nature of engagement and how it affects the context and vice-versa, as well as acting. Conflict sensitivity refers to the discipline and capacity of an organization to understand the conflict context in which programs are being implemented; understand how the conflict context might affect programs and how programs might affect the conflict context; act on this understanding to minimize risk of negative impacts on programs (i.e., staff, beneficiaries, communities, results) and the conflict dynamics; and identify options for positively impacting the conflict context. The activity is expected to incorporate elements that alleviate the stresses on education due to the various crises that the sector is facing. For example, activities will enhance the ability of individual schools to respond to the challenges posed by the economic crisis. It is essential that partners implement programming under this award in a conflict-sensitive manner with upfront and continuing contextual analysis and monitoring that inform interventions throughout the life of the program. The Recipient may use the USAID Rapid Education Risk Analysis (RERA) tool to assist in the initial risk analysis. The tool is available at <http://eccnetwork.net/wp-content/uploads/USAID-RERA-v1.pdf>.

*Localization:* USAID emphasizes the importance of utilizing localization and reaching new and underutilized partners. The goal of '[localization](#)' is that USAID's processes, partnerships, and programs create an enabling context in which local actors define priorities and lead their communities' and countries' development agendas, and are enabled through effective and inclusive local systems, sufficient resources, and strong local capacity to sustain outcomes over time. This will create the conditions whereby local actors, new and underutilized partners, and systems own and value efforts to strengthen education systems, through an equitable and inclusive development process that ensures results are locally sustained. Accomplishing the QITABI 3 objectives will require specific knowledge of the local education system, local stakeholders and schools. The approach will require specific knowledge of the schools, the teaching workforce, the Ministry of Education and the Center for Educational Research and Development in terms of their operations, constraints, challenges and opportunities. The approach will require engagement of local public and private education sector actors, such as schools, communities, diaspora, academia, civil society and others. The Recipient must incorporate localization into their design and decision-making processes to ensure local education actors and systems own and value reforms, and to ensure results are locally sustained.

### *Collaboration Adaptation and Learning*

Adaptability is critical in this context to allow for adjustments to new conditions, shocks, crises, or stabilization and its impact on long-term decisions and corresponding programmatic adjustments. In order to build adaptability into the implementation of this activity, the Recipient will be expected to act on RERA findings and to conduct on-going rolling assessments. Conducted every two months, rolling assessments will gather information and monitor trends on a critical set of data and inform the Recipient's ability to adapt to Lebanon's fluid and dynamic context. At a minimum the process will focus on critical events that significantly affect activity implementation. Questions to be addressed may include: what are the emerging issues in the selected areas of activity implementation? What are the critical events planned in the next two months? Do activities or approaches need to be adjusted? If so, how? The findings from these assessments and any course corrections taken will be incorporated into the activity's quarterly reports.

Per USAID ADS Chapter 201 on the Program Cycle, this activity will adopt a collaborative, learning and adapting approach and will build in checkpoints to see if the activities undertaken are on track.<sup>11</sup> Identifying knowledge gaps in the theory of change of the activity or in the technical knowledge base and identifying and implementing ways to fill these gaps will be expected. Milestones will be identified for the first year and a quarterly review will be undertaken using monitoring data to assess, learn and adjust the work plan as needed. This process will also facilitate collaboration internally and with external stakeholders and will be used to feed data, analysis and performance information into an iterative process that ultimately leads to necessary adjustments in the performance monitoring plan and stronger outcomes. These opportunities may focus on challenges and successes in implementation to date, changes in the operating environment or context that could affect programming, opportunities to better collaborate or influence other actors, and/or other relevant topics.

### *Synergy and collaboration*

Implementation of activities under this Award must be grounded in dynamic and productive partnerships and must ensure coordination of interventions between the Recipient, USAID/Lebanon, CERD, MEHE, donors, international NGOs or local NGOs working in the education sector and project beneficiaries.

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<sup>11</sup> <https://usaidlearninglab.org/cla>

USAID/Lebanon coordinates closely with other education donors and, as a result, where respective project activities are related there are close complementary efforts. Current donor commitments and areas of focus linked to MEHE's five-year plan are available through UNICEF and the Ministry of Education and Higher Education. USAID carried out consultation with GOL and donors ahead of the design of the new program to ensure that no duplication of activities occurs and to ensure that anticipated activities fill gaps and demand services to ultimately improve the education system and results in Lebanon.

The Recipient will be asked to seek other partnerships during project implementation in order to maximize USAID's education investments. These potential partners may include for-profit private sector entities, local community groups, and members of the Lebanese Diaspora. Such public-private alliances will be useful in building momentum around the public school system, and in getting communities and individuals seriously involved through active contributions.

#### *Gender Sensitive*

The new program will address gender issues through its several components and cross-cutting themes. It will address the weak quality of the public education system generally and specifically how it affects girls and boys differently and will incorporate gender sensitive materials in its training activities for teachers, and in the classroom teaching materials that are developed. All data will be disaggregated by sex. The Applicant must take into consideration the impact of gender on the quality of education. For example, how do male and female teachers experience status differently? Are there gender roles or expectations that affect how male and female students are treated and their learning outcomes? How are male and female caregivers engaged by the school and their community groups based on gender patterns?

#### *Inclusive Development*

Under this activity, USAID/Lebanon expects the implementing partner to promote different aspects of inclusive development in education and integrate them within proposed strategies for meeting the outcomes. Partners are expected to demonstrate in their applications how they will do so throughout the implementation of the activity. The ultimate goal of inclusive development in education is to reform policies or practices that restrict equitable access to education based on gender, class, disability, ethnicity, language group, geographic location, religious affiliation, academic ability, or other factors that

have been identified as the basis for exclusion. It is expected that the Recipient will comply with the objectives of the USAID Disability Policy<sup>12</sup> and USAID's Gender Equality and Female Empowerment Policy<sup>13</sup> in performing the program under this cooperative agreement. USAID/Lebanon requires that contextual analyses conducted at the outset of this activity include an analysis of gender and disability.

### *Sustainability*

The Recipient will be responsible for ensuring sustainability of the results of this activity's interventions and the resultant achievements. Capacity building of the participating organizations' management is an essential part of project sustainability. The Recipient must work within existing systems and bodies to avoid creating duplicate systems and regulatory bodies. The activity implementation must be such that CERD and MEHE are able to sustain interventions at nominal or no additional cost. In addition, the activity's design must consider policies and regulations necessary for enforcing and maintaining any introduced standards, criteria and procedures. This activity will develop systems and build the capacity of the human resources to utilize and maintain the systems. Another vital element for sustainability is building capacity within CERD and MEHE to monitor and evaluate their literacy and numeracy interventions. Such a system will improve the decision making process at CERD and MEHE. It will also enable CERD and MEHE to develop their own strategic plan and follow through on the implementation of the strategies in a more professional direction, bereft of unfounded assumptions. The Recipient will work with USAID to mitigate any weaknesses in the capacity approach that are identified in the initial assessment of the educational institutions that the activity will work at.

### *Climate Adaptation and Mitigation*

The Recipient should consider implications to climate change adaptation and mitigation in implementation, and provide alternative forms of implementation when climate risks occur. The Recipient is encouraged to propose ways of reducing their own carbon footprint and integrating climate change information into reading and learning materials and other areas of the intervention, as appropriate.

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<sup>12</sup> USAID's Disability Policy can be found at: [http://pdf.usaid.gov/pdf\\_docs/PDABQ631.pdf](http://pdf.usaid.gov/pdf_docs/PDABQ631.pdf)

<sup>13</sup> USAID's Gender Equality and Female Empowerment Policy can be found at: <https://www.usaid.gov/policy/gender-equality-womens-empowerment>

## **G. MONITORING, EVALUATION AND LEARNING PLAN (MELP)**

There are two fundamental purposes to monitoring and evaluating the performance of this activity:

1. Reporting on activity progress:
  - Through the tracking of indicators on a monthly or quarterly basis to measure whether it is meeting specified targets, and
  - Through reporting on specific indicators using periodic performance monitoring and evaluation events held throughout implementation or through studies on specific topics identified by the implementing partner or USAID.
2. Capturing knowledge about:
  - How the activity is progressing and the extent to which theories of change and their assumptions are still relevant and accurate, and
  - Whether external assumptions about the activity's operating environment and the contextual factors that influence the activity's performance remain valid and appropriate, as anticipated, throughout activity implementation.
  - Whether interventions can be expanded or must be modified (or abandoned) based on initial results. The activity will use an adaptive approach to manage progress, supported by M&E, that will allow for deliberate decision points and redirecting implementation based on initial results, emerging opportunities, learning, and changing external factors.

To support progress reporting, the Recipient will develop a complexity-aware Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning Plan (MELP) for the activity. The MELP must define a sound and realistic approach to measure the quality, effectiveness and outcomes of implementation of the activity keeping in mind the possibility for insecurity and limited access to certain geographic locations at certain times. The plan must describe the planned monitoring approach to project management and to measure progress towards the activity's purpose, outcomes and results. The MELP will address data collection and reporting on the agreed upon to track progress towards the achievement of activity goal. The monitoring plan must abide by best practices for monitoring, such as the use of unique identifiers. The Recipient will carry out special studies using appropriate complexity-aware monitoring methods such as most significant change, outcome harvesting and others to monitor a range of both intended and unintended outcomes resulting from this activity, as well as contextual

indicators.

Monitoring, evaluation, and collaborating, learning, and adapting (CLA) for activities should emphasize the systematic process of collecting and analyzing performance data and other information to track progress toward planned results. Monitoring and evaluation should influence the planning of activities, decision-making and the allocation of resources, and to incorporate adaptive management in order to make changes as needed. It also involves collaborating with and across implementing partners to manage the relationship among activities to achieve higher-level outcomes. Building on the evidence gathered from the Human and Institutional Capacity Development (HICD) assessment, student learning assessments, and other sources of data and information from QITABI 2, the activity is expected to have an inception phase of 18 months to two years in which the activity will, in collaboration with CERD and MEHE, test various models of implementation, based on the interventions developed during QITABI 2 and also including subject-based assessments, and analyze the results for effectiveness and cost. These models will build on key lessons learned and gaps identified during QITABI 2, and following the inception period, the Activity, in partnership with CERD and MEHE, will determine the most cost effective and appropriate models to integrate into the education system to sustain increased learning outcomes for students in Lebanon.

Illustrative indicators that could be included in the MELP, disaggregated by sex, age-group and marginalized group:

Outcome 1:

- Number of entities with enhanced abilities as a result of USG assistance
- Number of new management and monitoring systems, procedures and tools recommended and/or introduced to (CERD and MEHE) as a result of USG assistance

Outcome 2:

- Percentage of learners who demonstrate reading fluency and comprehension of grade level text at the end of grade 2 with USG assistance (Standard ES. 1-1)
- Percentage of learners achieving improvement of at least one reading level
- Percentage of survival retention rate because it focuses on retention between grades and incidence of student dropout out over a series of grades. The purpose of this indicator is to measure the retention

capacity and internal efficiency of an education system, illustrating the situation regarding retention of students from grade to grade in schools, and conversely the magnitude of dropout by grade.

- Number of primary school educators who complete professional development activities on implementing evidence-based reading instruction with USG assistance (Standard ES. 1-7)
- Number of primary or secondary textbooks and other Teaching and Learning Materials (TLM) provided with USG assistance (Standard ES.1-10)
- Percentage of teachers with improved instructional practices through classroom observation
- Percentage of students who have access to life skills and youth programs

For each indicator proposed, the MELP will indicate targets and plans for the determination of baseline values and include a target that assures the reliability and validity of data collected, elaborate the process by which the indicators will be tracked and how monitoring processes and results will be used to inform activity management decisions. Proposed indicators should move beyond collecting data on inputs and outputs for the activity, and propose a limited number of relevant outcome-level indicators to measure and track the progress of the program in achieving the activity results in addition to those provided above. Proposed indicators should be gender- sensitive and must include the appropriate disaggregation including disaggregation by sex, age group, marginalized groups (e.g. children living with disabilities), and any other relevant fragility dimension.

The use of standard indicators is required, although Applicants may suggest a limited number of custom indicators in the MELP. The applicant is expected to include an Accountability and Feedback Plan<sup>14</sup> in the MELP in order to ensure that local voices are heard and incorporated into programmatic adaptation.

The Mission will employ a three-tiered monitoring approach. The first tier of monitoring will be the responsibility of the Recipient. The Recipient will report monitoring findings in quarterly reports, incorporating whenever possible the above worldwide indicators in addition to these activity-specific ones. The second tier of monitoring will be the responsibility of the Agreement Officer's Representative (AOR). The AOR will review the Recipient's reports, visit Recipient's offices and conduct regular site visits. The USAID/Lebanon

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<sup>14</sup> <https://www.usaid.gov/documents/listening-local-voices-accountability-and-feedback-plans>

Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) support contractor will provide a third tier of monitoring and support.

This activity will use and build off the previously collected data generated under QITABI 2.

Baseline information will be collected by the Recipient at the onset of the activity. The Recipient should adopt a reliable, transparent and valid approach to reporting data which might include:

- Maintaining a proper set of supportive documentation to track and report on indicators such as attendance sheets for training sessions, or press releases for media appearances;
- Ensuring that sources of data are valid while using either primary sources of information or objectively verifiable secondary information;
- Ensuring timely reporting;
- Ensuring that results are attributable to the initiatives and efforts undertaken under the activity;
- Ensuring consistency in data collection, calculation and reporting; Ensuring consistent responsibility over data collection a designated team member at the implementing partner;
- Ensuring that costs associated with monitoring and evaluation are reasonable;

The M&E support contractor will assist the Recipient with indicator-related responsibilities as needed and appropriate. The M&E support contractor will verify the quality of data collected by the Recipient and the relevance of indicators used.

The activity will analyze and adapt QITABI 2 indicators so that there is a continuum in data that can be used for analysis and informing CERD and MEHE progress.

In addition, the project will coordinate with the Mission M&E contractor to refine and finalize the Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) plan. The M&E contractor will provide support services in aligning the implementing partner's M&E plan with the Mission's results framework, as well as perform data quality assessment and data verification if/when required. Quarterly discussions with the M&E support contractor, AOR and the Recipient will be held to review data collected and identify both positive and negative trends in student learning and

activity processes so that this feedback can be applied in the following quarter. Ensuring feedback loops is part of the USAID mandate to pursue Collaborating, Learning and Adapting (CLA) processes to ensure early identification of challenges or promising practices, timely course corrections if needed, and factors impeding outcome-level results.

Evaluations will be conducted by the Mission's M&E support contractor. The Recipient will have to provide all required and necessary information for evaluations and/or assessments. Evaluation questions will be created in partnership with the AOR.

All of the data and analysis linked to this activity will be shared with implementing partners (including the GOL), public and civil society entities and other donors. Sharing learning with beneficiaries will also be important.

A finalized set of indicators for reporting will be determined after award when the activity's M&E plan is developed. Other activity indicators will be needed as part of the M&E plan.

The applicant should include a plan to comply with USAID's cost reporting requirement. Adherence to this requirement includes collecting data on expenditures, contributions from other sources, and details of the interventions.

## **H. ALIGNMENT WITH USAID'S STRATEGIC PRIORITIES**

This activity will enable USAID/Lebanon to advance Development Objective 2 *Effectiveness of Educational Institutions Improved* of the [Country Development Cooperation Strategy \(CDCS\) 2021-2026](#) that focuses on improving learning outcomes (IR2.2) and improving the capacity to provide quality educational management systems (IR2.3). The activity is aligned with USAID's Education Policy (2018, November).

## **I. ALIGNMENT WITH GOVERNMENT OF LEBANON'S STRATEGIC PRIORITIES**

This activity is aligned with the Government of Lebanon's education priorities as outlined in the Ministry of Education and Higher Education Lebanon five-year General Education Plan (2021-2025). The activity specifically aligns with the plan's Pillar 2 "Improved quality of education and higher learning outcomes to all students and strengthen citizenship", and Pillar 3 "System strengthening & Governance". Pillar 2 focuses on improving the quality of teaching and

workforce management, curriculum reforms and learning assessments, while Pillar 3 focuses on supporting programs towards a positive and safe educational ecosystem.

The Lebanon five-year General Education Plan is the most important guide for the new activity as it is the roadmap for all donor assistance in Lebanon. USAID's experience in the education sector and ability to bridge humanitarian and development assistance is an important niche that helps advance progress in meeting education objectives in Lebanon.

**[END OF SECTION A]**

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## **SECTION B: FEDERAL AWARD INFORMATION**

### **1. Estimate of Funds Available and Number of Awards Contemplated**

USAID intends to award one Cooperative Agreement pursuant to this notice of funding opportunity. Subject to funding availability and at the discretion of the Agency, USAID intends to provide a range between \$87 - \$97 million in total USAID funding over a five (5) year period.

### **2. Expected Performance Indicators, Targets, Baseline Data, and Data Collection**

The activity's outcomes are included under "SECTION A: PROGRAM DESCRIPTION, E. Achieving Results" and illustrative indicators are found under "SECTION A: PROGRAM DESCRIPTION, G. Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning Plan (MELP)".

### **3. Start Date and Period of Performance for Federal Awards**

The anticipated period is five (5) years from the date of award execution. The estimated start date will be on/or about October 2023.

### **4. Substantial Involvement**

USAID's substantial involvement under this Cooperative Agreement are listed below:

#### **a. Approval of Recipient annual work plans.**

The Recipient will be required to submit a draft detailed work plan for all activities under each component with associated budget estimates to AOR for review. The initial draft Work Plan submitted with the application must be finalized no later than 60 days after the effective date of the award. The AOR will provide written comments on the draft Work Plan within two weeks of submission. When the work plan is finalized, the AOR will provide written approval.

Annual Work Plans for subsequent years are due to the AOR no later than 30 days prior to the end of the USG's fiscal year or approximately August 30th. Work plans may be submitted electronically. Any substantial revisions to the approved Work Plan must be approved in writing by the AOR. The AOR will provide written

comments on the draft plan within two weeks of submission. Upon receipt of the comments, the Recipient will have one week to revise the plan. The AOR will provide written approval of the finalized plan.

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

b. Approval of specified key personnel and any changes thereto, with prior review and concurrence by the Agreement Officer's Representative and written approval of the Agreement Officer. The personnel listed in this section have been approved:

<b>Title</b>	<b>Name</b>
Chief of Party	TBD
Deputy Chief of Party	TBD

c. Approval of the Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning (MEL) Plan by the AOR.

There are two fundamental purposes to monitoring and evaluating the performance of this activity:

1. Reporting on activity progress:
  - Through the tracking of indicators on a monthly or quarterly basis to measure whether it is meeting specified targets, and
  - Through reporting on specific indicators using periodic performance monitoring and evaluation events held throughout implementation or through studies on specific topics identified by the implementing partner or USAID.
2. Capturing knowledge about:
  - How the activity is progressing and the extent to which theories of change and their assumptions are still relevant and accurate, and
  - Whether external assumptions about the activity's operating environment and the contextual factors that influence the activity's performance remain valid and appropriate, as anticipated, throughout activity implementation.
  - Whether interventions can be expanded or must be modified (or abandoned) based on initial results. The activity will use an adaptive approach to manage progress, supported by M&E, that will allow for deliberate decision points and redirecting implementation based on initial results, emerging opportunities, learning, and changing

external factors.

To support progress reporting, the Recipient will develop a complexity-aware Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning Plan (MELP) for the activity. The MELP must define a sound and realistic approach to measure the quality, effectiveness and outcomes of implementation of the activity keeping in mind the possibility for insecurity and limited access to certain geographic locations at certain times. The plan must describe the planned monitoring approach to project management and to measure progress towards the activity's purpose, outcomes and results. The MELP will address data collection and reporting on the agreed upon to track progress towards the achievement of activity goal. The monitoring plan must abide by best practices for monitoring, such as the use of unique identifiers. The Recipient will carry out special studies using appropriate complexity-aware monitoring methods such as most significant change, outcome harvesting and others to monitor a range of both intended and unintended outcomes resulting from this activity, as well as contextual indicators.

Monitoring, evaluation, and collaborating, learning, and adapting (CLA) for activities should emphasize the systematic process of collecting and analyzing performance data and other information to track progress toward planned results. Monitoring and evaluation should influence the planning of activities, decision-making and the allocation of resources, and to incorporate adaptive management in order to make changes as needed. It also involves collaborating with and across implementing partners to manage the relationship among activities to achieve higher-level outcomes. Building on the evidence gathered from the Human and Institutional Capacity Development (HICD) assessment, student learning assessments, and other sources of data and information from QITABI 2, the activity is expected to have an inception phase of 18 months to two years in which the activity will, in collaboration with CERD and MEHE, test various models of implementation, based on the interventions developed during QITABI 2 and also including subject-based assessments, and analyze the results for effectiveness and cost. These models will build on key lessons learned and gaps identified during QITABI 2, and following the inception period, the Activity, in partnership with CERD and MEHE, will determine the most cost effective and appropriate models to integrate into the education system to sustain increased learning outcomes for students in Lebanon.

The Mission will employ a three-tiered monitoring approach. The first tier of monitoring will be the responsibility of the Recipient. The Recipient will report

monitoring findings in quarterly reports, incorporating whenever possible the above worldwide indicators in addition to these activity-specific ones. The second tier of monitoring will be the responsibility of the Agreement Officer's Representative (AOR). The AOR will review the Recipient's reports, visit Recipient's offices and conduct regular site visits. The USAID/Lebanon Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) support contractor will provide a third tier of monitoring and support.

This activity will use and build off the previously collected data generated under QITABI 2.

Baseline information will be collected by the Recipient at the onset of the activity. The Recipient should adopt a reliable, transparent and valid approach to reporting data which might include:

- Maintaining a proper set of supportive documentation to track and report on indicators such as attendance sheets for training sessions, or press releases for media appearances;
- Ensuring that sources of data are valid while using either primary sources of information or objectively verifiable secondary information;
- Ensuring timely reporting;
- Ensuring that results are attributable to the initiatives and efforts undertaken under the activity;
- Ensuring consistency in data collection, calculation and reporting; Ensuring consistent responsibility over data collection a designated team member at the implementing partner;
- Ensuring that costs associated with monitoring and evaluation are reasonable;

The M&E support contractor will assist the Recipient with indicator-related responsibilities as needed and appropriate. The M&E support contractor will verify the quality of data collected by the Recipient and the relevance of indicators used.

The activity will analyze and adapt QITABI 2 indicators so that there is a continuum in data that can be used for analysis and informing CERD and MEHE progress.

In addition, the project will coordinate with the Mission M&E contractor to refine and finalize the Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) plan. The M&E

contractor will provide support services in aligning the implementing partner's M&E plan with the Mission's results framework, as well as perform data quality assessment and data verification if/when required. Quarterly discussions with the M&E support contractor, AOR and the Recipient will be held to review data collected and identify both positive and negative trends in student learning and activity processes so that this feedback can be applied in the following quarter. Ensuring feedback loops is part of the USAID mandate to pursue Collaborating, Learning and Adapting (CLA) processes to ensure early identification of challenges or promising practices, timely course corrections if needed, and factors impeding outcome-level results.

Evaluations will be conducted by the Mission's M&E support contractor. The Recipient will have to provide all required and necessary information for evaluations and/or assessments. Evaluation questions will be created in partnership with the AOR.

All of the data and analysis linked to this activity will be shared with implementing partners (including the GOL), public and civil society entities and other donors. Sharing learning with beneficiaries will also be important.

A finalized set of indicators for reporting will be determined after award when the activity's M&E plan is developed. Other activity indicators will be needed as part of the M&E plan.

The applicant should include a plan to comply with USAID's cost reporting requirement. Adherence to this requirement includes collecting data on expenditures, contributions from other sources, and details of the interventions.

d. Agency and Recipient Collaboration or Joint Participation

i. Collaborate in the selection of advisory committee members, if the program will establish an advisory committee. USAID may participate as a member of this committee as well.

e. Review and approval of substantive provisions of proposed subawards or contracts (see definitions in 2 CFR 200). The Recipient must request prior approval from the USAID Agreement Officer for the sub-award, transfer or contracting out of any work under this Agreement in accordance with 2 CFR 200.308 unless delegated separately under the Agreement Officer's

## Representative's Designation Letter.

f. Monitoring to authorize specified kinds of direction or redirection because of interrelationships with other projects.

g. Significant technical decisions at pre-planned decision points will require USAID approval, including for example but not limited to pivoting assistance to respond to emerging needs, and implementing initiatives that respond to specific requests by the Ministry of Education.

## h. Cost Reporting Requirements

(a) *Periodic Reporting.* The recipient shall prepare and submit three sets of data, as specified in (a)(1), (a)(2), and (a)(3), on the same schedule that they submit financial reports according to Section F. While the information in these data sets is related to the information contained in periodic financial reports, the requirements herein are distinct and serve different purposes. They are also distinct from reporting requirements associated with the Monitoring, Evaluation, and Learning (MEL) Plan described in Section F.

(1) *Expenditure Data.* (i) The recipient must report expenditure data against 13 standard cost categories as relevant. These 13 categories correspond to the most common objectives of USAID-funded activities in education and workforce development (e.g., in-service educator training, capacity strengthening of government systems; see submission instructions in (a)(1)(iv) for the full list). The recipient may also identify custom sub-categories to disaggregate these categories based on what they want to learn.

(ii) The recipient must further disaggregate all identified cost categories and sub-categories according to 11 types of ingredients as relevant: 1) international labor costs; 2) local labor costs; 3) allowances; 4) international travel; 5) transportation, and per diem; 6) local travel, transportation, and per diem; 7) equipment and supplies; 8) subcontracts or subgrants; 9) other direct costs; 10) grants under contract; and 11) overhead. These ingredient categories generally align with standard financial categories. However, the recipient must report on costs for international and local labor separately.

(iii) The recipient must indicate which costs are non-recurrent costs (intervention start-up) versus recurrent costs (implementation of the intervention).

(iv) The recipient must submit expenditure data in Excel following the instructions in the [Cost Reporting Guidance, Annexes](#) and [Cost Reporting Field Guide](#).

(2) *Data on the Contributions of Other Sources.* (i) The recipient must report substantial and activity-critical monetary or in-kind contributions to the activity objectives valued more than U.S. \$1,000 from other actors, both government and non-government. Such inputs may or may not be counted as cost share under the award.

(ii) For each third-party source, the recipient must identify contributions according to the following categories: 1) [government or non-government] staff time; 2) [government or non-government] staff time in training; 3) office space; 4) venue; 5) materials/equipment/supplies; 6) transportation; 7) direct monetary contributions; and 8) other. Within each of these categories, the recipient must note the number of units (e.g., number of staff and time, square feet of the venue, value estimate); the name of the contributor (e.g., private company); the location (e.g., non-capital urban); and the cost category with which the contribution is associated. For additional guidance, see the submission instructions referenced in (a)(2)(iv).

(iii) The recipient must base contributions data on written communication with contributors and existing documentation. These estimates are not expected to be precise, validated by partner staff, or monitored using USAID resources.

(iv) The recipient must submit contributions data in Excel following instructions in the [Cost Reporting Guidance, Annexes](#) and [Cost Reporting Field Guide](#), and using the worksheets in [Contributions and Details of Interventions Reporting Templates](#). There are three tabs associated with contributions data in the Templates guidance: government contributions (Tab B.1), non-government contributions (Tab B.2), and cost share (Tab B.3).

(3) *Data on the Details of the Intervention.* (i) The recipient must report beneficiary-level dosage of the intervention/inputs and outputs (e.g., # of minutes in a week of subject-specific instruction, # of hours received by each learner in individualized training) to allow for unit cost computation.

(ii) The recipient must submit data on the details of the intervention in Excel format following instructions in the [Cost Reporting Guidance Annexes](#) and [Cost Reporting Field Guide](#), and using the worksheets in [Contributions and Details of Interventions Reporting Templates](#). There are three tabs associated with reporting on the details of the intervention: Primary & Secondary Education (Tab C.1), Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) and Higher Education (Tab C.2), and Youth (Tab C.3). The recipient must fill out a separate worksheet for each intervention that they develop and/or implement using the relevant tab. The recipient may also identify additional indicators that allow for unit computation and/or are central to its performance management.

(4) *Applicability to Subawards.* The recipient should include the reporting requirements herein in all subcontracts and other subawards so that it can account for all inputs under the award. In the event that the recipient subawards to a local partner for a specific task, the entirety of the task may be categorized according to the appropriate cost category.

(5) *Submission Requirements for Periodic Reporting.* The recipient must submit required data files to the Agreement Officer's Representative (AOR). In addition, the recipient must submit data files to the [Development Data Library \(DDL\)](#) in accordance with the instructions in [ADS 579, Development Data](#). All cost data submitted to the DDL should include a risk-utility assessment tab and a data detail tab as described in the [Cost Reporting Guidance](#).

(b) *Submission of Cost Reporting Manual During Award Start-Up.* To ensure consistency and accuracy of costing reporting throughout implementation, the recipient must develop and submit a Costing Reporting Manual during the first 90 days of award according to the [Cost Reporting Manual](#) instructions. The Manual submitted by the recipient must document cost measurement objectives and/or cost analysis questions; identify which standard cost categories are relevant and establish any custom sub-categories; and outline procedures, roles, and responsibilities for capturing data, assuring data quality, and submitting reports according to the requirements herein. The recipient

must submit the Manual to the AOR and update it at least annually to reflect any significant changes in staffing or roles.

#### **5. Authorized Geographic Code**

The geographic code for the procurement of commodities and services under this program is 937.

#### **6. Nature of the Relationship between USAID and the Recipient**

The principal purpose of the relationship with the Recipient and under the subject program is to transfer funds to accomplish a public purpose of support or stimulation of the **Quality Instruction Towards Access and Basic Education Improvement (QITABI) 3** which is authorized by Federal statute. The successful Recipient will be responsible for ensuring the achievement of the program objectives and the efficient and effective administration of the award through the application of sound management practices. The Recipient will assume responsibility for administering Federal funds in a manner consistent with underlying agreements, program objectives, and the terms and conditions of the Federal award.

**[END OF SECTION B]**

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## **SECTION C: ELIGIBILITY INFORMATION**

### **1. Eligible Applicants**

Eligibility for this NOFO is not restricted.

USAID welcomes applications from organizations that have not previously received financial assistance from USAID.

### **2. Cost Sharing or Matching**

Cost sharing is not required under this NOFO, but it is encouraged.

Cost share refers to the resources an Applicant contributes to the total cost of an agreement. It is the portion of project or program costs not borne by the United States Government (USG). Applicants are strongly encouraged to provide innovative approaches to cost sharing and to provide detailed explanations in their applications. In addition to USAID funds, Applicants are encouraged to contribute resources from their own, private or local sources for the implementation of this program. Illustrative examples for cost share include overhead, nonexempt taxes, general and administrative costs or any other costs.

Applicants must review 2 CFR 200.306 (<https://www.gpo.gov/fdsys/pkg/CFR-2014-title2-vol1/pdf/CFR-2014-title2-vol1-sec200-306.pdf>) in determining cost share contribution. Cost share will be considered as an element of cost effectiveness under USAID regulation 2 CFR 200 and of applicable USAID policy and procedure.

Contributions can be either cash or in-kind and can include contributions from the Applicant, local counterpart organizations and other donors (not other USG federal funding sources). Cost sharing contributions should be in accordance with 2 CFR 200. Information regarding the proposed cost share should be included in the SF 424 and the Budget as indicated on those documents. The cost sharing plan must be discussed in the Budget Notes to the extent necessary to determine its feasibility and realistic access to the sources and funds.

### **3. Other**

An applicant is required to submit only **one** set of technical and cost applications.

**[END OF SECTION C]**

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## SECTION D: APPLICATION AND SUBMISSION INFORMATION

### 1. Agency Point of Contact

USAID/Lebanon  
Office of Acquisition and Assistance (OAA)  
Attention: Amy McQuade  
Regional Agreement Officer  
E-mail: [lebanonproposals@usaid.gov](mailto:lebanonproposals@usaid.gov)

### 2. Questions and Answers

Questions regarding this NOFO should be submitted electronically to [lebanonproposals@usaid.gov](mailto:lebanonproposals@usaid.gov) no later than the date and time indicated on the cover letter, as amended. Any information given to a prospective applicant concerning this NOFO will be furnished promptly to all other prospective applicants as an amendment to this NOFO, if that information is necessary in submitting applications or if the lack of it would be prejudicial to any other prospective applicant.

### 3. General Content and Form of Application

Preparation of Applications:

Each applicant must furnish the information required by this NOFO. Applications must be submitted in two separate parts: the Technical Application and the Business (Cost) Application. This subsection addresses general content requirements applying to the full application. Please see subsections 5 and 6, below, for information on the content specific to the Technical and Business (Cost) applications. The Technical application must address technical aspects only while the Business (Cost) Application must present the costs, and address risk and other related issues.

Both the Technical and Business (Cost) Applications must include a cover page containing the following information:

- Name of the organization(s) submitting the application;
- Identification and signature of the primary contact person (by name, title, organization, mailing address, telephone number and email address) and the identification of the alternate contact person (by name, title, organization,

mailing address, telephone number and email address);

- Program name;
- Notice of Funding Opportunity number;
- Name of any proposed sub-recipients or partnerships (identify if any of the organizations are local organizations, per USAID's definition of 'local entity' under ADS 303).

Any erasures or other changes to the application must be initialed by the person signing the application. Applications signed by an agent on behalf of the applicant must be accompanied by evidence of that agent's authority, unless that evidence has been previously furnished to the issuing office.

Applicants may choose to submit a cover letter in addition to the cover pages, but it will serve only as a transmittal letter to the Agreement Officer. The cover letter will not be reviewed as part of the merit review criteria.

Applications must comply with the following:

- USAID will not review any pages in excess of the page limits noted in the subsequent sections. Please ensure that applications comply with the page limitations.
- Written in English.
- Use standard 8 1/2" x 11", single sided, single-spaced, Calibri font not smaller than ~~14~~12 point, 1" margins, left justification and headers and/or footers on each page including consecutive page numbers, date of submission, and applicant's name.
- Eight point font can be used for graphs and charts. Tables however, must comply with the 9 point requirement.
- Submitted via Microsoft Word and PDF formats, except budget files which must be submitted in Microsoft Excel.
- The estimated start date identified in Section B of this NOFO must be used in the cost application.
- The technical application must be a searchable and editable Word and PDF format as appropriate.
- The Cost Schedule must include an Excel spreadsheet with all cells unlocked and no hidden formulas or sheets. A PDF version of the Excel spreadsheet may be submitted in addition to the Excel version at the applicant's discretion, however, the official cost application submission is the unlocked Excel version.

Applicants must review, understand, and comply with all aspects of this NOFO. Failure to do so may be considered as being non-responsive and may be evaluated accordingly. Applicants should retain a copy of the application and all enclosures for their records.

#### **4. Application Submission Procedures**

Applications in response to this NOFO must be submitted no later than the closing date and time indicated on the cover letter, as amended. Late applications will not be reviewed nor considered. Applicants must retain the proof of timely delivery in the form of system-generated documentation of delivery receipt date and time/confirmation from the receiving office/certified mail receipt.

Applications must be submitted by email to [lebanonproposals@usaid.gov](mailto:lebanonproposals@usaid.gov)

Email submissions must include the NOFO number and applicant's name in the subject line heading. In addition, for an application sent by multiple emails, the subject line must also indicate whether the email relates to the technical or cost application, and the desired sequence of the emails and their attachments (e.g. "No. 1 of 4", etc.). For example, if your cost application is being sent in two emails, the first email should have a subject line that states: "[NOFO number], [organization name], Cost Application, Part 1 of 2".

USAID's preference is that the technical application and the cost application each be submitted as consolidated email attachments, e.g. that you consolidate the various parts of a technical application into a single document before sending it. If this is not possible, please provide instructions on how to collate the attachments. USAID will not be responsible for errors in compiling electronic applications if no instructions are provided or are unclear.

After submitting an application electronically, applicants should immediately check their own email to confirm that the attachments were indeed sent. If an applicant discovers an error in transmission, please send the material again and note in the subject line of the email or indicate in the file name if submitted via grants.gov that it is a "corrected" submission. Do not send the same email more than once unless there has been a change, and if so, please note that it is a "corrected" email.

Applicants are reminded that email is NOT instantaneous, and in some cases delays of several hours occur from transmission to receipt. Therefore, applicants are requested to send the application in sufficient time ahead of the deadline. For this NOFO, the initial point of entry to the government infrastructure is the USAID mail server.

There may be a problem with the receipt of \*.zip files due to anti-virus software. Therefore, applicants are discouraged from sending files in this format as USAID/L cannot guarantee their acceptance by the internet server. File size must not exceed 9.5 MB.

## **5. Technical Application Format (15 pages)**

The purpose of this section is to provide the information necessary to allow USAID to fairly and completely evaluate the Applicant under each of the evaluation criterion specified in this NOFO. The technical application must be specific, complete and presented concisely and must not exceed 15 pages. Annexes to the Technical application must be separately included and identified, and are not included in the 15 page limit. Any additional Annexes besides those listed and required below will not be reviewed. The Technical Application Body must include the following Sections:

- 1) Technical Approach
- 2) Management Approach and Personnel Qualifications (including four Annexes: Management Plan, Staffing Plan, Draft 5-year Implementation Plan, and Key Personnel Resumes)
- 3) Past Performance (Annex: Past Performance Reference Sheets)

### **1) Technical Approach:**

This section of the technical application will use an evidence-based approach to literacy, numeracy, social and emotional skills instruction that will increase the likelihood of the mastery of basic reading and math skills leading to improved student learning outcomes, and developing the capacity of the Ministry of Education (MEHE) and the Center for Educational Research and Development (CERD) to improve student learning outcomes and achieving maximum impact in providing quality education to sustain the introduced reforms.

The applicant must articulate a clear theory of change that links proposed evidence-based interventions to specific, measurable and achievable activity

outcomes and outputs. The technical approach must describe technically sound, realistic, evidence-based, and integrated interventions to achieve outcomes and results for target beneficiaries, which are linked to the proposed indicators. The description of proposed interventions should demonstrate the Applicant's ability to adapt and to be agile in the face of unanticipated factors influencing activity performance. This ability must take into account alternative scenario planning. The applicant must describe the conflict-sensitive approaches and strategies that will be applied to the proposed interventions, demonstrating a clear understanding of the conflict dynamics in the context of Lebanon.

The application must demonstrate a strong understanding of past investments and progress made in education in Lebanon, and include strategies for promoting collaboration among different stakeholders and avoiding overlap in planned interventions.

The technical approach will describe an appropriate monitoring, evaluation, and learning (MEL) strategy that balances both the need for accountability with the desire to learn and apply adaptive management throughout the life of the activity. The MEL strategy should include a clear articulation of the specific complexity-aware monitoring strategies that will be used and the opportunities for periodic evaluative and/or learning events to be held throughout the life of the project. The MEL strategy must describe how the proposed interventions will collaborate with and capitalize on other USAID, CERD, MEHE, other donor and local organization activities, including maintaining the strong relationship that USAID has built with the Ministry of Education, the Center for Educational Research and Development and other education stakeholders. (Note: The MEL strategy (to be submitted under the technical approach) is separate from the MEL Plan, to be submitted separately within 90 days of the date of award execution.)

**2) Management Approach and Personnel Qualifications (including four Annexes: Management Plan, Staffing Plan, Draft 5-year Implementation Plan, and Key Personnel Resumes):**

The Management Approach section must clearly demonstrate the applicant's ability to effectively implement the proposed activity based on its management approach, including management plan, staffing plan, draft 5-year Implementation Plan, and key personnel to demonstrate their relevant technical expertise to achieve the activity objectives. Applicants must explain the organizational and management structure which includes all technical staff members and their roles and responsibilities. It must also present a vision and

strategy for program management that allows adaptation of program approaches based on program learning, experience, and inputs from both internal and external researchers and evaluators.

The Management Plan (Annex):

The management plan provides a realistic, flexible and feasible approach to activity implementation across outcome areas, partners, and geographic regions, and optimizes the experience, expertise and capacity of each partner. It describes the management structure that will be put in place to ensure achievement of the program outcomes and proposed results and ability to adapt as needed, including ensuring equitable gender and disability inclusion management practices.

The management plan must describe the roles, responsibilities and capacity of all partners working on the activity, including international, national, local and government partners. Applicants should address any anticipated technical assistance needs through partnerships with international or national organizations with relevant expertise. Applicants are strongly discouraged from requiring local organizations to sign exclusivity agreements.

The Staffing Plan (Annex):

The applicant must present as an annex a Staffing Plan in the format of an infographic that clearly describes the management structure or organizational chart. The lines of management, supervisory authority and technical responsibility must be specified, including a cogent description of the roles and responsibilities of key personnel and professional technical staff and advisors. The Staffing Plan must articulate how key personnel have the requisite knowledge, skills, experience and language ability to effectively achieve the results and deliverables proposed.

Draft Five-Year Implementation Plan (Annex):

The five-year implementation plan must outline the major activities that the Recipient plans on implementing over the life of the activity. It must be clear, concise and responsive to the technical, monitoring/evaluation/learning, financial, and management needs of the proposed activities. While annual work plans are required from the Recipient at a later stage once the activity is awarded, the purpose of this five-year plan is to map out, to the extent possible, the

Applicant's vision of the different activities that will be taking place over the duration of the activity. Activities in the five-year implementation plan need to be in line with the proposed technical approach. The applicant must present as an annex a table that clearly lays out the timeframe in which the different activities will be implemented. A higher level of specificity is expected in the section that covers the first year of implementation, as opposed to the subsequent years.

### Key Personnel Resumes (Annex):

The Applicant should submit a resume for each of the Key Personnel (Chief of Party and Deputy Chief of Party positions) that is limited to two pages per individual and using a standard format. The resumes of key personnel should at least include relevant work experience in similar projects in technical and academic qualifications, reference contacts and language capabilities and at least three references, with contact information, preferably email addresses. The Applicant must also provide a written and signed letter of intent from each key personnel indicating his/her: (a) availability to serve in the stated position, in terms of the number of days after award; and (b) intention to serve for a specified duration. Applicants are strongly discouraged from requiring key personnel to sign exclusivity agreements.

#### 1. Chief of Party (COP)

The Chief of Party will be responsible for the overall management of the activity and must have an advanced degree (masters or above) in international development, education, public administration or any other related field, including at least ten years of relevant experience in the types of interventions being proposed, implementing similar activities, and experience in managing complex international-donor funded development activities in challenging environments. The candidate must have demonstrated outstanding leadership, effective organizational development, partnership-building, managerial, team-building, and communications skills, with proven ability to coordinate with other key stakeholders such as CERD, MEHE and non-governmental organizations. The COP will be in charge of developing the various interventions that result in the desired outcomes and impact. In addition, the COP will lead the team and provide overall supervision on the implementation of the interventions.

#### 2. Deputy Chief of Party (DCOP)

The Deputy Chief of Party, full time, must have a minimum of seven years of relevant experience in the field of capacity development and/or institutional

strengthening, with a master's degree in education, social sciences or a related discipline. The DCOP must have experience working in the Lebanese public education sector and an understanding of the Lebanese context. The DCOP will work closely with the COP to support the COP in the management of all aspects of the project, including but not limited to managing personnel issues, overseeing the status and progress of the different activities, ensuring adequate and timely reporting requirements are met, and representing the project on behalf of the COP when required.

### **3) Past Performance:**

#### Past Performance

The Applicant, including all sub-recipients or partners of a consortium, must provide past performance information for itself and each major sub-recipient (i.e., a partner/major sub-recipient whose proposed cost exceeds 15% of the Applicant's total proposed cost) in accordance with the following guidance. In an annex, the Applicant should provide a list of its current and recent (i.e. last five years) projects that are similar in content, size, scope and complexity to this NOFO in the form of Past Performance Reference Sheets (Annex). The Past Performance Reference Sheets should use a standard format, ideally in a matrix or bullet format.

For reporting on the past performance of each program, Applicant should provide:

1. Contract or cooperative agreement/grant number (as prime or sub) or activity name
2. Procuring agency or organization
3. Funding sources and levels
4. Period of implementation/performance
5. Program objective
6. Brief description of the work performed
7. Objectives achieved
8. Challenges in implementation
9. Location of the work performed
10. References, including contact names, job titles, business address, phone and email address

Past performance references should entail awards for similar undertakings in similar countries, such as crisis settings or similar to Lebanon's operating context.

USAID may use performance information obtained from sources other than those identified by the Applicant/sub-recipient. USAID will utilize existing databases of grantee/contractor performance information and solicit additional information from the references provided in the Application to this NOFO and from other sources if and when the Agreement Officer finds the existing databases to be insufficient for evaluating an Applicant's performance.

In the event that extraordinary problems impacted any of the referenced contracts or agreements, the Applicant should provide a short description of the problems and any corrective actions taken. 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 comment will be considered with the negative performance information. USAID will initially determine the relevance of similar performance information as a predictor of probable performance under the subject requirement. USAID may give more weight to performance information that is considered more relevant and/or more current.

The Applicant lacking relevant past performance is assigned a "neutral" rating and will not be evaluated favorably or unfavorably on performance. Prior to assigning a "neutral" past performance rating, the Agreement Officer may take into account a broad range of information related to the Applicant's performance.

## **6. Business (Cost) Application Format**

The Business (Cost) Application must be submitted separately from the Technical Application.

The Business (Cost) Application must illustrate the entire period of award, using the budget format shown in the SF-424A.

The Cost Application should include budget information as well as other documentation needed to support a determination of responsibility. The Cost Application shall conform to the following:

- 1) SF 424: Complete and sign the Application for Federal Assistance. This form is available at: <https://www.grants.gov/forms/sf-424-family.html>

- 2) SF-424A Budget Information: Include a budget detailing the budget on the Standard Form 424A. This form is available at: <https://www.grants.gov/forms/sf-424-family.html>

The Cost Application must contain the following sections (which are further elaborated below this listing with the letters for each requirement).

**a) Required Certifications and Assurances:**

The applicant must complete the following documents and submit a signed copy with their application:

- (1) "Certifications, Assurances, Representations, and Other Statements of the Recipient" ADS 303mav document found at: <https://www.usaid.gov/ads/policy/300/303mav>
- (2) Assurances for Non-Construction Programs (SF-424B)
- (3) Certificate of Compliance: Please submit a copy of your Certificate of Compliance if your organization's systems have been certified by USAID/Washington's Office of Acquisition and Assistance (M/OAA).

**b) Mandatory Budget Template and Budget Narrative**

In support of the SF-424A, please include a detailed budget (**see Annex I - UPDATED**) and narrative that describes the basis for cost estimates among the major budget categories. These should be supported by detailed breakdowns of each major budget category. In the budget narrative, include adequate cost or historical unit pricing data to establish a reasonable cost and provide assurance that the recipient will realize no increment above actual cost. The Applicant's proposed budget should provide estimates of the program based upon the total estimated amount for the cooperative agreement.

Applicants should minimize their administrative and support costs for managing the project to maximize the funds available for project activities.

The budget and budget narrative must detail all direct costs associated with the implementation and completion of activities, as well as any indirect costs and program costs such as those related to any subawards as detailed below:

- 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 partner organization (or sub-Recipient) involved in the program,
- If the Applicant is a consortium, the cost application must include documents that reflect the legal relationship among the parties. The document(s) should include a full discussion of the relationship among the applicants, including the identity of the applicant that the USG will treat for purposes of administration of any cooperative agreement or grant, identity of the applicant that will have accounting responsibility, how the applicant proposes to allocate effort under any cooperative agreement or grant, and the express agreement of the principals of the Applicant organization to be held jointly and severally liable for the acts of omissions of the other.

The management structure must be clearly reflected in the budget and budget narrative. Levels of effort per month, number of months and the monthly remuneration must be clearly reflected for all personnel including key and admin/support staff.

The detailed budget must contain the following budget categories and information, at a minimum:

- 1) Salaries and Allowances – Must be proposed consistent with 2 CFR 200.430 Compensation - Personal Services. The applicant’s budget must include position title, salary rate, level of effort, and salary escalation factors for each position. Allowances, when proposed, must be broken down by specific type and by position. Applicants must explain all assumptions in the Budget Narrative. The Budget Narrative must demonstrate that the proposed compensation is reasonable for the services rendered and consistent with what is paid for similar work in other activities of the applicant. Applicants must provide their established written policies on personnel compensation. If the applicant’s written policies do not address a specific element of compensation that is being proposed, the Budget Narrative must describe the rationale used and supporting market research.
- 2) Fringe Benefits – These benefits are non-wage compensation that an organization can provide to its employees in addition to their salaries. If the Applicant has a fringe benefit rate approved by an agency of the U.S. Government, the applicant should use such rate and provide evidence of its approval. If an Applicant does not have a fringe benefit rate approved,

the application should propose a rate and explain how the Applicant determined the rate; in this case, the narrative should include a detailed breakdown comprised of all items of fringe benefits by personnel (e.g., unemployment insurance, workers compensation, health and life insurance, retirement, etc.) and the costs of each, expressed in U.S. dollars and as a percentage of salaries.

- 3) Travel and Transportation – The Applicant should indicate the number of trips, domestic and international, estimated as necessary to carry out the proposed program description, and their estimated costs. Applicants must specify the origin and destination for each proposed trip, the duration of travel, and number of individuals who would be traveling. If applicable, applicants should base per diem calculations on current, published U.S. Government per diem rates for the localities concerned.
- 4) Equipment & Supplies – Must include information on estimated types of equipment, models, supplies and the cost per unit and quantity. The Budget Narrative must include the purpose of the equipment and supplies and the basis for the estimates. The Budget Narrative must support the necessity of any rental costs and reasonableness in light of such factors as: rental costs of comparable property, if any; market conditions in the area; alternatives available; and the type, life expectancy, condition, and value of the property leased.
- 5) Other Direct Costs – Applicants should detail any other direct costs, including the costs of communications, report preparation, passport issuance, visas, medical exams and inoculations, insurance (other than insurance included in the applicant’s fringe benefits), equipment, office rent, etc.; Branding and Marking Costs in accordance with ADS 320.3.7.3.
- 6) Contractual/Subaward – Applicants should detail any costs associated with subcontracted or subgranted costs, including consultants (external, expatriate technical assistance and those associated with external, local in-country technical assistance). Please note that for all proposed major subgrants and major subcontracts (major is defined as 15% of the total prime award), they must have the same format and level of detail as those of the Applicant.
- 7) Indirect Costs – Applicants must indicate whether they are proposing indirect costs or will charge all costs directly. In order to better understand

indirect costs please see Subpart E of 2 CFR 200. The application must identify which approach they are requesting and provide the applicable supporting information. Below are the most commonly used Indirect Cost Rate methods:

Method 1 - Direct Charge Only

Eligibility: Any applicant

Initial Application Requirements: See above on direct costs

Method 2 - Negotiated Indirect Cost Rate Agreement (NICRA)

Eligibility: Any applicant with a NICRA issued by a USG Agency must use that NICRA

Initial Application Requirements: If the applicant has a current NICRA, submit your approved NICRA and the associated disclosed practices. If your NICRA was issued by an Agency other than USAID, provide the contact information for the approving Agency. Additionally, at the Agency's discretion, a provisional rate may be set forth in the award subject to audit and finalization. See [USAID's Indirect Cost Rate Guide for Non Profit Organizations](#) for further guidance.

Method 3 - De minimis rate of 10% of modified total direct costs (MTDC)

Eligibility: Any applicant that does not have a current NICRA

Initial Application Requirements: Costs must be consistently charged as either indirect or direct costs, but may not be double charged or inconsistently charged as both. If chosen, this methodology once elected must be used consistently for all Federal awards until such time as a non-Federal entity chooses to negotiate an indirect rate, which the non-Federal entity may apply to do at any time. The applicant must describe which cost elements it charges indirectly vs. directly. See 2 CFR 200 for further information.

Method 4 - Indirect Costs Charged As A Fixed Amount

Eligibility: Non U.S. non-profit organizations without a NICRA may request, but approval is at the discretion of the AO

Initial Application Requirements: Provide the proposed fixed amount and a worksheet that includes the following:

- Total costs incurred by the organization for the previous fiscal year and estimates for the current year.
- Indirect costs (common costs that benefit the day-to-day operations of the organization, including categories such as salaries and expenses of executive officers, personnel administration, and accounting, or that

benefit and are identifiable to more than one program or activity, such as depreciation, rental costs, operations and maintenance of facilities, and telephone expenses) for the previous fiscal year and estimates for the current year

- Proposed method for prorating the indirect costs equitably and consistently across all programs and activities of using a base that measures the benefits of that particular cost to each program or activity to which the cost applies.

If the applicant does not have an approved NICRA and does not elect to utilize the 10% de minimis rate, the Agreement Officer will provide further instructions and may request additional supporting information, including financial statements and audits, should the application still be under consideration after the merit review. USAID is under no obligation to approve the applicant's requested method.

- 8) Cost Sharing: If the Applicant chooses to provide cost share, the Applicant must provide details on cost-sharing contributions that will be leveraged or provided for this program, including the donors, a narrative explanation of the contributions and other information allowing us to evaluate cost efficiency of the proposed contributions, if any.

The proposed budget must provide cost estimates for the management of the program (including program monitoring). The Applicant should minimize administrative and support costs for managing the project to maximize the funds available for project activities.

Applicants should 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:

1. Has adequate financial resources or the ability to obtain such resources as required during the performance of the award.
2. Has the ability to comply with the award conditions, taking into account all existing and currently prospective commitments of the Applicant, non governmental and governmental.
3. 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.
4. Has a satisfactory record of integrity and business ethics; and,

5. Is otherwise qualified and eligible to receive a fixed amount award under applicable laws and regulations (e.g., EEO).

The Applicant is 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 Applicant/Recipient to ensure compliance with these Executive Orders and laws. This provision must be included in all subawards (contracts and grants) issued under this Agreement that results from this NOFO.

Applicants that have never received a cooperative agreement, grant or contract from the U.S. Government are required to submit a copy of their accounting manual. If a copy has already been submitted to the U.S. Government, the Applicant must advise which Federal Office has a copy and provide a point of contact with contact information (e.g., phone number). Alternatively, applicants may file a self-certification of compliance with USAID standards.

**c) Prior Approvals in accordance with 2 CFR 200.407**

Inclusion of an item of cost in the detailed application budget does not satisfy any requirements for prior approval by the Agency. If the applicant would like the award to reflect approval of any cost elements for which prior written approval is specifically required for allowability, the applicant must specify and justify that cost. See 2 CFR 200.407 for information regarding which cost elements require prior written approval.

**d) Approval of Subawards**

The applicant must submit information for all subawards that it wishes to have approved at the time of award. For each proposed subaward the applicant must provide the following:

- Name of organization
- Unique Entity Identifier (UEI)
- Confirmation that the subrecipient does not appear on the Treasury Department's Office of Foreign Assets Control (OFAC) list
- Confirmation that the subrecipient does not have active exclusions in the System for Award Management (SAM)
- Confirmation that the subrecipient is not listed in the United Nations Security designation list

- Confirmation that the subrecipient is not suspended or debarred
- Confirmation that the applicant has completed a risk assessment of the subrecipient, in accordance with 2 CFR 200.332(b)
- Any negative findings as a result of the risk assessment and the applicant's plan for mitigation.

#### **e) Unique Entity Identifier (UEI) and SAM Registration**

Applicants must obtain a Unique Entity Identifier (UEI) and register in the System for Award Management (SAM) (<https://sam.gov/>) in order to be eligible to receive federal assistance, such as grants and cooperative agreements. Unless an exemption applies (see ADS 303maz), applicants must be registered in SAM prior to submitting an application for award for USAID's consideration. Recipients must maintain an active SAM registration while they have an active award. Each applicant (unless the applicant is an individual or entity that is exempted from UEI/SAM requirements under 2 CFR 25.110) is required to:

1. Provide a valid UEI for the applicant and all proposed sub-recipients;
2. Be registered in SAM before submitting its application.
3. Continue to maintain an active SAM registration with current information at all times during which it has an active Federal award or an application or plan under consideration by a Federal awarding agency.

The registration process may take many weeks to complete. Therefore, applicants are encouraged to begin the process early. If an applicant has not fully complied with the requirements above by the time USAID is ready to make an award, USAID may determine that the applicant is not qualified to receive an award and use that determination as a basis for making an award to another applicant.

Applicants can find additional resources for registering in SAM, including a Quick Start Guide and a video, on <https://sam.gov/>.

#### **f) Branding Strategy & Marking Plan**

The apparently successful applicant will be asked to provide a Branding Strategy and Marking Plan to be evaluated and approved by the Agreement Officer and incorporated into any resulting award. **The applicant must use the template included as Annex IV for Marking and Branding Template.**

**g) Funding Restrictions**

Profit is not allowable for recipients or subrecipients under this award. See 2 CFR 200.331 for assistance in determining whether a sub-tier entity is a subrecipient or contractor.

Construction will not be authorized under this award.

USAID will not allow the reimbursement of pre-award costs under this award without the explicit written approval of the Agreement Officer.

Except as may be specifically approved in advance by the AO, all commodities and services that will be reimbursed by USAID under this award must be from the authorized geographic code specified in Section B.4 of this NOFO and must meet the source and nationality requirements set forth in 22 CFR 228.

**[END OF SECTION D]**

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## **SECTION E: APPLICATION REVIEW INFORMATION**

### **1. Criteria**

The merit review criteria found in this section are the criteria by which all applications will be individually reviewed. For the purpose of this NOFO, technical considerations are more important than cost and other criteria.

The application must contain the Applicant's best terms from both technical and cost standpoints. USAID reserves the right, but is not under obligation, to enter into discussions with one or more Applicants to obtain clarifications, additional details, or to suggest refinements in the proposed program description, budget, or other aspects of an application, if doing so is determined to be in the best interests of the U.S. Government.

The technical application will be evaluated by a Selection Committee comprised of USAID personnel and host government representative(s) who will serve as observers. The cost/business application will be evaluated by the Agreement Officer/Agreement Specialist on a cost effectiveness and realism analysis. The Agreement Officer will make the final selection.

### **2. Review and Selection Process**

#### **Technical Criteria**

The Government will evaluate the technical applications using the following technical criteria:

- Technical Approach
- Management Approach and Personnel Qualifications (including Management Plan, Staffing Plan, Draft 5-year Implementation Plan, and Key Personnel Resumes)
- Past Performance

These criteria serve to identify the major programmatic priorities which USAID expects to be addressed in the technical application.

The technical criteria are set forth below in descending order of importance. The "Technical Approach" is the most important of the technical evaluation criteria and is significantly more important than the "Management Approach and

Personal Qualifications”. The “Management Approach and Personal Qualifications” is more important than the “Past Performance”. All subcriteria are equal in weight unless indicated below. When the technical evaluation factors are combined, they are more important than cost. The technical evaluation criteria described below in more detail serve as the standard against which all technical applications will be evaluated, and serve to identify the significant matters that Applicants must address in order to be considered for an award.

**a) Technical Approach:**

The technical approach will be evaluated on the overall merit and feasibility of the activity approach and strategies proposed to achieve the goal, outcomes and results.

The Applicant’s technical approach will be evaluated based on:

The degree to which the proposed program demonstrates the ability to achieve maximum impact in increasing access to education, as well as the program’s balance across the proposed outcome areas.

The degree to which the technical approach articulates a clear theory of change and applies a technically sound, realistic, evidence-based and integrated set of interventions to achieve outcomes and results for target beneficiaries, including appropriate strategies to ensure adaptability and conflict-sensitivity throughout the life of the activity and to manage adaptively; and the degree to which the technical approach advances equity, empowerment, inclusion, and accessibility of People with Disabilities (PWDs) including teachers, students, principals and administrators.

The degree to which the proposed technical approach applies a community-led, collaborative approach that expands and/or leverages local actors and the Ministry of Education, the Center for Educational Research and Development, USAID and other partner investments to achieve the activity outcomes, as well as building on USAID investments in education and other sectors.

The degree to which complexity-aware monitoring methods are applied to monitoring, evaluation, and learning, and are appropriate for the proposed interventions and implementation strategies.

## **b) Management Approach and Personal Qualifications:**

The Applicant's management approach will be evaluated based on:

Management Plan: The degree to which the Management Plan provides a realistic, flexible, adaptable, and feasible approach to activity implementation across outcome areas, partners, and geographic regions, and optimizes the experience, expertise and capacity of each partner.

Staffing Plan: The staffing plan will be evaluated for the extent it is clear and responsive to the technical, monitoring/evaluation/learning, financial, and management needs of the proposed activities and demonstrates optimal use of resources, and the relevance and strength of qualifications and experience for proposed key personnel, including technical expertise, adaptive management skills, education levels, and the number of years of experience.

Key Personnel: Proposed key personnel who meet or exceed the qualifications outlined in Section D, possess the appropriate technical and management skills, and/or complement each other to successfully implement the activity and achieve the objectives outlined in the Program Description.

## **c) Past Performance:**

The evaluation under this criterion will focus on the extent to which the application demonstrates successful past performance implementing previous education awards of similar scale and complexity.

Past Performance: The degree to which the application demonstrates a strong record in managing complex education sector activities that required substantial and sustained collaboration with a large number of collaborators including other USAID implementing partners, host country government officials and agencies, and non-public education sector actors. The extent to which the Applicant demonstrates the ability to apply gender-transformative, positive youth development and inclusive development approaches.

USAID will verify or corroborate the following from past performance references:

- i. The relevancy of the technical scope and location of the work performed under the program (crisis settings or context similar to Lebanon);

- ii. The extent of successful performance by the applicant in achieving the program's objectives;
- iii. Instances of good performance;
- iv. Instances of poor performance;
- v. Significant achievements;
- vi. Significant problems, and
- vii. Any indications of excellent or exceptional performance in the most critical areas.

## **Cost Criteria**

USAID will evaluate the cost application of the Applicant(s) under consideration for an award as a result of the merit criteria review to determine whether the costs are allowable, allocable and reasonable in accordance with the cost principles found in 2 CFR 200 Subpart E.

### **1. Cost Effectiveness and Cost Realism**

The proposed cost will be evaluated on the basis of reasonableness and for realism. Cost realism will be based on the following considerations:

- a) Are proposed costs realistic for the activities to be performed under this award?
- b) Do the costs reflect a clear understanding of the program requirements?
- c) Are the costs consistent with the various elements of the Applicant's technical application?

### **2. Cost Share**

Cost share is not required, but it is encouraged. If an Applicant submits an application with a cost share, it will be reviewed for realism and to verify that the Applicant meets the standards set in 2 CFR 200.306, 2 CFR 700.10, and the Standard Provision entitled "Cost Sharing (Marching)" for U.S. entities, or the Standard Provision entitled "Cost Share" for non-U.S. entities.

**[END OF SECTION E]**

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## **SECTION F: FEDERAL AWARD ADMINISTRATION INFORMATION**

### **1. Federal Award Notices**

Award of the agreement contemplated by this NOFO cannot be made until funds have been appropriated, allocated and committed through internal USAID procedures. While USAID anticipates that these procedures will be successfully completed, potential applicants are hereby notified of these requirements and conditions for the award.

### **2. Administrative & National Policy Requirements**

The resulting award from this NOFO will be administered in accordance with the following policies and regulations.

For U.S. organizations, 2 CFR 700, 2 CFR 200, and ADS 303maa, Standard Provisions for U.S. Non-governmental Organizations are applicable.

For non-U.S. organizations, ADS 303mab, Standard Provisions for Non-U.S. Non-governmental Organizations will apply. Full copies of the 2 CFR 200 and 2 CFR 700 are incorporated hereby by reference. Please refer to ADS 303.4 and 303.5 for guidance. However, the applicable standard provisions will be attached to the final award document.

### **3. REPORTING AND EVALUATION**

#### **a) Financial Reporting:**

- (1) The Recipient must submit the Federal Financial Form (SF-425) on a quarterly basis within 30 calendar days after the end of each USG fiscal quarter (i.e. October 30, January 30, April 30, July 30) to the Agreement Officer (AO) and Agreement Officer's Representative (AOR).

The Recipient must submit all final financial reports no later than 90 calendar days after the end of agreement to the Agreement Officer, and the AOR.

Electronic copies of the SF-425 can be found at <https://www.usaid.gov/forms/sf-425>.

The report must be supported with a detailed budget breakdown reflecting USAID expenditures and cost share per line item for the quarter and the projected costs for the next reporting period.

(2) **Accruals Reporting:**

Accruals are the value of the liability recognized during the period for goods and/or services received but not disbursed, or goods and/or services invoiced but not recorded.

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 20 days before the end of a quarter per year. The Recipient must submit a spreadsheet showing cumulative disbursements and estimated (un-disbursed) accruals to the AOR.

**b) Performance Reporting**

**I. Quarterly Progress Reports:**

Quarterly reports shall be submitted within 30 days after the end of each USG fiscal quarter. The scope and format of the quarterly reports will include the following:

- An analytical description of overall program progress toward results that reflects and synthesizes achievements. This is a broad analysis that examines the progress in the context of program objectives and expected results.
- A summary of all the activities conducted. This section includes a description of progress toward results and links to press articles that mention the project.
- A spreadsheet as an attachment that includes all the indicators established in the monitoring and evaluation plan for this award. Data must be disaggregated by gender and other disenfranchised populations, where relevant. See monitoring and evaluation plan for further guidance on reporting on indicators.
- All technical materials and deliverables achieved under this award. Examples include lesson plans, supplementary readers, assessment instruments, observation tools, training guides, workshop reports, educational kits, research results, studies, pedagogical materials and technical content developed to support the activity's outcomes. The

Recipient must submit all technical materials and deliverables to the USAID Development Experience Clearinghouse (<https://dec.usaid.gov/>) and provide links to the AOR.

- Challenges encountered, reasons why established goals were not met, when applicable, and how challenges or problems will be overcome during the next reporting period.
- Priorities for programming during the next reporting period including a quarterly list of public events to be organized by the project during the coming three months, including approximate date, location, and audience. The project will coordinate with USAID about all planned events with press participation, press activities, press releases, as well as inclusion of USAID promotional materials for the participants, participation of USAID/USG representatives.
- Reports must also contain, as an attachment, a summary list of sub-grants issued during the quarter.
- Human interest stories that reflect successes and will elevate the awareness of the program as a visible USG-supported effort. These stories must be shared on a quarterly basis.
- In the final quarter of the reporting year of the award, the Recipient shall submit the soft copy of the Annual nonexpendable property report to the AO and AOR in USAID/Lebanon. This report shall include all Nonexpendable property such as office equipment for the Recipient's office and any other type of equipment provided as part of this activity's interventions during the reporting period.

In addition to the above, the Recipient must include in the Quarterly Progress Reports a narrative progress section that reflects recent achievements and overall project accomplishments under each component. This section must summarize the previous two quarters. The report should be brief and discuss achievements under each of the activity's components. A format for this report will be provided by USAID. This section of the Quarterly Progress Report will cover two quarters and should be submitted by the end of October (covering Q3 & Q4) and end of April (covering Q1 & Q2) from every fiscal year. The first report is due by the end of October of the implementation year.

These progress reports will reflect progress in relation to agreed-upon benchmarks contained in the award and approved annual work-plan. The report will specify any problems encountered and indicate resolutions or proposed corrective actions. It will be a comprehensive narrative report

summarizing two quarters' activities and accomplishments using the annual work plan as a starting point and will serve as the tool by which USAID/Lebanon monitors the performance of the Recipient. The section will reflect on recent achievements and overall project accomplishments under each component.

## **II. Final Report**

Ninety (90) days after the award completion date, the Recipient will submit final technical and financial reports to the AOR 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. However, success stories must be duly documented and reported. The final report must include all the activity's technical deliverables as annexes.

## **III. Branding Strategy and Marking Plan:**

The apparently successful applicant will be asked to provide a Branding Strategy and Marking Plan to be approved by the Agreement Officer and incorporated into any resulting award. The applicant must use the template included as Annex IV for Marking and Branding Template.

## **IV. Communication and Outreach Plan:**

The draft Communication and Outreach Plan must be submitted within 30 days of the date of award execution. The AOR will provide comments/edits to the Recipient within 20 days of receipt of the draft Plan. The purpose of the communication and outreach plan is to highlight the recipients plan on outreach, events, communication with USAID, other projects, other donors and external stakeholders. The final Communication and Outreach Plan is due within 45 days of the date of award execution and is to be approved by the Agreement Officer and incorporated into the award.

**V. Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning (MEL) Plan**

The draft MEL plan must be submitted within 90 days of the date of award execution and must include a description of the management of the MEL, such as monitoring strategies and potential sources of information for the indicators and suggested indicators. The AOR will provide comments/edits to the Recipient within 20 days of receipt of the draft MEL Plan. The final MEL Plan is due 120 days of the date of award execution. The MELP will ensure intended results and impact are being generated and inform activity course corrections if and when necessary. The applicant must include in their proposed approach ideas for conducting periodic performance monitoring and evaluation. This must include proposed qualitative and quantitative indicators, including but not limited to intermediate results, outputs, and baselines indicators.

**VI. Data Quality Analysis (DQA)**

The DQA is due after the first reporting period that follows the approval of the MEL Plan. Data Verification in response to the DQA is due following one reporting period after the completion of the DQA.

**VII. Demobilization Plan**

No less than three months prior to the completion date of the award, the Recipient shall submit a demobilization plan.

The Plan will include, at a minimum, an illustrative Property Disposition Plan addressing all requirements under contractual and local law a for the transfer of property; a plan for the phase out of in-country operations; a delivery schedule for all reports or other deliverables required under the awards; and a timeline for completing all required actions in the Demobilization Plan, including submission date of the final Property Disposition Plan to the Agreement Officer. In addition, the Recipient will describe how all required prime and sub-award audits will be conducted after the demobilization of the Recipient. The Demobilization Plan shall be approved in writing by the AOR.

## **VIII. Annual Work Plan**

The Recipient will be required to submit a draft detailed work plan for all activities under each component with associated budget estimates to AOR for review. The initial draft Work Plan submitted with the application must be finalized no later than 60 days after the effective date of the award. The AOR will provide written comments on the draft Work Plan within two weeks of submission. When the work plan is finalized, the AOR will provide written approval.

Annual Work Plans for subsequent years are due to the AOR no later than 30 days prior to the end of the USG's fiscal year or approximately August 30th. Work plans may be submitted electronically. Any substantial revisions to the approved Work Plan must be approved in writing by the AOR. The AOR will provide written comments on the draft plan within two weeks of submission. Upon receipt of the comments, the Recipient will have one week to revise the plan. The AOR will provide written approval of the finalized plan.

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

## **IX. Other Reporting**

The Recipient may be required to submit other reports or oral briefings as directed by the AOR or other USAID officials.

### **Partner Vetting Information:**

#### **1. Partner Vetting Pre-Award Requirements**

- (a) USAID has determined that any award resulting from this assistance solicitation is subject to vetting. An applicant that has not passed vetting is ineligible for award.
- (b) The following are the vetting procedures for this solicitation:
  - (1) Prospective applicants review the attached USAID Partner Information Form, USAID Form 500-13, and submit any questions about the USAID Partner

Information Form or these procedures to the agreement officer by the deadline in the solicitation.

(2) The agreement officer notifies the applicant when to submit the USAID Partner Information Form. For this solicitation, USAID will vet prior to award but not with the submission of the initial application. USAID will request the apparently successful applicant to submit the USAID Partner Information Form to the Vetting Unit prior to award. Within the timeframe set by the agreement officer in the notification, the applicant must complete and submit the USAID Partner Information Form to the vetting official. The designated vetting official is:

Vetting official: Lebanon VSU Email: [lebanonaidvsu@usaid.gov](mailto:lebanonaidvsu@usaid.gov).

(3) The applicants must notify proposed subrecipients and contractors of this requirement when the subrecipients or contractors are subject to vetting.

Note: Applicants who submit using non-secure methods of transmission do so at their own risk.

(c) Selection proceeds separately from vetting. Vetting is conducted independently from any discussions the agreement officer may have with an applicant. The applicant and any proposed subrecipient or contractor subject to vetting must not provide vetting information to anyone other than the vetting official. The applicant and any proposed subrecipient or contractor subject to vetting will communicate only with the vetting official regarding their vetting submission(s) and not with any other USAID or USG personnel, including the agreement officer or the agreement officer's representatives. The agreement officer designates the vetting official as the only individual authorized to clarify the applicant's and proposed subrecipient's and contractor's vetting information.

(d) (1) The vetting official notifies the applicant that it: (i) is eligible based on the vetting results, (ii) is ineligible based on the vetting results, or (iii) must provide additional information, and resubmit the USAID Partner Information Form with the additional information within the number of days the vetting official specified in the notification.

(2) The vetting official will coordinate with the agency that provided the data being used for vetting prior to notifying the applicant or releasing any information. In any determination for release of information, the classification

and sensitivity of the information, the need to protect sources and methods, and the status of ongoing law enforcement and intelligence community investigations or operations will be taken into consideration.

(e) Reconsideration: (1) Within 7 calendar days after the date of the vetting official's notification, an applicant that vetting has determined to be ineligible may request in writing to the vetting official that the Agency reconsider the vetting determination. The request should include any written explanation, legal documentation and any other relevant written material for reconsideration.

(2) Within 7 calendar days after the vetting official receives the request for reconsideration, the Agency will determine whether the applicant's additional information merits a revised decision.

(3) The Agency's determination of whether reconsideration is warranted is final.

(f) Revisions to vetting information: (1) Applicants who change key individuals, whether the applicant has previously been determined eligible or not, must submit a revised USAID Partner Information Form to the vetting official. This includes changes to key personnel resulting from revisions to the technical portion of the application.

(2) The vetting official will follow the vetting process of this provision for any revision of the applicant's Form.

(g) Award. At the time of award, the agreement officer will confirm with the vetting official that the apparently successful applicant is eligible after vetting. The agreement officer may award only to an apparently successful applicant that is eligible after vetting.

## **2. Partner Vetting, Award Requirements**

(a) The Recipient must comply with the vetting requirements for key individuals under this award.

(b) Definitions: As used in this provision, "key individual," "key personnel," and "vetting official" have the meaning contained in 22 CFR 701.1.

(c) The Recipient must submit within 15 days a USAID Partner Information Form, USAID Form 500-13, to the vetting official identified below when the Recipient replaces key individuals with individuals who have not been previously

vetted for this award. Note: USAID will not approve any key personnel who are not eligible for approval after vetting. The designated vetting official is:

Vetting official: Lebanon VSU

Email: [lebanonaidvsu@usaid.gov](mailto:lebanonaidvsu@usaid.gov)

(d) (1) The vetting official will notify the Recipient that it -

- (i) Is eligible based on the vetting results,
- (ii) Is ineligible based on the vetting results, or
- (iii) Must provide additional information and resubmit the USAID Partner Information Form with the additional information within the number of days the vetting official specifies.

(2) The vetting official will include information that USAID determines releasable. USAID will determine what information may be released consistent with applicable law and Executive Orders, and with the concurrence of relevant agencies.

(e) The inability to be deemed eligible as described in this award term may be determined to be a material failure to comply with the terms and conditions of the award and may subject the Recipient to suspension or termination as specified in the subpart "Remedies for Noncompliance" at 2 CFR part 200.

(f) Reconsideration:

(1) Within 7 calendar days after the date of the vetting official's notification, the Recipient or prospective subrecipient or contractor that has not passed vetting may request in writing to the vetting official that the Agency reconsider the vetting determination. The request should include any written explanation, legal documentation and any other relevant written material for reconsideration.

(2) Within 7 calendar days after the vetting official receives the request for reconsideration, the Agency will determine whether the recipient's additional information merits a revised decision.

(3) The Agency's determination of whether reconsideration is warranted is final.

(g) A notification that the Recipient has passed vetting does not constitute any other approval under this award.

(h) When the prime recipient anticipates that it will require prior approval for a subaward in accordance with 2 CFR 200.308(c)(6) the subaward is subject to vetting. The prospective subrecipient must submit a USAID Partner Information Form, USAID Form 500-13, to the vetting official identified in paragraph (c) of this provision. The agreement officer must not approve a subaward to any organization that has not passed vetting when required.

(i) The Recipient agrees to incorporate the substance of paragraphs (a) through (i) of this award term in all first tier subawards under this award.

### **3. SUB-AWARDEES VETTING**

Prior to the provision of funding by the Recipient to its sub-awardees, the Recipient shall conduct all screening procedures and due diligence on sub-awardees and key individuals of the sub-awardees, including a check of sub-awardees and such key individuals not screened at the time of award by the Agreement Officer to ensure compliance with Executive Order 13224 and U.S. law prohibiting transactions with, and the provision of resources and support to individuals and organizations associated with terrorism. The Recipient will screen names of its sub-awardees and the key individuals of such sub-awardees against the Specially Designated Nationals List (“SDN” list) administered by the Department of the Treasury’s Office of Foreign Assets Control (“OFAC”) <http://www.ustreas.gov/offices/enforcement/ofac/sdn/>; UN’s 1267 Committee List on Al-Qaida and the Taliban and Associated Individuals and Entities: [https://www.un.org/sc/suborg/en/sanctions/1267/aq\\_sanctions\\_list](https://www.un.org/sc/suborg/en/sanctions/1267/aq_sanctions_list); and that the applicant has active exclusions in the System for Award Management (SAM) on this web-site: <https://www.sam.gov/portal/public/SAM/>.

“Key individual” means (i) principal officers of the organization’s governing body (e.g., chairman, vice chairman, treasurer and secretary of the board of directors or board of trustees);

(ii) the principal officer and deputy principal officer of the organization (e.g., executive director, deputy director, president, vice president); (iii) the program manager or chief of party for the USG-financed program; and (iv) any other person with significant responsibilities for administration of the USG-financed activities or resources.”

#### **4. ADDITIONAL VETTING GUIDANCE**

In addition to the vetting requirements found in 2 and 3, the Recipient is responsible for complying with the USAID/Lebanon Vetting Mission Order (see Annex III). Any costs incurred by the Recipient that are not in compliance with the USAID/Lebanon Mission Order are unallowable.

#### **X. Geographic Information Systems Data Collection and Reporting**

The Recipient should apply geospatial methods using Geographic Information Systems (GIS) technology to support USAID's effort to incorporate geographic data and analysis into USAID's overall development planning, design, and monitoring, evaluation, and learning. The Recipient should include geographic data collection and submission methods in the MEL Plan and Implementation Plans as a separate section. The USAID/Lebanon Mission expects to see the three types of GIS data:

- A. **Activity and Intervention Location Data:** Activity and Intervention Location Data will be submitted according to the AOR's requirements. Activity and Intervention Location Data refers to data that records a discrete point location for activity and intervention sites. Activity and Intervention Location Data is essential in establishing an effective method for managing, analyzing, and communicating Activity and Intervention information.
- B. **Outcome Data:** Any datasets on activity outcomes should include discrete point locations at the collection point. Activity outcomes will include person-level outcomes such as assessment of knowledge, attitudes and practices.
- C. **Activity Specific Geographic Data:** This refers to data such as the analytical output of a geographic analysis that is conducted while implementing an Activity and is useful to USAID's development planning and project design purposes. When the Recipient creates or acquires these datasets using USAID funds, it will submit them to the AOR.

To the extent possible, Activity and Intervention Location Data should be collected under this activity. The Recipient must submit all geographic data collected to the AOR. This information must be submitted as part of the quarterly reports.

**[END OF SECTION F]**

## **SECTION G: FEDERAL AWARDING AGENCY CONTACT(S)**

### **1. NOFO Points of Contact**

Please refer to Section D.

### **2. Acquisition and Assistance Ombudsman**

The A&A Ombudsman helps ensure equitable treatment of all parties who participate in USAID's acquisition and assistance process. The A&A Ombudsman serves as a resource for all organizations who are doing or wish to do business with USAID. Please visit this page for additional information: <https://www.usaid.gov/work-usaid/acquisition-assistance-ombudsman>

The A&A Ombudsman may be contacted via: [Ombudsman@usaid.gov](mailto:Ombudsman@usaid.gov)

**[END OF SECTION G]**

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## **SECTION H: OTHER INFORMATION**

USAID reserves the right to fund any or none of the applications submitted. The Agreement Officer is the only individual who may legally commit the Government to the expenditure of public funds. Any award and subsequent incremental funding will be subject to the availability of funds and continued relevance to Agency programming.

### **H.1 Applications with Proprietary Data**

Applicants who include data that they do not want disclosed to the public for any purpose or used by the U.S. Government except for evaluation purpose, should mark the cover page with the following:

“This application includes data that must not be disclosed, duplicated or used – in whole or in part – for any purpose other than to evaluate this application. If, however, an award is made as a result of – or in connection with – the submission of this data, the U.S. Government will have the right to duplicate, use, or disclose the data to the extent provided in the resulting award. 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 sheets {insert sheet numbers}.”

Additionally, the applicant must mark each sheet of data it wishes to restrict with the following:

“Use or disclosure of data contained on this sheet is subject to the restriction on the title page of this application.”

**[END OF SECTION H]**

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## **STANDARD PROVISIONS**

Note: the full text of these provisions may be found at:

<https://www.usaid.gov/ads/policy/300/303maa>,  
<https://www.usaid.gov/ads/policy/300/303mab>, and  
<https://www.usaid.gov/ads/policy/300/303mat>).

The actual Standard Provisions included in the award will be dependent on the organization that is selected (or the type of award, in the case of a fixed amount award). The award will include the latest Mandatory Provisions for either U.S. or non-U.S. Nongovernmental organizations, as appropriate. The award will also contain the applicable “required as applicable” Standard Provisions.