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Issue Date: July 21, 2023
Deadline for Question: August 10, 2023
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Closing Time: 2:00 P.M. (Local Dominican Time)

Subject: Notice of Funding Opportunity (NOFO) Number:
72051723RFA00004

Program Title: Basic Education Recovery Activity

Ladies/Gentlemen:

The United States Agency for International Development (USAID) is seeking an application for a Cooperative Agreement from qualified entities to implement the Basic Education Recovery Activity.

USAID intends to make an award to the applicant if it meets the objectives of this funding opportunity based on the merit review criteria described in this NOFO subject to a risk assessment. The eligible party interested in submitting an application is 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, 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 or accessing the NOFO, please contact the Grants.gov Helpdesk at 1-800-518-4726 or via email at support@grants.gov for technical assistance.

USAID may not award to the applicant unless the applicant has complied with all applicable Unique Entity Identifier (UEI) and System for Award Management (SAM) requirements detailed in Section D.6.g. The registration process may take many weeks to complete. Therefore, the applicants are encouraged to begin registration early in the process.

Please send any questions to the point(s) of contact identified in Section G. The deadline for questions 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.

Issuance of this notice of funding opportunity 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,

Chadwick Mills
Regional Agreement Officer (AO)
Regional Office of Acquisition & Assistance (ROAA)

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SECTION A: PROGRAM DESCRIPTION
BASIC EDUCATION RECOVERY ACTIVITY

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 Section F.

LIST OF ACRONYMS

ADS	Automated Directives System
AOR	Agreement Officer Representative
CASEL	Collaborative for Academic, Social, and Emotional Learning
CDCS	Country Development and Cooperation Strategy
CLA	Collaboration, Learning and Adaptability
DR	Dominican Republic
EASEL	Harvard's Ecological Approaches to Social Emotional Learning Laboratory
EDUCA	Business Action for Education
EMMP	Environmental Mitigation and Monitoring Plan
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
GIDA	Gender and Inclusive Development Analysis
GISS	Gender Inclusion Safe Schools
GODR	Government of Dominican Republic
IDEC	Dominican Initiative for Quality Education
IDEICE	Dominican Institute for Educational Quality Evaluation and Research
ISP	Institutional Strategic Plan
IR	Intermediate Result
LAC	Latin America and the Caribbean
MEL	Monitoring, Evaluation, and Learning
MEO	Mission Environmental Officer
MINERD	Ministry of Education
NPI	New Partnership Initiative
PD	Program Description
PSE	Private Sector Engagement
RCE	Request for Categorical Exclusion
RERA	Rapid Education Risk Analysis
SAFE	Sequenced, Active, Focused, and Explicit
SEL	Social and Emotional Learning
SES	Socioeconomic Status
SIGERD	Information System for School Management
TLM	Teaching and learning material
UDL	Universal Design for Learning
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund
USAID	United States Agency for International Development
USG	United States Government

1. Introduction

The Dominican Republic's (DR) education system experiences diverse challenges that hinder the quality of education and students' learning outcomes. The MINERD's 2021-2024 Institutional Strategic Plan (ISP) outlines several of these key challenges and their proposed solutions to ensure access to a quality education for all children. Among the key objectives outlined in the Strategic Plan are: 1) Improving teacher capacity and performance; 2) Increasing equity and inclusion across the system; 3) Improving the quality of education in the primary grades; and 4) Reducing the number of children who repeat or are over age in third and fourth grade.

The five-year Basic Education Recovery Activity will be a cooperative agreement with a Total Estimated Amount (TEA) of \$24,000,000. Basic Education Recovery Activity will help MINERD achieve the goals outlined in the ISP to improve the quality of education in the early grades of primary school, with special attention given to diminishing the long-standing gaps in students' learning outcomes that were further exacerbated by COVID-19 school closures. Applicants must present a clear strategy and actionable plans for ensuring that interventions of the activity are incorporated into MINERD's education programs.

The Basic Education Recovery Activity will coordinate with MINERD to achieve four key objectives: 1) Improve literacy instruction in pre-first and the early primary grades; 2) Provide remedial reading interventions for students in first through third grade who are most at risk for academic failure; 3) Implement social and emotional learning (SEL) interventions for all students in grades pre-first through third grade; and 4) strengthen system-level inputs/processes to ensure improved reading and SEL outcomes for all children. Applicants are encouraged to identify private sector and other innovative solutions to accomplish the desired objectives and results of the activity.

Within any foundational learning program, students progress and acquire key skills at differing speeds and need different levels of support to become proficient in foundational skills. Remedial programs can help the learners who are struggling the most to meet grade-level expectations by providing instruction tailored to their learning needs.¹ Global evidence suggests that remedial education models can improve foundational skill development in low- and middle-income countries when continuous assessment is used to determine skill gaps and match learners with skill-based, targeted and direct remedial reading instruction.

This Activity will address the academic and socioemotional needs of learners at schools in target geographic areas, which will be determined in consultation with MINERD. This Activity will focus on supporting impoverished populations that are lacking access to quality, inclusive education, with the goal of reducing repetition rates in the third grade. **Basic Education Recovery Activity will support MINERD to leverage lessons learned so that remedial reading instruction and SEL best practices can be institutionalized and rolled out to non-USAID supported schools across more regions of the country.**

¹ Norman, J. R., Ralaingita, W. D., Long, B., & Davidson, M. (2020). *Remediation in foundational literacy and numeracy: A how-to guide*. <https://scienceofteaching.site/remediation-strategies-and-approaches/#introduction>

The Basic Education Recovery Activity contributes to USAID/DR Country Development Cooperation Strategy (CDCS) Sub-Intermediate Result (IR) 2.1.3, which aims to improve public education services and school safety. It also aligns to the United States Government (USG) Strategy on International Basic Education² and the emphasis of the USAID Education Policy³ on the importance of foundational reading and social and emotional skills to ensure the long-term success of children and youth. Materials and methodologies MINERD has already endorsed, including those supported by the USAID Read Activity, the Spaces to grow (Espacios para Crecer) from the At Risk Youth Initiative, the Latin American and Caribbean (LAC) Reads Capacity Program, and other previous USAID interventions, should be considered where appropriate to maximize resources, expand reach, and reinforce the sustainability of tested interventions MINERD has already adopted.

2. Country Context

Despite positive policy and budgetary actions promoting quality education improvements, the Government of the Dominican Republic (GODR) has struggled to realize the desired rate of learning achievement. According to MINERD's Third Grade National Diagnostic Assessment in 2017:⁴

- Only 10 percent of public school students achieved satisfactory ratings in reading skills, in comparison with 23 percent of students in private sector schools;
- Only seven percent of students in the lowest Socio Economic Status (SES) quintile achieved satisfactory performance in reading, compared with 23 percent of students from the highest SES quintile; and
- Failure to acquire minimum proficiency in foundational skills is more dire for students with disabilities. Nearly half of this group between ages 6-11 were unable to read or access education to meet their needs.⁵

As a result of inadequate learning conditions and poor learning achievement, grade repetition and an over age population are common in the primary grades. A UNICEF report notes that 8.9 percent and 13.5 percent of third graders in urban and rural areas, respectively, did not academically qualify to advance to the fourth grade. Furthermore, 18.6 percent of primary school students are over age for their grade level.⁶ In 2019, only 53.6 percent of 11-year-olds were completing primary school on time.⁷ Rural and male students are more likely to be either over age or not complete their formal schooling, and at least 21 percent of children with disabilities

² USG International Basic Education Strategy, 2018, <https://www.usaid.gov/education/usg-strategy>

³ USAID Education Policy, 2018, <https://www.usaid.gov/education/policy>

⁴<https://www.ministeriodeeducacion.gob.do/docs/direccion-de-evaluacion-de-la-calidad/vfus-informe-nacional-de-la-evaluacion-diagnostica-de-tercer-grado-pdf.pdf>

⁵ UNICEF, 2017, Niños y Niñas Fuera de la Escuela en la República Dominicana,

<https://www.unicef.org/dominicanrepublic/media/246/file/Ni%C3%B1os%20Fuera%20de%20la%20Escuela%20en%20Rep%C3%BAblica%20Dominicana.pdf>

⁶ Ibid

⁷ As per MINERD Planificación Estratégica, 2021,

www.ministeriodeeducacion.gob.do/transparencia/media/plan-estrategico-institucional-pei/planificacion-estrategica-institucional/toJ-rf-plan-estrategico-2021-2024-peipdf.pdf

between ages 6-11 are out of school.⁸

A lack of teacher capacity, continuous professional development and sufficient monitoring systems have also crippled the education sector. For example, the majority of teaching candidates who took MINERD's certification test, known as the *concurso*, failed it in 2019, with less than 24 percent of the 49,566 teaching candidates succeeding.⁹ A lack of qualified teachers has led, in part, to the system having 19,000 teaching vacancies for the 2021-2022 school year.¹⁰

Violence within schools, local communities, and at home are widely recognized as another significant impediment to student learning, teacher instruction, and the overall wellbeing of both students and teachers in the classroom. A UNICEF report stated that 43.7 percent of teachers knew of cases of intimidation in their schools, and 30 percent were aware of cases of sexually and racially motivated harassment in their schools. Likewise, in the Rapid Education Risk Analysis (RERA)¹¹ USAID conducted in 2019, the principal concern of respondents in the sample were different forms of violence, mainly domestic violence and the separation of families. In schools, violence included bullying, intimidation, verbal abuse, physical confrontations, and fights. Bullying is alleged to be under-acknowledged by school leadership, which creates a toxic and unsafe learning environment. For both teachers and students, these factors collectively negatively impact social and emotional wellbeing and create feelings of insecurity. Teachers in particular express the need to be better equipped to handle violence and bullying in the classroom, and school leadership is crucial for not only quality education delivery, but for creating safe spaces as well.

3. Background and Problem Statement

The 2013 increase of the DR's education allocation to 4 percent of Gross Domestic Product (GDP) catalyzed nearly a decade of reforms, but the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic in March 2020 precipitated a regression in education gains on every level. Moderate improvements in primary school attendance rates¹² and learning outcomes¹³ suffered. For example, metrics from USAID's Read Activity showed a 27 percentage-point reduction in the reading fluency and comprehension of second grade students, from 75.6 percent in 2019 to 48.47 percent in 2021. Similarly, The World Bank estimated that the pandemic could increase the share of students not acquiring minimum reading proficiency from 79 percent to 93 percent, widening existing learning

⁸ UNICEF, 2017, Niños y Niñas Fuera de la Escuela en la República Dominicana, <https://www.unicef.org/dominicanrepublic/media/246/file/Ni%C3%B1os%20Fuera%20de%20la%20Escuela%20en%20Rep%C3%BAblica%20Dominicana.pdf>

⁹ El Caribe, "MinerD realizó en 2019 concurso de oposición docente con más de 49 mil postulantes," 2019, <https://www.elcaribe.com.do/panorama/minerd-realizo-en-2019-concurso-de-oposicion-docente-con-mas-de-49-mil-postulantes/>

¹⁰ Listin Diario, "ADP estima en esta semana se fijará fecha de concurso docente," 2021 <https://listindiario.com/la-republica/2021/09/27/689854/adp-estima-en-esta-semana-se-fijara-fecha-de-concurso-docente>

¹¹ USAID, Rapid Education Risk Analysis: Dominican Republic, 2019, https://pdf.usaid.gov/pdf_docs/PA00WFWZ.pdf

¹² As per MINERD Planificación Estratégica, 2021, www.ministeriodeeducacion.gob.do/transparencia/media/plan-estrategico-institucional-pei/planificacion-estrategica-institucional/toJ-rrf-plan-estrategico-2021-2024-peipdfpdf.pdf with 93 percent of children ages 5 to 14 attending school.

¹³ As demonstrated by the fourth Regional Comparative and Explanatory Study from UNESCO, Evaluación de la Calidad de la Educación en América Latina, <https://es.unesco.org/fieldoffice/santiago/lece/ERCE2019>

inequalities.¹⁴ These low performance outcomes directly contribute to grade repetition and an increasing population of over-age learners in primary school.

In March 2020, MINERD ordered the immediate closure of schools nationwide. Most private institutions quickly switched to virtual modalities and platforms delivering continuous instruction. The public sector, however, was unable to easily pivot due to limited access to devices, internet connectivity challenges, and the inadequate capacity of teachers to perform long distance instruction. In many cases, students also reported a lack of internet, limited access to radio or TV, and a lack of motivation to use distance learning resources.¹⁵ Many children from vulnerable communities were also less likely to have a parent or caretaker at home to assist in accessing available technologies, or they themselves lacked the skills to navigate virtual platforms to meet workload demands. Consequently, classes in public schools during FY 2020 ended earlier than originally scheduled, and the following school year opened with a two-month delay. By November 2020, MINERD had coordinated the broadcasting of classes through a national television and radio network. Curriculum booklets with activities, funded by USAID and UNICEF, were distributed to all students in pre-first through ninth grade as an instructional supplement to programming broadcasts. Even after schools received MINERD authorization to reopen in November 2021, many public schools did not resume onsite operations until January 2022. A principal reason for the delay was a lack of appropriate infrastructure to maintain social distancing and quality sanitation or hygiene protocols in place.

Inevitably, almost two years of school disruption left deleterious effects on student achievement and mental health. During this period, socio-economic inequities were exacerbated, particularly within certain geographic locations. Along the border region between the Dominican Republic and Haiti, nearly 40 percent of students did not access remote learning, compared to the national average of 16 percent during the period of school closures.¹⁶ Approximately 41 percent of students reported receiving less than two hours of class daily.¹⁷

The wellbeing of students and school staff is also recovering. The closure of schools resulted in the loss of access to school meals and positive relationships with teachers and other students. Additionally, many students found themselves isolated in home environments at an increased risk for violence and abuse. Recent evidence in Latin America has indicated a growing mental health crisis among children and youth, and a rise in gender-based violence and child labor.¹⁸

MINERD has committed to intentionally addressing the *return to learning* effort and has taken action to address challenges in the system, including the *Return to Happiness* program and a month-long school reinforcement exercise at each grade level.¹⁹ These efforts are commendable.

¹⁴ World Bank, Acting Now to Protect the Human Capital of Our Children : The Costs of and Response to COVID-19 Pandemic's Impact on the Education Sector in Latin America and the Caribbean, 2021, <https://openknowledge.worldbank.org/handle/10986/35276>

¹⁵ World Bank, "What have we learned about distance learning in the Dominican Republic during the pandemic?" 2022, <https://blogs.worldbank.org/latinamerica/what-have-we-learned-about-distance-learning-dominican-republic-during-pandemic>

¹⁶ Ibid

¹⁷ Ibid

¹⁸ ECLAC, 'The social challenge in times of COVID-19', https://repositorio.cepal.org/bitstream/handle/11362/45544/1/S2000324_en.pdf

¹⁹ UNICEF, LACRO COVID-19 Education Response: Update 33 Status of School Reopenings, 2022, <https://www.unicef.org/lac/en/media/32771/file>

Nonetheless, the scale of challenge for the education system and its stakeholders requires additional resources. The Basic Education Recovery Activity directly responds to the need to accelerate the achievement of the most marginalized students in target areas and restore the social and emotional wellbeing of teachers, students, and the school community.

4. Theory of Change

USAID/Dominican Republic posits the following theory of change and invites Applicants to revise and/or refine this development hypothesis:

- **IF** inclusive, remedial reading instruction is implemented in the most marginalized schools as a complement to MINERD’s national reading program, and **IF** the social and emotional wellbeing of the school community is improved, and **IF** national education system-level inputs and processes are strengthened, **THEN** the national education system will advance and sustain improved reading proficiency and positive social and emotional learning²⁰ outcomes among targeted students by the end of third grade.

5. Risk

Based on the desk review and consultations with key stakeholders, USAID identified the following potential risks and contextual factors that could undermine the Activity’s development hypothesis:

- Epidemics, pandemics, and natural and environmental hazards that can affect school access and provoke prolonged school closures;
- Relevant changes in government institutions;
- Inability to successfully coordinate activities with key government, community, and development sector stakeholders;
- Inability to formally engage with MINERD at the start of implementation and obtain an agreement that ensures the continuity of activities beyond any changes in MINERD authorities;
- Lack of accessibility to the most vulnerable, rural, and remote communities; and
- Lack of engagement from the private sector.

The Applicant may identify additional risks that could impact programming, and plan for mitigation measures accordingly.

6. Geographic Focus

The geographic focus of the Activity will be finalized in coordination with MINERD after the award is made, based on the following selection criteria: 1) areas with low learning outcomes (as identified by the National Diagnostic Evaluations); 2) areas with high levels of marginalized

²⁰ Defined as “a set of cognitive, social, and emotional competencies that children, youth, and adults learn through explicit, active, focused, sequenced instruction that allows them to understand and manage their emotions, set and achieve positive goals, feel and show empathy for others, establish and maintain positive relationships, and make responsible decisions.” United States Agency for International Development (USAID). “Social and Emotional Learning and Soft Skills USAID Policy Brief,” (2019).

student populations; and 3) areas with high levels of poverty. USAID anticipates the geographic focus to be in the southern provinces and to some extent the border regions with Haiti, where learning levels and access to quality, inclusive education are lowest²¹ and poverty levels are highest. For example, five of the seven provinces with the highest levels of repetition rates in primary school are in the border regions. The highest rates of repetition overall are in Pedernales (13.6 percent) and Elias Pinas (18.5 percent). The border regions also had the highest percentage of teachers (39.2 percent) scoring at the lowest level on teacher competency exams; and students in the border regions scored significantly below the national average on the end-of-secondary-school exams.

USAID anticipates that the implementation of certain components of the Activity (see Intermediate Results 1 and 2 below) will utilize a phased approach to implementation, operating in a select number of schools in Year 1 and then expanding the geographic focus of the Activity in Year 3, in consultation and agreement with MINERD and USAID. Applicants should propose a preliminary scope and plan for a phased approach in the southern provinces and/or the border regions; this plan will be finalized with USAID and MINERD after the award is made.

Other components (see Intermediate Result 3) will be implemented at different systems levels. USAID anticipates that promising interventions will be rolled out to other selected education areas.

7. Results Framework and Activity Description

Results Framework

<p>Activity Goal: Strengthened national education system that promotes and sustains age-appropriate, grade-level reading proficiency and socio-emotional learning of targeted students by the end of third grade.</p>		
<p>Intermediate Result (IR) 1: Third grade students demonstrate increased reading proficiency and decreased student repetition in marginalized schools employing inclusive, remedial reading instruction.</p>	<p>IR 2: Social and emotional wellbeing in targeted schools improved for grades pre-first to third.</p>	<p>IR 3: Reading attainment and socio-emotional wellbeing best practices institutionalized nationally for pre-first to third grades.</p>

²¹ Gobierno de la República Dominicana. "Monitoreo de la Frontera", 4, no 6 (Junio 2021).

<p>Sub-IR 1.1: Targeted schools utilize new and existing evidence-based inclusive teaching and learning remedial reading materials in grades pre-first to third.</p> <p>Sub-IR 1.2: School staff demonstrate strengthened capacity to deliver inclusive, remedial reading instruction in grades pre-first to third.</p> <p>Sub-IR 1.3: Targeted schools strengthen supplemental remedial reading instruction plans in extended school day programs in grades 1 to 3.</p> <p>Sub-IR 1.4: Targeted schools implement early warning systems to identify academically at-risk students in grades 1 to 3.</p>	<p>Sub-IR 2.1: Targeted schools integrate social and emotional learning approach into classroom instruction in grades pre-first to third.</p> <p>Sub-IR 2.2: Targeted schools utilize SEL teaching and learning materials in grades pre-first to third.</p> <p>Sub-IR 2.3: School communities demonstrate increased capacity to improve social emotional learning for students in grades pre-first to third.</p>	<p>Sub-IR 3.1: MINERD demonstrates strengthened institutional capacity to use data for education decision making and resource management in grades pre-first to third.</p> <p>Sub-IR 3.2: MINERD adopts standards, curriculum, and/or best practices for reading, remedial instruction, SEL, and reducing grade repetition and rolls out promising interventions in schools in select non-USAID funded education regions.</p> <p>Sub-IR 3.3: MINERD rolls out early warning system for at-risk first to third grade students in schools in select non-USAID funded education regions.</p> <p>Sub-IR 3.4: Private sector stakeholders increase engagement to strengthen the education system.</p>
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Placeholder: IRs 1 and 2 will be implemented at the school-level in all target schools. IR 3 will be implemented at the system level, including the national and central levels, and will flow down to the education regions and school districts.

Intermediate Result (IR) 1: *Third grade students demonstrate increased reading proficiency and decreased student repetition in marginalized schools employing inclusive, remedial reading instruction.*

While the USAID Read Activity made progress in improving evidence-based reading instruction, developing pedagogical materials, and improving reading outcomes, some students failed to meet grade-level expectations and struggled to gain momentum in learning achievement, as is often seen in education systems globally. When an evidence-based curriculum is successfully

implemented, some learners will build skills and progress successfully with the core program, while other students will still need additional layers of support to achieve grade-level expectations. In the initial years of primary school, some learners will need additional instruction, often delivered through small group remedial instruction, to master key foundational skills and keep up with their grade-level curriculum. In the middle and upper grades of primary school, classrooms can have learners who are over age and potentially more than two grade levels behind their peers academically. Remedial instruction, supplemental activities, and additional support are necessary for this group to develop foundational skills, progress academically, and catch up with the grade-level standards. As students progress through the primary grades, remedial instruction is necessary to ensure that learners who are struggling the most receive the support they need to master the key foundational skills necessary to be successful in the upper grades.

Students who fail to achieve basic literacy by third grade are at increased risk for grade repetition and dropout, and struggle to acquire more complex academic skills. Under IR 1, the Activity will design and implement a remedial reading instruction program to support students who are the furthest behind and struggling the most to meet grade-level proficiency in reading (e.g. over-age learners who are two grade levels behind academically, and those with learning disabilities) to acquire foundational literacy skills. Although one of the goals is to reduce third-grade repetition rates, achieving this objective will require interventions in pre-first, first, second, and third grades in order to address gaps in learning outcomes at the earliest stage possible. In addition, the Activity will **provide limited support to pre-primary teachers in the form of resources and teacher training to improve children’s emergent literacy skills and ease the transition between pre-primary and primary school.**

In order to support learners and teachers, **Applicants should propose how, in collaboration with MINERD, they will develop an approach to remedial reading instruction to complement 1) the national reading curriculum (*ConBase*), 2) development of supplementary reading materials, and 3) the training of teachers in instructional strategies that are age-appropriate, differentiated to skill levels, and grounded in evidence and research on best practices in remedial reading education.**²² Applicants should propose a preliminary plan for how remedial instruction will be implemented to most effectively improve reading outcomes. Applicants should present a remedial reading approach sensitive to the social and emotional needs of learners to ensure that beneficiaries are not further marginalized due to being behind in their reading skills. IR1 should have a link to the SEL component in IR2 to ensure a safe classroom environment for all learners. To promote inclusion and learning for all, Applicants may consider in collaboration with MINERD how to integrate Universal Design for Learning (UDL)²³ into the curriculum, teaching and learning materials, training, and instruction to meet the needs of all learners. Applicants should consider using the Universal Design for Learning to Help All Children Read toolkit.²⁴

²² Norman, J. R., Ralaingita, W. D., Long, B., & Davidson, M. (2020). *Remediation in foundational literacy and numeracy: A how-to guide*. <https://scienceofteaching.site/remediation-strategies-and-approaches/#introduction>

²³ Universal Design for Learning (UDL) is a research-based set of principles designed to make learning environments accessible and effective for all.

²⁴ <https://www.globalreadingnetwork.net/resources/universal-design-learning-help-all-children-read>

USAID/DR anticipates a **phased approach** to IR1, in which a select number of schools in target areas within the southern provinces and/or border region with Haiti receive the intervention in Years 1 and 2, followed by a significant roll out in Year 3, **incorporating lessons learned by applying Continuous Learning and Adapting principles**. Applicants should propose an implementation rollout plan for the Activity.

Sub IR 1.1 *Targeted schools utilize new and existing evidence-based inclusive teaching and learning remedial reading materials in grades pre-first to third:* Many students lacking foundational reading skills are over age and may not find materials designed for emergent readers engaging. Appropriate remedial and inclusive teaching and learning materials should be identified and/or developed on a need basis and include age and skill level appropriate content, including leveled materials for emergent readers as early as pre-primary. If existing materials are identified to be used in the activity, these may need to be adapted to the context and needs of target beneficiaries. Applicants should conduct an assessment to identify, build on, and complement any existing teaching and learning materials, e.g. UNICEF's ConBase, USAID's Read Activity, and that of other education stakeholders to accomplish the results of the Activity. As appropriate, materials may include decodable and leveled readers.

Sub IR 1.2 *School staff demonstrate strengthened capacity to deliver inclusive, remedial reading instruction in grades pre-first to third:* Remedial instruction requires teachers to master specific approaches, such as small group instruction and ability-based grouping in the classroom with which they may not be familiar. In order to effectively support at-risk students to meet grade-level proficiency, training and coaching are needed on key topics such as formative assessment and differentiated instruction. This Activity should build on the teacher training and coaching processes developed under the USAID Read Activity to provide additional support focused on preparing teachers to implement differentiated and remedial instruction. For pre-primary teachers, the Activity should provide training on best practices for teaching emergent readers, including strategies to develop their language and listening comprehension. For teaching at the primary level, teachers should receive support to accurately assess student skill levels, group students based on data, and provide targeted remedial support to help students reach grade-level proficiency. Teachers will require in-classroom coaching to ensure they are implementing strategies effectively. Pedagogical coordinators, technical specialists and other key stakeholders should also be trained in these methods to ensure support for the methods at the system level. Areas of focus could include how to support learners in multigrade classrooms as well as non-native Spanish speakers, such as Haitian immigrant populations, building on training and resources developed by the LAC Reads Capacity Program. Applicants should identify existing materials for training and coaching teachers and develop additional materials to accomplish the results of the Activity. Applicants should also identify means by which training and coaching can be integrated into the existing system and staffing patterns of MINERD.

Sub IR 1.3 *Targeted schools strengthen supplemental remedial reading instruction plans in extended school day programs in grades 1 to 3:* **The extended school day program presents an opportunity for academically at-risk students to receive additional targeted reading instruction without missing core instruction in their classrooms.** Currently, planning for the extended school day is managed at the school level and teachers are often responsible for

developing lesson plans for this time period. As such, teachers would benefit from support in developing a remedial reading instruction program to assist in lesson planning that includes explicit foundational reading skills instruction tailored to student needs. It is expected that this Activity will work in alignment with MINERD to build on tested tools and plans to provide remedial instruction to the most at-risk students. Strategies such as tutoring, small groups, Teaching at the Right Level (TARL),²⁵ and others should be considered with a focus on supporting students who are academically struggling, including those with learning disabilities,²⁶ to provide evidence-based direct instruction of foundational reading skills. Additionally, the plan should include a robust initial assessment to be used at the school level to identify at-risk learners who require additional support in reading.

Sub IR 1.4 Targeted schools implement early warning systems to identify academically at-risk students in grades 1 to 3: In its 2021-2024 ISP, MINERD highlighted as a key issue the percentage of children in third grade who are over age or have repeated the year. Third grade is the first time that students may repeat a year of schooling based on their academic performance. It is expected that this Activity will implement an early warning system to identify students in the first, second and third grades at greatest risk of attrition or repetition due to a lack of foundational reading skills. These students, including children with disabilities, will be prioritized for entry into a remedial reading program. By providing children with remedial reading instruction, it is expected that repetition in third grade will be measurably reduced within the Activity lifespan. Sub IR 1.4 should be connected to the Sub-IR 3.3, *MINERD rolls out early warning system for at-risk pre-first to third grade students in schools in select non-USAID funded education regions*. Applicants must propose ideas for what to include in a strategy to reduce third grade repetition.

Illustrative activities for IR 1 may include:

- To help learners struggling to read, develop an evidence-based inclusive remedial reading ²⁷ instruction curriculum that includes explicit and direct instruction of foundational reading skills;
- Develop remedial reading instruction materials that supports older learners to master basic literacy skills;
- Create materials for pre-primary learners that develop their emergent literacy skills;
- Provide training focused on best practices in remedial and differentiated instruction for teachers, school leaders, counselors and other key stakeholders;
- Provide training to school personnel and other MINERD officials on how to use assessment data to identify the most at-risk learners;
- To increase inclusion, incorporate UDL into the curriculum, teaching and learning materials, training, and instruction; and
- In connection with the Sub-IR 3.3, strengthen the data disaggregation in schools in

²⁵ Teaching at the Right Level is an evidence-based educational approach that groups children according to learning needs, as opposed to age, for targeted instruction of foundational skills. It is more relevant for Grade 3 than for earlier grades. <https://www.teachingattherightlevel.org/>

²⁶ Reading Rockets. *What Remedial Reading Methods Work Best for Students with Learning Disabilities?* Accessed December 8, 2022. <https://www.readingrockets.org/faqs/what-remedial-reading-methods-work-best-students-learning-disabilities>

²⁷ Norman, J. R., Ralaingita, W. D., Long, B., & Davidson, M. (2020). *Remediation in foundational literacy and numeracy: A how-to guide*. <https://scienceofteaching.site/remediation-strategies-and-approaches/#introduction>

relation to the specific gender gaps and inclusive development needs in the school.

Intermediate Result 2: Social and emotional wellbeing in targeted schools improved for grades pre-first to third.

Evidence demonstrates that social and emotional skills support the success of learners of all ages at school, at work, and in life. SEL competencies provide a foundation for academic performance, which can support positive social behaviors including fewer conduct problems and less emotional distress, as well as improved test scores and grades at school (Durlak et al., 2011).

Under this IR, the Activity will design and implement a comprehensive SEL approach that enhances foundational reading skill development, reduces negative student behavior in school, and improves the social and emotional skills of both students and staff. The Activity should consider how the SEL approach can meet the needs of all beneficiaries such as by using UDL principles. MINERD has developed and is revising its [Education System Norms for Harmonious Interactions in Public and Private Education Centers](#)²⁸ under the Office of Psychology and Orientation that should be considered in the development of the Activity's SEL program. MINERD should provide concurrence of the planning and roll out of the proposed activities. Implementing partners shall develop an SEL program that ideally is embedded within the academic curriculum and must include the development and implementation of SEL teaching and learning materials. Also, professional development activities specifically related to SEL instruction shall be designed to build the capacity of teachers, school administrators, pedagogical coordinators and other key education stakeholders to support students. These activities may include training, coaching, and mentoring among other effective strategies to reinforce a culture of wellbeing within and beyond the classroom. The Applicant may refer to Harvard's Ecological Approaches to Social Emotional Learning (EASEL) Laboratory to develop instructional approaches that support active student instruction to master SEL skills. The SEL program must identify and contextualize the foundational social and emotional skills needed in the local system to improve academic performance and help learners advance in their education. Additionally, Applicants should propose interventions in addition to the SEL program that will improve the school climate, including improved school safety and creating an environment conducive to learning and school advancement. USAID/Dominican Republic anticipates IR2 being rolled out as a phased approach, in which a select number of schools in target areas of the southern provinces and/or the border region with Haiti receive the intervention in Year 1 and 2 followed, by a significant roll out in Year 3, incorporating lessons learned applying Continuous Learning and Adapting principles. Applicants should propose an implementation roll out plan for the phased approach.

Sub-IR 2.1: *Targeted schools integrate social and emotional learning approach into classroom instruction in grades pre-first to third:* The Activity will work with local stakeholders and coordinate with MINERD to implement a contextualized SEL program for primary school learners in the Dominican Republic. This program will identify and clearly define contextually and developmentally appropriate SEL skills learners need to acquire to be successful in school

²⁸ <https://www.ministeriodeeducacion.gob.do/docs/licitaciones-oai/hWI8-7-normas-de-convivencia-final-imprentapdf.pdf>

and beyond. Implementing partners shall work with education leaders at various levels to develop or build upon any existing strategy within MINERD for successfully integrating SEL into the academic curriculum, as well as in the extended school day program. This could include standalone SEL instruction and the integration of SEL skills into other academic content areas. At the school level, the activity shall work with school leaders to improve the school climate so that teachers and school counselors can practice positive disciplining, build and respond to their own social and emotional needs, and to that of students. The SEL component should also incorporate strategies to mediate conflict. Furthermore, this Activity should consider how to support the roll out of the Education System Norms for Harmonious Interactions in Public and Private Education Centers developed by MINERD under the Office of Psychology and Orientation.

Sub-IR 2.2: *Targeted schools utilize SEL teaching and learning materials in grades pre-first to third:* The Activity will work with local stakeholders to develop contextually and developmentally appropriate SEL teaching and learning materials that could be integrated into both the regular school day as well as the extended school day program. These materials should be used at the school level and should include the SEL skills that are identified in the SEL framework. The activity should support SEL instruction by incorporating SEL skills into other academic subjects and creating opportunities for students to practice and refine these skills.

Sub-IR 2.3: *School communities demonstrate increased capacity to improve social emotional learning for students in grades pre-first to third:* Improving the motivation and skills of teachers, school counselors, pedagogical coordinators, technicians, school administrators, parents and caregivers to instruct, practice, and model social and emotional skills is essential to helping children build their own social and emotional skills. In order for these groups to instruct, practice, and model social and emotional skills, the Activity must support these staff and other groups to develop relevant social and emotional skills themselves. Educators and other key stakeholders should be trained in SEL instructional approaches that incorporate Sequenced, Active, Focused, and Explicit (SAFE) instruction. The training should provide strategies to contextualize SEL skills using learner-centered approaches and emphasize the importance of developing positive and supportive relationships with their learners.

Illustrative Activities for IR 2 may include:

- A SEL program developed in partnership with MINERD to identify and define contextually relevant SEL skills for learners in the Dominican Republic;
- SEL teaching and learning materials developed;
- Teacher and school counselor training focused on best practices for SEL;
- School administrator, pedagogical coordinator, and other stakeholder training focused on supporting SEL programs;
- Interventions to improve social and emotional skills of school staff;
- Support MINERD to roll out the school norms of behavior under the Psychology and Orientation Direction; and
- Coordinating with other USAID programs on the development of educational/training SEL and school safety materials for school police training.

Intermediate Result 3: *Reading attainment and socio-emotional wellbeing best practices institutionalized nationally for pre-first to third grades.*

This IR will strengthen the national education system by bolstering MINERD capacity to use data in decision making and resource management; improving coordination throughout the central, regional, local, and school levels to achieve system coherence in policy and implementation for reading and SEL outcomes; adopting and implementing standards, curriculum, and best practices for reading, SEL, UDL, and preventing student repetition; implementing an early warning system; and engaging private sector partners to mobilize additional resources for basic education recovery. For institutionalization and roll-out to succeed, it is critical that host country entities relevant to the education sector at various levels become responsive and effective institutions able to provide and oversee quality education for all learners. The Activity will take a systems approach to addressing the core challenges in education governance and management, identifying the key system changes that are required, including strengthening the Information System for School Management (SIGERD), as well as potential levers for bringing systems-level change. Applicants must present a clear strategy and actionable plans for ensuring that interventions of the activity are incorporated into MINERD's education programs.

Sub-IR 3.1: *MINERD demonstrates strengthened institutional capacity to use data for education decision making and resource management in grades pre-first to third:* The Activity will strengthen MINERD national assessment implementation, data collection capacity and data utilization for improved decision making and resource management. Starting with a clear understanding of the needs and demand from key MINERD leaders, the Activity should engage with local partners to continue to improve MINERD's service provision capabilities. Under this sub-IR, the applicant must strengthen coordination and communication among MINERD, regional offices, local/district offices, and schools to achieve coherence in the system around decision making, resource management, and implementation of policies. For example, early warning system data collected at the school level should be communicated to other stakeholders of the education system to affect necessary actions.

In order to improve data for education decision making, the Activity may include adding a national assessment for reading and SEL in additional early grades such as 1 and 2. The Activity will collaborate with MINERD, local governments, and other stakeholders to build capacity around the usage of data for decision making, resource management and allocation at all levels of the education system. Interventions should ensure data is more accessible to teachers, directors, and national school leaders. The Activity should work with teachers, directors and national staff to better analyze and use data to impact school and classroom level instruction and improve learning outcomes.

Sub-IR 3.2: *MINERD adopts standards, curriculum, and/or best practices for reading, remedial instruction, SEL, and reducing grade repetition and rolls out promising interventions in schools in select non-USAID funded education regions:* The applicant must collaborate with MINERD and USAID to determine which additional *regionales educativas* (education regions) within the education system to roll out standards, curriculum, best practices for reading, remedial

instruction, and SEL. The applicant may explore with MINERD the idea of developing benchmarks for primary grade reading and SEL linked to international standards such as the Global Proficiency Framework for reading and the Collaborative for Academic, Social, and Emotional Learning (CASEL) framework for SEL. Applicants may propose changes to standards, curriculum, and/or policies that they find relevant to achieving the goals and results of this Activity.

Sub-IR 3.3: *MINERD rolls out early warning system for at-risk pre-first to third grade students in schools in select non-USAID funded education region:* The applicant shall collaborate with MINERD and USAID to determine which *regionales educativas* (education regions) to implement and roll out an early warning system that identifies students potentially at risk for grade repetition and/or dropping out of school. The Applicant must propose a process for working in schools and at various levels within the education system. The early warning system will provide teachers, administrators, and other education officials with data to inform decisions around extra support and/or remediation to ensure learners progress through and remain in the education system.

Sub-IR 3.4: *Private sector stakeholders increase engagement to strengthen the education system:* The applicant shall actively engage private and philanthropic donors to mobilize resources (financial and/or in kind), to support the institutionalization and scale for basic education recovery interventions. Applicants must propose a plan for engaging private sector partners in basic education recovery. Such a plan must consider how they plan to approach the private sector and leverage private sector contributions, may it be monetary and/or in-kind, and collaborate in a way that brings shared value to and act responsibly in the communities where they do business. The plan should include targets for engaging private sector entities.

Applicants may consider if there is an opportunity to link Basic Education Recovery Activity to the existing CATALYZE EduFinance Activity in the Dominican Republic; for example, by reviewing the market assessment conducted in December 2020.²⁹

Illustrative Activities for IR 3 may include:

- Scale up an Early Warning System to identify and support students at risk for grade repetition and/or drop-out;
- Identify key standards and policies for early grade reading and SEL (this may include but is not limited to setting benchmarks for reading and math in the early primary grades aligned to the Global Proficiency Framework³⁰ standards, developing policies that promote inclusion of marginalized groups in education, and developing policies to institutionalize social and emotional learning;
- Support the implementation of a national testing system to collect, analyze and use student learning data to improve education quality, starting with the national assessments for third grade, and considering adding national assessments at earlier grade levels;

²⁹ Find information about CATALYZE EduFinance at this website as well as a market assessment conducted for the Dominican Republic: <https://www.usaid.gov/catalyze/edufinance-LAC>

³⁰ <https://www.edu-links.org/resources/global-proficiency-framework-reading-and-mathematics>

- Strengthen local education offices to gather data and report results on learning outcomes for decision making and coordinate actions effectively with municipalities and school networks; and
- Provide training activities to build skills for school leaders and other education officials to improve school and system management including evidence-based decision making, budgeting and resource management.

8. Activity Monitoring, Evaluation, and Learning: USAID has committed to monitoring and evaluating activities using credible methods. Monitoring and reporting results are a key element of USAID programming, and data is used to improve performance and effectiveness, as well as to inform planning and management decisions.

USAID/DR requires all awarded activities to develop a monitoring, evaluation and learning (MEL) plan with established baseline assessments, data collection and analysis, monitoring, and verification procedures to not only track progress toward objectives/areas, but also facilitate a continuous process of learning and translating knowledge into better practices. The MEL plan will be presented to USAID for approval 90 days after the Activity is awarded.

The Activity MEL Plan is a tool that outlines how the Applicant will inform USAID about progress towards expected outcomes and specified targets, help ensure the actions achieve the expected outputs, provide answers to the Activity’s learning questions, and identify plans for collecting indicator baseline data prior to the start of implementation. The Applicant will consider the activity’s theory of change and results framework, and consider a full range of standard and custom indicators and targets relevant to measure performance aligned with Agency priorities and USAID’s CDCS objectives. It will also allow the management team to make any necessary adjustments to achieve the desired outcomes. The MEL plan will support not only activity performance monitoring but also knowledge sharing and collaborative learning. Additionally, flexibility and adaptive management are at the core of the activity implementation strategy. The MEL plan is a “living document” that will be updated periodically in response to possible changes in the Activity and its context.

USAID/DR presents here a list of illustrative indicators for Applicants to consider under the Activity Goal, IRs, and sub-IRs. Applicants must submit a proposed set of indicators (these are not limited and/or can be different from the ones proposed in the following list) and targets for each IR and sub IR that will allow for monitoring progress towards expected outcomes. These proposal indicators should align to the Applicant’s technical approach and lead to the achievement of the desired objectives of the Activity. The Mission encourages the Applicants to propose additional indicators that illustrate how they will measure progress towards outcomes aligned with USG priorities in the Dominican Republic. While USAID has standard indicators to track resources, the Activity will include a mix of standard and custom, context or supplemental indicators. The final indicators and targets for achievement of Activity objectives will be developed in collaboration with USAID/DR, and submitted as part of the Activity MEL plan.

Activity Goal and Results	Illustrative Indicators
<p>Activity Goal: Strengthened national education system that promotes and sustains age-appropriate, grade-level reading proficiency and socio-emotional learning of targeted students by the end of third grade.</p>	<p><i>(Outcome) ES.1-48: Percent of learners targeted for USG assistance with an increase of at least one proficiency level in reading at the end of grade 2</i></p> <p><i>(Outcome) ES.1-1: Percent of learners targeted for USG assistance who attain a minimum grade-level proficiency in reading at the end of grade 2</i></p> <p><i>(Output) ES.1-3: Number of learners in primary schools or equivalent non-school based settings reached with USG education assistance</i></p>
<p>Intermediate Result (IR) 1: Third grade students demonstrate increased reading proficiency and decreased student repetition in marginalized schools employing inclusive, remedial reading instruction.</p>	<p><i>(Outcome) Supp-10: Percent of educators providing quality classroom instruction with USG support (quality in the remedial instruction)</i></p> <p><i>(Output) Custom: Number of students receiving remedial education support from USG-assisted program (disaggregates important here: e.g. learners with disabilities, Haitian/other minorities)</i></p>
<p>Sub-IR 1.1: Targeted schools utilize new and existing evidence-based inclusive teaching and learning remedial reading materials in grades pre-first to third.</p>	<p><i>(Output) ES.1-55: Percent of learners targeted for USG assistance who have the appropriate variety of reading materials in the language of instruction with inclusive representation of diverse populations (focused on remedial reading and UDL instruction)</i></p>
<p>Sub-IR 1.2: School staff demonstrate strengthened capacity to deliver inclusive, remedial reading instruction in grades pre-first to third.</p>	<p><i>(Output) ES.1-6: Number of educators who complete professional development activities with USG assistance</i></p> <p><i>(Output) Custom: Number of monthly coaching visits per teacher</i></p>
<p>Sub-IR 1.3: Targeted schools strengthen supplemental remedial reading instruction plans in extended school day programs in grades 1 to 3.</p>	<p><i>(Outcome) Custom: Percentage of schools implementing supplemental remedial instruction plan in the extended school day</i></p> <p><i>(Output) Custom: Number of students attending extended school day remedial support program (disaggregates</i></p>

	<i>important here)</i>
Sub-IR 1.4: Targeted schools implement early warning systems to identify academically at-risk students in grades 1 to 3.	<p><i>(Output) Custom: Number of schools implementing an early warning system</i></p> <p><i>(Outcome) Custom: Percentage of students transitioning from third grade to fourth grade</i></p>
IR 2: Social and emotional wellbeing in targeted schools improved for grades pre-first to third.	<p><i>(Outcome) Custom: Percent of individuals targeted for USG assistance with improved social and emotional skills (disaggregated by learners and school staff).</i></p> <p><i>(Output) ES.1-51: Percentage of learning environments supported by USG assistance that have improved safety, according to locally-defined criteria</i></p>
Sub-IR 2.1: Targeted schools integrate social and emotional learning approach into classroom instruction in grades pre-first to third.	<i>(Outcome) Custom: Percentage of schools implementing strategies developed to improve SEL of staff and teachers</i>
Sub-IR 2.2: Targeted schools utilize SEL teaching and learning materials in grades pre-first to third.	<i>(Output) ES.1-55: Percent of learners targeted for USG assistance who have the appropriate variety of reading materials in the language of instruction with inclusive representation of diverse populations (focused on SEL instruction)</i>
Sub-IR 2.3: School communities demonstrate increased capacity to improve social emotional learning for students in grades pre-first to third.	<p><i>(Outcome) Custom: Percent of educators or school communities implementing SEL best practices in classroom instruction following training with USG assistance</i></p> <p><i>(Output) ES.1-6: Number of educators/school counselors who complete professional development activities with USG assistance (in SEL)</i></p> <p><i>*both of these indicators can be disaggregated</i></p>
IR 3: Reading attainment and socio-emotional wellbeing best practices institutionalized nationally for pre-first to third grades.	<p><i>(Outcome) ES.1-59: Education system strengthened through USG-assisted policy reform</i></p> <p><i>(Outcome) CBLD-9: Percentage of U.S. Government-assisted organizations with improved performance</i></p>

<p>Sub-IR 3.1: MINERD demonstrates strengthened institutional capacity to use data for education decision making and resource management in grades pre-first to third.</p>	<p><i>(Outcome) Supp-16: Education data systems strengthened through USG assistance</i></p>
<p>Sub-IR 3.2: MINERD adopts standards, curriculum, and/or best practices for reading, remedial instruction, SEL, and reducing grade repetition and rolls out promising interventions in schools in select non-USAID funded education regions.</p>	<p><i>(Outcome) Custom: Number of standards, curriculum, best practices for reading, remedial instruction, social emotional learning, and reducing repetition scaled to non USAID-funded education regions by the MINERD.</i></p> <p><i>(Outcome) Custom: Number of non-USAID funded education institutions with allocated budgets to replicate reforms, modeled by USAID-funded institutions, improving early grade reading and/or social emotional wellbeing</i></p>
<p>Sub-IR 3.3: MINERD rolls out an early warning system for at-risk pre-first to third grade students in schools in select non-USAID funded education regions.</p>	<p><i>(Outcome) Custom: Early warning system for at-risk students adopted in non USAID-funded education regions.</i></p>
<p>Sub-IR 3.4: Private sector stakeholders increase engagement to strengthen the education system.</p>	<p><i>(Outcome) CBLD-10 Value (\$) of non-donor resources mobilized for local development priorities</i></p> <p><i>(Output) PSE-1 Number of USG engagements jointly undertaken with the private sector to achieve a U.S. foreign assistance objective</i></p> <p><i>(Output) PSE-2: Number of private sector enterprises that engaged with the USG to support U.S. Foreign Assistance Objectives</i></p>

USAID/DR plans to roll out a phased approach for IR1: *Inclusive and remedial reading instruction in the most marginalized schools improved* and IR2: *Social and emotional wellbeing and school climate improved*, starting with a baseline assessment. Applicants should propose how they would implement IR1 and IR2 first in a smaller selection of schools in Years 1 and 2, monitor and evaluate performance, learn and adapt in implementation to refine and continuously improve the approach, and then roll out promising interventions from IR1 and IR2 to a broader number of schools during Years 3 to 5. In accordance with the USAID Evaluation Policy, in addition to evaluation questions focused on accountability, there will also be an emphasis on learning. Therefore, it is expected that the theory of change and indicator data will be critical components of the information used in monitoring and evaluation.

Information gleaned through a mid-term performance evaluation may be used to inform the adaptive management of the activity. USAID/Dominican Republic may conduct an external mid-term performance evaluation of the Activity 24-30 months after the agreement is awarded and an external final evaluation before closeout. If this Activity is selected for an evaluation, the Awardee is expected to cooperate fully with the evaluators.

The Activity may also have an external final evaluation. If this Activity is selected for an external final evaluation, the applicant must cooperate fully with the evaluators.

Moreover, the Applicant is expected to conduct assessments during the initial months (first 6 to 12 months of implementation) of the Activity that can inform implementation. Illustrative assessments include:

- **Literacy Landscape Assessment:**³¹ A comprehensive and flexible approach to capture and analyze the many contextual factors that influence the literacy acquisition of students in the primary grades or equivalent of the targeted schools/population.
- **Impact of COVID-19 in Education:** Identify the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic in the education sector, addressing specifically student’s learning outcomes, social and emotional development of the teachers and students, school climate, and the education system operations.
- **Baseline Assessment:** The applicant must conduct an Activity-level baseline assessment during award start up that corresponds to the indicators and methodologies agreed in the monitoring and evaluation plan. The activities under IR1 and IR2 cannot begin implementation until after completion of the baseline assessment.
- **Gender and Inclusive Development Analysis:** During the first three months of implementation, the Activity will refer to the USAID/DR [Gender and Inclusive Development Analysis](#) (GIDA) and 1) conduct an additional rapid needs assessment based on the GIDA report, or 2) an Activity focused GIDA based in the the ADS 201 Suggested Approaches for [Integrating Inclusive Development in the Program Cycle](#). After the award is signed, the decision on whether a rapid assessment or a GIDA will be conducted will be coordinated with the AOR, USAID Gender Advisor, and the Implementing Partner. The findings and recommendations obtained from the rapid assessment or the GIDA will be integrated in the work plan of the Activity, added to mandatory reports, and reviewed, if applicable every year.

In March 2020 USAID/DR completed the [mandatory gender analysis](#) per USAID’s Automated Directives System(ADS) 205 as part of the design process for the CDCS 2020-2025. For specific

³¹ For an example of a literacy landscape assessment tailored to questions and needs of a specific context, see the Literacy Landscape Assessment in the Democratic Republic of the Congo found here: https://pdf.usaid.gov/pdf_docs/PA00X79F.pdf

guidance on how to conduct the GIDA, please refer to *USAID Suggested Approaches for Integrating Inclusive Development Across the Program Cycle and in Mission Operations* (ADS 201 Additional Help).

8.1 Adaptive, Flexible, Collaborative Management:

USAID recognizes the importance of thinking critically and shifting strategic decisions to respond to emerging development challenges. The Activity should incorporate Collaboration, Learning and Adaptability (CLA) in program implementation to enable adaptive programming that can swiftly respond to emerging evidence, opportunities, new knowledge, changing circumstances, and challenges. Implementation plans should be viewed as living documents, and semi-annual reviews will be expected in order to ensure adaptive and responsive programming. Structured pause and reflect discussions to revisit assumptions, review progress, and make course corrections will be conducted at least semi-annually to strengthen programmatic relevancy, promote sustainability, and help the Activity achieve the expected results.

The Applicant will be expected to articulate how interventions will adapt to dynamic and rapidly evolving environments, and which learning processes are appropriate to ensure the most effective implementation approach and continued progress toward anticipated results. Continuous assessments may include, but are not limited to baseline needs assessments for contextual variations and capacity assessments for media outlets/institutions/organizations.

Maintaining flexibility and adaptability to respond to evolving contextual dynamics, including pandemic-related health concerns, and to take advantage of opportunities and mitigate challenges, is important for successful Activity implementation. Interventions may require an iterative, adaptive management approach that regularly reassesses and re-evaluates the Activity's operating environment(s), and adjusts program planning, implementation, and assessment of results as necessary.

9. Geographic Data

Collecting and analyzing geographic data throughout Activity implementation helps to maximize development impact effectively and efficiently, and promote transparency, participation, and collaboration. Planning for and managing data collection and submission is a key step in leveraging the value of geographic data at USAID.

USAID is required to make nonproprietary geospatial data available collected under its activities to the public. Data must be consistent with U.S. Federal Geographic Data Committee (FGDC) standards. Therefore, the applicant must collect, analyze, and share Activity Location Data for the implementation sites and at a minimum, collect the location of intended beneficiaries at the administrative unit 1 level, e.g., region, province, etc.

The applicant is expected to analyze Activity location data with other monitoring data to inform efforts to manage adaptively and promote accountability. The Activity MEL plan must consider indicator disaggregation by geographic location. When geographically disaggregated indicators

are included, the MEL plan must indicate the level of geographic detail at which the indicator data will be collected.

10. Coordination with USG, GoDR, and Other Donors

10.1 Relationship to USG Priorities

The Activity aligns with and advances the following USAID policies and priorities:

- ***USAID/Dominican Republic CDCS 2020-2025:*** The Basic Education Recovery activity directly responds to the proposed USAID/DR 2020-2025 CDCS, which supports U.S. initiatives to advance the 2030 GoDR National Development Strategy. The five-year CDCS seeks to have a more secure and inclusively prosperous Dominican Republic advancing local and transboundary resilience. It prioritizes three key interrelated thematic Development Objectives (DO) as follows:
 - DO1: Citizen-Responsive Governance Strengthened;
 - DO2: Effective and Inclusive Service Delivery Systems Enhanced; and
 - DO3: Resilient and Inclusive Community and Wellbeing Improved.

This Activity will contribute to the Sub-IR 2.1.3, *Public education services and school safety improved*, under Development Objective 2.

- ***USAID Basic Education Strategy:*** The primary purpose of education programming is to achieve sustained, measurable improvements in learning outcomes and skills development. The policy applies to education programming across all levels (from pre-primary through higher education), contexts (stable contexts to crisis and conflict-affected environments), settings (formal and non-formal), and providers (state and non-state).
- ***USAID Education Policy:***³² The Activity will increase equitable access to quality education, particularly the most marginalized, as well as improve foundational skills of beneficiaries.
- ***USAID Private Sector Engagement Policy:***³³ The Activity will seek to increase and deepen collaboration with the private sector in education, seek market-based solutions for greater sustainability, make catalytic use of USAID resources, and mobilize private capital for scale. Refer to section 11.4 for additional information.
- ***USAID's 2022-2030 Climate Strategy:***³⁴ The Activity will work on curriculum revision that includes climate change topics to increase student knowledge so they become climate champions in their communities.

10.2 Relationship to GoDR priorities:

The Activity aligns with and advances the following priorities under MINERD's 2021-2024 ISP:

³² <https://www.usaid.gov/education/policy>

³³ https://www.usaid.gov/sites/default/files/documents/1865/usaid_psepolicy_final.pdf

³⁴ <https://www.usaid.gov/climate/strategy>

- Improve conditions for teachers and strengthen their competencies.
- Reduce school repetition and over-age students in primary and secondary grades.
- Increase levels of student learning achievement, specifically a satisfactory level of proficiency in reading according to their grade, cycle and level reached.
- Improve development and performance of psychological, emotional, and psychosocial performance of the actors linked to the teaching and learning process.
- Roll out the National Program *Con Base* for grades 1 to 3.

The Activity will coordinate with those ministries and agencies of the GoDR whose mandate and actions intersect with the outcomes outlined in the activity results framework. These include but are not limited to the following:

- **MINERD:** Responsible for all education in the Dominican Republic.
- **Ministry of Development, Economy, and Planning:** Responsible for national-level development policies, strategies, and indicators related to youth and citizen security.
- **Ministry of Youth:** Youth policy and training in Positive Youth Development and MEL.
- **Ministry of Women:** Gender based violence prevention and female empowerment.
- **Dominican National Police:** Relationship building and joint crime and violence prevention planning with schools to assist in safe learning environments.

10.3 Coordination with Other Partners

The Activity will coordinate with other partners working in basic education in the Dominican Republic. These include but are not limited to the following:

- **United Nations Children’s Fund (UNICEF):** UNICEF implements the MINERD early grade reading and math initiative titled *Con Base*. The Project focuses on advancing early grade literacy and math development through sequenced lesson planning and teacher capacity development. The program includes theoretical and practical guides for teaching Spanish Language and Mathematics, a training plan for technicians, pedagogical coordinators, and teachers, and a monitoring methodological framework. The pedagogical practice promoted by the program is oriented to the teaching of the Spanish Language centered on the textual, functional and communicative approach. The methodology starts from the text to teach reading and writing and uses didactic sequences as a way of organizing the pedagogical processes. In the same way, play is included as an important strategy to develop learning.
- **Business Action for Education (EDUCA):** The Presidential Project for Educational Excellence aims to double the achievement level of third grade students by the year 2023 and quintuple the achievement level of sixth grade students in the area of mathematics by 2023. EDUCA supports directors, pedagogical coordinators, teachers and students of the 1st and 2nd cycle of the Primary Level of 53 educational centers.
- **Fundación Propagas:** Fundación Propagas has several education programs in the Dominican Republic including *Aprendemos*, which was established in an agreement with

MINERD to improve school climate and instruction; *Pequeños Científicos* focused on early science; *Lectores Saludables* focused on early literacy as well as physical and emotional health; *Ciudad Reciclada* focused on recycling at education centers; and *Eco Escuelas*, which is an international environmental certification program.

- **Dominican Initiative for Quality Education (IDEC):** A space for dialogue and agreement between different key actors involved in Dominican education. This initiative defines 10 educational policies, 30 priorities and 87 essential actions. In addition, it establishes a follow-up and monitoring system to ensure compliance with these commitments and thus improve the quality of education in our country. Representatives of civil society, the private sector, the public sector, different experts and international agencies are organized in thematic working groups. The tables are made up of 300 experts from different sectors, who work voluntarily and in a participatory manner in this process. Each table deals with a specific problem. Your job: identify the root of each problem and envision possible solutions. Once the table agrees on the path to follow, it draws up a detailed plan, where the following are displayed: the key actions to be carried out and their indicators, scheduled times, and the responsible entities.
- IDEICE

11. USAID Priorities: Key Considerations

The following represent key considerations and programmatic priorities for USAID and that the Activity will intentionally integrate across its programming:

11.1 Local Capacity Development and New Partnership Initiative: Applicants must address how local capacity development and new partnership initiatives (NPI) will be embedded in the activity from start to finish. In line with USAID principle of promoting local capacities, the Activity plans to use local organizations in implementation. The applicant will intentionally engage with local organizations in a way that develops their ability to design, implement and report on educational programming. Local capacity development for educational organizations will be an important component as part of the sustainability approach of the Activity. Lessons learned from past USAID interventions in the education and youth sectors will be taken into account throughout the implementation of the Activity.

Applicants may propose a small grants component of the Activity to bring in local, new, and underutilized partners to lead or support Activity interventions. Any proposed small grants or subawards must adhere to USAID ADS 303.3.21 on Subawards.

11.2 Sustainability: Applications must include a sustainability plan for how the Activity will sustain Activity results beyond the life of the Activity. The sustainability plan must include details on how the Activity will coordinate closely with MINERD, districts, schools, and other key local stakeholders to identify, build on, and roll out activities that will lead to sustainable improvements in learning outcomes for grades 1-3 and to include SEL methodologies for young learners' foundational skills development. Throughout implementation, the Activity will assess

the commitment and capacity of MINERD, school districts, select schools, and other local institutions to implement and sustain USAID-funded interventions. The Activity will achieve sustainability by strengthening evidence-based, replicable and scalable interventions, leveraging permanent streams of local resources, and increasing resiliency and adaptation. The Activity will contribute to sustainable outcomes by: (1) Providing support to school management systems for student enrollment, attendance, transition, and SEL; and (2) Strengthening community and family support to improve foundational SEL skills.

The sustainability plan must include concrete actions to communicate, coordinate, and harmonize work with USAID partners working with at-risk youth. Maintaining effective communication and collaboration mechanisms with other USAID and donor programs will be necessary for sustainability, especially at the national and district levels. This includes coordinating with stakeholders involved in violence reduction, such as local citizen security roundtables, Community Justice Houses, other USAID partners and other donor-funded activities to reduce school crime and violence.

11.3 Gender and Inclusive Development: USAID promotes a nondiscriminatory, inclusive, and integrated development approach that ensures that all people, including those who face discrimination, and thus may have limited access to a country's benefits, legal protections, or social participation, are fully included and can actively participate in and benefit from development processes and activities. Applications must explain how the needs of marginalized and underrepresented communities are central to the intervention and that members of these groups are included fully in the Activity design and implementation. The applicant shall intentionally include marginalized youth populations such as LGBTQI+ youth, orphans, youth that are trafficked and smuggled, young people with disabilities, youth of Haitian descent, Venezuelan youth migrants, and youth living with human immunodeficiency virus/acquired immunodeficiency syndrome (HIV/AIDS).

The U.S. government strategy to prevent and respond to Gender-Based Violence (GBV) globally include a framework to strategically combat various forms of violence, including domestic violence, sex trafficking, forced marriage, and female genital mutilation. To support this strategy, USAID/DR's new basic education activity will work to prevent GBV in primary schools and create safe learning spaces. This activity will address the most common forms of violence and abuse in schools that can develop into GBV habits in school as well as later in life, including bullying, gender equality, the stigmatization of children of foreign descent, and individuals of both sexes with disabilities.

Schools play an important role in the community, serving as a meeting point where families interact with school personnel, creating a critical link between education professionals and families. This proximity enables school personnel to more readily identify vulnerable parents who may be facing GBV and may need support in seeking help. The activity will seek ways to involve school personnel on how to identify individuals at risk of experiencing GBV and how to link these individuals and their families to service providers. Addressing GBV in the community reinforces preventing violence in primary schools and creates safe learning spaces.

Leveraging previous work, USAID assistance will work with school counselors and teachers on how to create and promote safe schools, on the prevention of school-based violence and abuse as well as social and emotional learning of students and teachers. The Activity will seek to increase in-school mentoring sessions to strengthen the implementation of violence detection and complaint routing strategies, and will support MINERD's National Norms of Behavior. School teachers, counselors, and psychologists will receive support on the topics of gender, inclusion, and safe schools; therefore helping teachers develop activities and promote a positive climate in schools. These efforts are expected to help bring about change in the acceptance of violence as a cultural norm in Dominican society.

The activity will engage with MINERD and local governments to support campaigns that raise awareness about school safety and security, family and GBV prevention, child protection, and the importance of a safe learning environment for all children. Activities will address GBV in schools by mobilizing students, teachers, and parents, around child protection and alternatives to violence. Additionally, beneficiaries will be exposed to training and lessons on tolerance and peace, which will ultimately improve citizens' sense of security.

The Activity will also focus on equity and inclusion at all levels of the intervention, ensuring areas such as policies, practices, environments, texts and materials are inclusive for all learners to access and receive a quality education. The Activity will inclusively meet the needs of girls and boys, learners with disabilities, migrants and Dominicans of Haitian descent, learners from rural and urban areas, learners living in poverty, and other marginalized populations. The Activity shall integrate the principles of UDL, equity and inclusion at the system and classroom levels.

The activity will work with parents and community associations, school boards, mentors, school counselors, and students to promote activities and tasks that support the inclusion of learners with special needs. School support for children with special needs will include referral to service providers, while civil society institutions and the government stakeholders who provide these services will also be mapped out.

It is expected that Basic Education Recovery Activity ensures an assessment is done at each grade level to determine needs for remediation. If there is evidence that disabilities exist beyond the scope of the activity, there should be a system in place to provide information that families can use for further diagnostics and sourcing additional support.

11.4 Private Sector Engagement: In alignment with the USAID Private Sector Engagement (PSE) policy, the Activity will identify and develop market-oriented approaches to challenges through which it can expand collaboration with the private sector to pursue more sustainable solutions. Many of the issues the Activity will address are directly related to private sector interests and key economic sectors. Certain business associations, such as the local chambers of commerce, the American Chamber of Commerce, the National Association of the Private Sector, and educational books publishing enterprises, are natural key stakeholders in these sectors and potential partners for the Activity. In addition, NGOs, foundations, and special funds that are funded by the private sector and support civic education and other related initiatives will also be included in these interventions and in implementing the PSE policy.

USAID/DR promotes the importance of responsible, inclusive, and transparent business practices and seeks to collaborate with those private sector entities that bring shared value to and act responsibly in the communities where they do business. The Activity will prioritize engagement with business associations, private sector-funded NGOs, and other private sector entities that can enhance service delivery and are aligned with governance objectives, leveraging private resources and technical assistance to increase the impact of such organizations on these matters.

Applications should include the role that the private sector will play in addressing the challenges and an explanation of PSE approaches including partnerships with private sector entities that leverage the private sector. Private sector partners will provide a broad ecosystem of technical assistance to MINERD to institutionalize and scale up best practices to strengthen the education system and prevent grade repetition. The applicant must identify a private sector partner that has demonstrated strong working relationships with senior-level MINERD personnel, understands the challenges being faced by MINERD, and has the capacity to communicate effectively with MINERD personnel across the different management levels. For more information, refer to the USAID Private Sector Engagement Policy.³⁵

12. Environmental Considerations

The Foreign Assistance Act of 1961, as amended, Section 117 requires that the impact of USAID's activities on the environment be considered and that USAID include environmental sustainability as a central consideration in designing and carrying out its development programs. This mandate is codified in Federal Regulations (22 CFR 216) and in USAID's ADS Parts 201 and 204 (<http://www.usaid.gov/who-we-are/agency-policy/series-200>), which, in part, require that the potential environmental impacts of USAID-financed activities are identified prior to a final decision to proceed and that appropriate environmental safeguards are adopted for all activities. The applicant's environmental compliance obligations under these regulations and procedures are specified in the following paragraphs of this RFA.

In addition, the applicant must comply with host country environmental regulations unless otherwise directed in writing by USAID.

The preliminary determination for the types of actions that the Activity will implement is Request for Categorical Exclusion (RCE). No construction activities are planned as well as any other activities that may have a potential impact on the environment. The RCE will be finalized and approved prior to any award.

As part of its initial Implementation Plan, and all Implementation Plans thereafter, the applicant, in collaboration with the USAID Agreement Officer Representative (AOR) and Mission Environmental Officer (MEO), Regional Environmental Officer or Bureau Environmental Officer, as appropriate, shall review all ongoing and planned activities under this award to determine if they are within the scope of the approved Regulation 216 environmental

³⁵ USAID Private Sector Engagement Strategy, https://www.usaid.gov/sites/default/files/documents/1865/usaid_psepolicy_final.pdf

Documentation.

If the applicant plans any new activities outside the scope of the RCE, it shall assist the AOR in preparing the appropriate environmental documentation for USAID review and approval. No such new activities shall be undertaken prior to receiving written USAID approval. Any ongoing activities found to be outside the scope of the approved regulation 216 environmental documentation shall be halted until an amendment to the documentation is submitted and written approval is received from USAID. In addition, if a negative determination with conditions is given as environmental threshold decision for the new activities the applicant will prepare, in collaboration with the USAID AOR and MEO, an Environmental Mitigation and Monitoring Plan (EMMP) describing how they will monitor the implementation of the conditions of the new actions.

Climate Risk Analysis: The design team, in consultation with the Mission Climate Integration Liaison, considered the potential effects of climate risks/stressors during implementation (changing precipitation patterns, rising temperature, floods, droughts, fires, landslides, etc.) The key risks related to the illustrative interventions identified in the screening are low. The applicant should be cognizant of any climate-related risks that may challenge achieving the expected results of the designs they are putting forward and include plans to manage them.

Advancing Climate Action in and through Education³⁶: Climate change poses challenges to education infrastructure and learning outcomes. It impacts marginalized populations disproportionately, worsening poverty and exacerbating non-climate stressors. As stated in USAID’s Climate Strategy, inclusive formal and informal pre-primary through higher education systems need to produce a generation of climate-aware citizens ready to innovate, take action, and engage with their governments to demand a more sustainable future. Climate change poses challenges to education infrastructure and learning outcomes. It impacts marginalized populations disproportionately, worsening poverty and exacerbating non-climate stressors. The activity will include in its programming:

1. Partner with Ministries to integrate climate themes in pre-primary education, basic education, higher education, and youth workforce development curriculum.
2. Support education leaders to plan for climate resilience and green infrastructure.
3. Encourage the private sector to build skills for green jobs.
4. Engage school leaders to advocate for improved environmental practices and attitudes in their schools and communities.
5. Engage, students, parents, and communities to serve as climate action leaders and knowledge generators

Important Note

The term “program” as used in 2 CFR 200 and this NOFO is typically considered by USAID to be an Activity supporting one or more Project(s) pursuant to specific Development Objectives. Please see 2 CFR 700 for the USAID specific definitions of the terms “Activity” and “Project” as

³⁶ <https://docs.google.com/document/d/1PUABSS0PfrMYSwdz2jUd-399CcxgPzU0NPaGrzZVY4/edit>

used in the USAID context for purposes of planning, design, and implementation of USAID development assistance.

[END OF SECTION A]

SECTION B: FEDERAL AWARD INFORMATION

1. Estimate of Funds Available and Number of Awards Contemplated

USAID intends to award a Cooperative Agreement pursuant to this notice of funding opportunity. Subject to funding availability and at the discretion of the Agency, USAID intends to provide US\$24 million in total USAID funding over a five (5) year period.

2. Start Date and Period of Performance for Federal Awards

The anticipated period of performance is five (5) years. The estimated start date will be November/December 2023.

3. Substantial Involvement

The award will be a Cooperative Agreement and in accordance with ADS 303.3.11(b), the intended areas of substantial involvement are:

- a. The Agency's approval of the recipient's implementation plans during performance. USAID generally only requires approval of implementation plans annually; however, where changed contexts or new information require a pivot in the activity, USAID may consider changes to an implementation plan more frequently.
- b. The Agency's ability to immediately halt an activity if the recipient does not meet detailed performance specifications (for example, construction specifications). These would be provisions that go beyond the suspension remedies of the Federal Government for noncompliance as stated in 2 CFR 200, including non-performance. The award must state that the AO may immediately halt an activity when identified specifications are not met. The award must include the identified specifications when executed. The AO and Recipient must sign a bilateral amendment for any material changes to the specifications in the award.
- c. The Agency's review and approval of substantive provisions of proposed subawards or contracts (see definitions in 2 CFR 200). These would be provisions that go beyond existing policies on Federal review of recipient procurement standards and sole source procurement.
- d. The Agency's involvement in the selection of key recipient personnel. This does not include provisions in assistance instruments for the participation of a named Principal Investigator for research projects.
- e. Agency and recipient collaboration or joint participation, such as when the recipient's successful accomplishment of program objectives would benefit from USAID's technical knowledge. There should be sufficient reason for the Agency's involvement and the involvement should be specifically tailored to support identified elements in the program

description. Additionally, if the program establishes an advisory committee that provides advice to the recipient, USAID may participate as a member of this committee as well. Advisory committees must only deal with programmatic or technical issues, and not routine administrative matters.

- f. Agency monitoring to permit specific kinds of direction or redirection of the work because of the interrelationships with other projects or activities. All such direction or redirection must be within the program description budget, and other terms and conditions of the award.

4. Authorized Geographic Code

The geographic code for the procurement of commodities and services under this program is code 937, which includes the United States, the recipient country, and developing countries other than advanced developing countries, but excluding any country that is a prohibited source.

5. 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 Basic Education Recovery Activity 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]

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.

Faith-based organizations are eligible to apply for federal financial assistance on the same basis as any other organization and are subject to the protections and requirements of Federal law.

2. Cost Sharing or Matching

USAID has established a mandatory minimum recipient cost share of US\$2.4 million for the award. Such funds may be provided directly by the recipient; other multilateral, bilateral, and foundation donors; host governments; and local organizations, communities and private businesses that contribute financially and in-kind to implementation of activities at the country level. This may include contribution of staff level of effort, office space or other facilities or equipment which may be used for the program, provided by the recipient. For guidance on cost sharing in grants and cooperative agreements see 2 CFR 200.306.

[END OF SECTION C]

SECTION D: APPLICATION AND SUBMISSION INFORMATION

1. Agency Point of Contact

Name: Mr. Chadwick Mills
Title: Regional Agreement Officer (AO)
Email: cmills@usaid.gov
Telephone number: +1-809-368-7563

Name: Mr. Omar Trigo
Title: Administrative Agreement Officer
Email: otrigo@usaid.gov
Telephone number: +1-809-368-7738

2. Questions and Answers

Questions regarding this NOFO should be submitted by email to both Mr. Chadwick Mills at cmills@usaid.gov and Mr. Omar Trigo at otrigo@usaid.gov no later than the date and time indicated on the cover letter, as amended. Any information given to the prospective applicant concerning this NOFO will be furnished promptly to the 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 the prospective applicant.

3. General Content and Form of Application

Preparation of Application:

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. Application 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 the application comply with the page limitations.
- Written in English.
- Use standard 8 ½” x 11”, single sided, single-spaced, 12 point Times New Roman font, 1” margins, left justification and headers and/or footers on each page including consecutive page numbers, date of submission, and applicant’s name.
- 10 point font can be used for graphs and charts. Tables however, must comply with the 12 point Times New Roman requirement.
- Submitted via Microsoft Word or 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 or 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 proof of timely delivery in the form of system generated documentation of delivery receipt date and time, confirmation from the receiving office and/or certified email receipt.

Applications must be submitted by email to both Mr. Chadwick Mills at cmills@usaid.gov and Mr. Omar Trigo at otrigo@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/Dominican Republic/Regional Office of Acquisition and Assistance (ROAA) cannot guarantee their acceptance by the internet server. File size must not exceed 25 M per email.

5. Technical Application Format

The **Technical Application is limited to 25 pages (excluding annexes)** and should be specific, complete, and presented concisely. The application must demonstrate the applicant's capabilities and expertise with respect to achieving the goals of this program. The application should take into account the requirements of the program and merit review criteria found in this NOFO. The Technical Application must contain the following required sections:

a) Cover Page (See Section D.3 above for requirements)

b) Table of Contents

Include major sections and page numbering to easily cross-reference and identify merit review criteria.

c) List of Acronyms (Optional)

d) Executive Summary (One page)

The Executive Summary must provide a high-level overview of key elements of the Technical Application.

e) Technical Approach

The Technical Approach must demonstrate a clear, logical and well defined technical and management approach to addressing the goals, outcomes and activities outlined in the Results Framework. The applicant should demonstrate an understanding of the key needs, barriers, and opportunities for improving foundational skills (literacy & SEL) in the Dominican Republic, specifically for the most marginalized and vulnerable populations. The proposed approach should complement the Ministry of Education's strategic priorities and the ConBase reading curriculum to sustainably achieve the desired outcomes outlined in the PD.

Based on the key needs, challenges, and opportunities identified, the Applicant must propose a logical theory of change with clear causal linkages for sustainably addressing the challenges in the system. The applicant must clearly describe how their approach will achieve the IRs and Sub-IRs in the results framework.

The application must include a viable and feasible implementation plan, including an outline of an illustrative year one work plan (no more than 2 pages), informed by evidence and the local context. The implementation plan must describe how it will achieve the desired outcomes for all learners in the target areas inclusive of marginalized and vulnerable populations. These populations may consider, but are not limited to, gender, learners with disabilities, students whose first language is not Spanish, students affected by crisis and/or conflict, and those furthest behind in learning outcomes.

The technical approach must include a sound Monitoring, Evaluation, and Learning (MEL) Plan. The MEL Plan must reflect realistic, applicable indicators to measure achievements according to the desired outcomes of the Activity with appropriate disaggregations, realistic targets, and a robust methodology for data collection and verification plans. In addition the plan must show how Collaborating, Learning and Adapting (CLA), including flexible, iterative program tracking and management to learn and adapt in response to changing country context and emerging needs, will be incorporated. The approach must also demonstrate effective coordination, integration and complementarity among the Activity's components.

f) Management and Staffing Plan

The Technical Application must include a Management and Staffing Plan that describes the Applicant's proposed management structure and the processes and approaches it will use to provide the technical and advisory services described in the PD. The Applicant will specify the

functions, management, and decision-making authority for Key Personnel and any sub-awardees noted in the management structure. The Applicant should demonstrate strong alliances, consortia, or partnering arrangements to proactively address potential problems with flexible and workable solutions. The Applicant will maintain open, timely and effective communications with USAID, resulting in an implementation partnership that is adaptive, effective and results-oriented.

If the Applicant intends to develop broad institutional partnerships, alliances, sub-contracts, or sub agreements as part of implementing the PD, the Applicant shall clearly identify and describe the roles and responsibilities of each entity. The Applicant must discuss the nature of organizational linkages between the prime awardee and any sub-awardees, partner, and joint venture entity. This will include a discussion of roles and responsibilities, relationships, lines of authority, accountability and mechanisms for utilizing and sharing resources to achieve results.

The Management and Staffing Plan should include the following elements:

- An organizational chart that shows logical and appropriate links between Key Personnel and non-key staff and relationships between the Applicant and any proposed partner organizations (if the applicant proposes sub-awardees).
- A labor mix of Key Personnel with relevant education and experience that fits the technical approach and is able to successfully carry out activities and tasks within reasonable requested timeframes, meet quality standards, and achieve the objectives outlined in the PD.
- Roles and responsibilities for Key Personnel, communication arrangements with USAID including specific functions, management, and decision making authorities, and the roles and responsibilities of any partner organizations. The application should provide a realistic approach with steps for Activity start-up and associated dates.
- A staffing plan indicating proposed key personnel positions, descriptions of duties and the linkages between staff and achieving the expected results.

Key Personnel

The Key Personnel required for the performance of this award include a Chief of Party and three additional Key Personnel staff to be proposed by the Applicant. All key personnel must be professionally proficient in English and Spanish.

The Applicant shall propose their own Key Personnel labor mix to fit their technical approach. The Key Personnel are responsible for management, facilitation, and ensuring that activities and tasks are carried out within reasonable requested timeframes, meet quality standards, and achieve the objectives outlined in the PD.

The Applicant must immediately notify USAID of any proposed Key Personnel changes and the reasons therefore. The Applicant must take steps to immediately rectify this situation and will propose a substitute candidate for each vacated position along with a budget impact statement in sufficient detail to permit evaluation of the impact. Substitute candidates must meet the minimum qualifications as defined in this NOFO. The Applicant must not replace any of the proposed Key Personnel without notifying USAID.

The application must present in an annex CVs that detail experience, education, and qualifications of each Key Personnel. The applicant must include a list of three to five references and contact information. Roles and requirements of the Chief of Party are as follows:

Chief of Party

Responsible for overall and day-to-day management of award activities, involving multiple tasks across multiple locations. Demonstrates high-level strategic vision for advancing desired outcomes outlined in the PD, excellent management skills and leadership of complex projects. Provides effective technical and project management guidance and overall coordination to the project team and is responsible for the quality of all work products. Organizes, directs and coordinates the planning and production of all award support activities, effectively leveraging partners' expertise. Responsible for staffing, project planning, project financials, and staff direction and oversight. Maintains and manages the relationship with USAID.

Experience & Education: Minimum of 12 years experience working in international education and/or international development; and a minimum of 8 years experience in managing large, complex, donor-funded international development programs in education or other fields. A minimum of 5 years of demonstrable experience providing technical and operational management of education programs required, with experience managing large teams across multiple partner organizations, particularly in politically sensitive contexts. The Chief of Party must evidence skills in problem solving, leadership, communication, consensus building and coordination of diverse stakeholders including government, civil society and local community actors. A Master's degree in education, international development, or a related field required. Must be professionally proficient and fluent in written and spoken Spanish and English. Regional experience is desirable.

The Applicant must clearly define the roles, responsibilities, and requirements for each of the three additional Key Personnel positions proposed for the Activity. All Key Personnel must be professionally proficient in written and spoken Spanish and English.

g) Partnerships and Sustainability

The Applicant must present a sustainability and partnership plan that is realistic and ensures that the desired results of the program can be sustained after the completion of the Activity, including for marginalized and vulnerable populations. The application must include plans to work with key levels of government and present intervention strategies that align with existing MINERD systems and education programs.

The technical approach must clearly specify the Applicant's anticipated primary local partners, including specific stakeholders within MINERD, public and private organizations, and alliances, and outline how the Applicant will oversee these contractual and non-contractual relationships to promote capacity strengthening, local ownership and sustainability of interventions and desired outcomes over the life of the award and beyond.

h) Past Performance and Institutional Capability

The Applicant (including major sub-awardees) must provide information regarding its recent history of **relevant** performance for its cost-reimbursement, contracts, grants and/or cooperative agreements involving similar or related programs, not to exceed 3 awards. Past performance and institutional capability information should include the following:

- Examples demonstrating Applicant's ability to improve and sustain foundational learning skills, including early grade literacy and social and emotional skills, for marginalized and vulnerable learners.
- Additionally, examples should highlight performance strengthening education systems and building successful partnerships.

Information for each award should include:

- Name of Award
- Award Number (if USAID)
- Activity Title
- A brief description of the Activity (including lessons learned)
- Period of Performance
- Award amount
- Reports and findings from any audits performed in the last (3) years
- Name of at least two (2) updated professional contacts who most directly observed the work at the organization for which the service was performed with complete current contact information including telephone number, and e-mail address for each proposed individual.

If the Applicant encountered problems on any of the referenced Awards, it may provide a short explanation and the correction taken. The Applicant should not provide general information on its performance irrelevant to the award scope. USAID may use past performance information obtained from other sources identified or those supplied by the Applicant/major sub-award. USAID shall determine the relevance of similar past performance information. The Agency may request additional information and conduct a pre-award survey if it determines that it is necessary to inform the risk assessment.

6. Business (Cost) Application Format

The Business (Cost) Application must be submitted separately from the Technical Application. While no page limit exists for the full cost application, applicants are encouraged to be as concise as possible while still providing the necessary details. The business (cost) application must illustrate the entire period of performance, using the budget format shown in the SF-424A.

Prior to award, the applicants may be required to submit additional documentation deemed necessary for the Agreement Officer to assess the applicant's risk in accordance with 2 CFR 200.206. The applicant should not submit any additional information with their initial application.

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

a) Cover Page (See Section D.3 above for requirements)

b) SF 424 Form(s)

The applicant must sign and submit the cost application using the SF-424 series. Standard Forms can be accessed electronically at <https://www.grants.gov/web/grants/forms/sf-424-family.html>

Failure to accurately complete these forms could result in the rejection of the application.

c) 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).

d) Budget and Budget Narrative

The Budget must be submitted as one unprotected Excel file (MS Office 2000 or later versions) with visible formulas and references and must be broken out by project year, including itemization of the federal and non-federal (cost share) amount. Files must not contain any hidden or otherwise inaccessible cells. Budgets with hidden cells lengthen the cost analysis time required to make an award, and may result in a rejection of the cost application. The Budget Narrative must contain sufficient detail to allow USAID to understand the proposed costs. The applicant must ensure the budgeted costs address any additional requirements identified in Section F, such as Branding and Marking. The Budget Narrative must be thorough, including sources for costs to support USAID’s determination that the proposed costs are fair and reasonable. The applicant must refer to and complete (fill) the attached **ANNEX 1 – DETAIL & SUMMARY BUDGET TEMPLATE**.

The Budget must include the following worksheets or tabs, and contents, at a minimum:

- Summary Budget, inclusive of all program costs (federal and non-federal), broken out by major budget category and by year for activities implemented by the applicant and any potential sub-applicants for the entire period of the program. See Section H, Annex 1 for Summary Budget Template.

- Detailed Budget, including a breakdown by year, sufficient to allow the Agency to determine that the costs represent a realistic and efficient use of funding to implement the applicant's program and are allowable in accordance with the cost principles found in 2 CFR 200 Subpart E.
- Detailed Budgets for each sub-recipient, for all federal funding and cost share, broken out by budget category and by year, for the entire implementation period of the project.

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 – (if applicable) If the applicant has a fringe benefit rate approved by an agency of the U.S. Government, the applicant must use such rate and provide evidence of its approval. If an applicant does not have a fringe benefit rate approved, the applicant must propose a rate and explain how the applicant determined the rate. In this case, the Budget Narrative must include a detailed breakdown comprised of all items of fringe benefits (e.g., superannuation, gratuity, etc.) and the costs of each, expressed in U.S. dollars and as a percentage of salaries.
- 3) Travel and Transportation – Provide details to explain the purpose of the trips, the number of trips, the origin and destination, the number of individuals traveling, and the duration of the trips. Per Diem and associated travel costs must be based on the applicant's normal travel policies. When appropriate please provide supporting documentation as an attachment, such as company travel policy, and explain assumptions in the Budget Narrative.
- 4) Procurement or Rental of Goods (Equipment & Supplies), Services, and Real Property – 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) Subawards – Specify the budget for the portion of the program to be passed through to any subrecipients. See 2 CFR 200 for assistance in determining whether the sub-tier entity is a

subrecipient or contractor. The subrecipient budgets must align with the same requirements as the applicant's budget, including those related to fringe and indirect costs.

- 6) Construction – If applicable (See [ADS 303.3.30](#))
- 7) Other Direct Costs – This may include other costs not elsewhere specified, such as report preparation costs, passports and visas fees, medical exams and inoculations, as well as any other miscellaneous costs which directly benefit the program proposed by the applicant. The applicant should indicate the subject, venue and duration of any proposed conferences and seminars, and their relationship to the objectives of the program, along with estimates of costs. Otherwise, the narrative should be minimal.
- 8) 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.

Notes:

De Minimis rate: Eligible non-Federal organizations are authorized by 2 CFR 200 to elect to use the de minimis rate. The AO must not deny use of the de minimis rate unless the applicant fails to meet the conditions for its use.

Timing - The AO should consider how much information will be required in the initial application. The initial application should require minimal supporting documentation, but if the AO and the apparently successful applicant will pursue approval of either a NICRA where one does not currently exist or a fixed amount, the AO must request additional information and should conduct a pre-award survey.

- 9) Cost Sharing – The applicant should estimate the amount of cost-sharing resources to be provided over the life of the agreement and specify the sources of such resources, and the basis of calculation in the budget narrative. Applicants should also provide a breakdown of the cost share (financial and in-kind contributions) of all organizations involved in implementing the resulting award.

e) 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.

f) 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
- DUNS Number or 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.

g) Unique Entity Identifier (UEI) and SAM Requirements

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/>.

h) History of Performance

(This is in addition to the History of Relevant Performance information requested above in the ‘Technical Application Format’ Section)

The applicant must provide information regarding its recent history of performance for all its cost-reimbursement contracts, grants, or cooperative agreements involving similar or related programs, not to exceed 5 years, as follows:

- Name of the Awarding Organization;
- Award Number;
- Activity Title;
- A brief description of the activity;
- Period of Performance;
- Award Amount;
- Reports and findings from any audits performed in the last 5 years; and
- Name of at least two (2) updated professional contacts who most directly observed the work at the organization for which the service was performed with complete current contact information including telephone number, and e-mail address for each proposed individual.

Applicants shall complete (fill out) the attached **ANNEX 4 – PAST PERFORMANCE INFORMATION FORM TEMPLATE** for relevant projects or awards for which the applicant has served as Prime in the past 5 years. If the applicant has not served as the Prime for a relevant project or award in the past 5 years, the applicant may submit the PPI form for any relevant projects or awards on which the Applicant has served as a subaward/subcontractor in the past 5 years (please note this clearly on the submission).

If the applicant encountered problems on any of the referenced Awards, it may provide a short explanation and the corrective action taken. The applicant should not provide general information on its performance. USAID reserves the right to obtain relevant information concerning an applicant’s history of performance from any sources and may consider such information in its review of the applicant’s risk. The Agency may request additional information and conduct a pre-award survey if it determines that it is necessary to inform the risk assessment.

i) 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 follow instructions provided in the Pre-award Terms found in [ADS 303mba entitled “Branding Strategy – Assistance” and “Marking Plan – Assistance”](#) for preparing the strategy and plan. The applicant must complete (fill) the attached **ANNEX 3 – BRANDING STRATEGY & MARKING PLAN TEMPLATE**.

j) 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.

k) Conflict of Interest Pre-Award Term

Applicants must follow the Pre-award Terms found in [ADS 303mba entitled “Conflict of Interest Pre-Award Term”](#)

[END OF SECTION D]

SECTION E: APPLICATION REVIEW INFORMATION

1. Criteria

The merit review criteria prescribed here are tailored to the requirements of this particular NOFO. The applicant should note that these criteria serve to: (a) identify the significant matters which the applicant should address in its application, and (b) set the standard against which the application will be evaluated.

Technical and other factors will be evaluated relative to each other, as described here and prescribed by the Technical Application Format. The Technical Application will be scored by a Merit Review Committee (MRC) using the criteria described in this section.

2. Review and Selection Process

The Technical Application will be evaluated by a Merit Review Committee composed of USAID personnel. The applicant's proposed cost sharing will be considered in the review process, as opposed to being an eligibility criterion. The Cost/Business Application will be evaluated by the Agreement Officer, Agreement Specialist, and Financial Analyst on a cost effectiveness and realism analysis. The Agreement Officer will make the final selection.

a) Merit Review

USAID will conduct a merit review of all applications received that comply with the instructions in this NOFO. Applications will be reviewed and evaluated in accordance with the following criteria shown below, all are in descending order of importance:

Merit Review Criteria #1 - Technical Approach

The Technical Approach will be evaluated based on the extent to which the application:

- Proposes a logical, evidence-based approach and theory of change that responds to the desired outcomes, intermediate results, and sub-intermediate results outlined in the Program Description of the RFA.
- Demonstrates an understanding of the key needs, barriers, and opportunities in the Dominican Republic, specifically for the most marginalized and vulnerable populations, to complement the Ministry of Education's strategic priorities and the national reading curriculum (ConBase), to sustainably achieve the desired outcomes outlined in the PD.
- Clearly articulates a viable and feasible implementation plan informed by evidence and the local context. Clearly describes how it will achieve the desired outcomes for all learners in the target areas inclusive of marginalized and vulnerable populations.
- Includes a Monitoring, Evaluation, and Learning (MEL) Plan that reflects realistic, applicable

indicators and targets, a robust data collection methodology, relevant learning questions, incorporation of Collaborating, Learning and Adapting (CLA), and complementarity among the Activity's components.

Merit Review Criteria #2 - Management and Staffing Plan

The Management and Staffing Plan will be evaluated based on the extent to which the application:

- Includes an organizational chart that shows logical and appropriate links between Key Personnel and non-key staff and relationships between the Applicant and any proposed partner organizations (if the applicant proposes sub-awardees).
- Proposes a labor mix of Key Personnel with relevant education and experience that fits the technical approach and is able to successfully carry out activities and tasks within reasonable requested timeframes, meet quality standards, and achieve the objectives outlined in the PD.
- Clearly articulates the roles, responsibilities, and requirements for Key Personnel, communication arrangements with USAID including specific functions, management, and decision making authorities, and the roles and responsibilities of any partner organizations. Demonstrates a realistic approach with steps for Activity start-up and associated dates.
- Includes a staffing plan with a clear description of all positions necessary to achieve the expected results, demonstrating a balance between technical and managerial areas as well as local and regional experts to comply with the activities described in the PD.

Merit Review Criteria #3 - Partnerships and Sustainability

Partnerships and Sustainability will be evaluated based on the extent to which the application:

- Clearly articulates a sustainability and partnership plan that is realistic and ensures that the desired results of the program can be sustained after completion of the Activity, including for marginalized and vulnerable populations.
- Presents a clear strategy and actionable plans for working with key levels of government and how the proposed interventions may be integrated into existing MINERD systems and education programs.
- Clearly specifies the Applicant's anticipated primary local partners, including specific stakeholders within MINERD, public and private organizations, and alliances, and outline how the Applicant will oversee these contractual and non-contractual relationships to promote capacity strengthening, local ownership and sustainability of interventions and desired outcomes over the life of the activity and beyond.

Merit Review Criteria #4 - Past Performance and Institutional Capability

Past Performance and Institutional Capability will be evaluated based on the extent to which the applicant:

- Demonstrates proven capability to improve and sustain foundational learning skills, including early grade literacy and social and emotional skills, for marginalized and vulnerable learners.
- Demonstrates successful implementation of similar activities as well as experience in strengthening education systems.
- Demonstrates successful past experience in managing and implementing similar programs, in size and scale; Timeliness of performance, cost, and scope; Articulates lessons learned during past experiences and how lessons learned informed the proposed technical approach.
- Demonstrates experience leveraging successful partnerships with government and the private sector to achieve sustainable results; and experience working with a broad range of sub-grantees, registered organizations, community based organizations, informal groups and networks to improve quality education service delivery.

b) Business Review

The Agency 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 in accordance with the cost principles found in 2 CFR 200 Subpart E.

The Agency will also consider (1) the extent of the applicant's understanding of the financial aspects of the program and the applicant's ability to perform the activities within the amount requested; (2) whether the applicant's plans will achieve the program objectives with reasonable economy and efficiency; and (3) whether any special conditions relating to costs should be included in the award.

Proposed cost share, if provided, will be reviewed for compliance with the standards set forth in 2 CFR 200.306, 2 CFR 700.10, and the Standard Provision "Cost Sharing (Matching)" for U.S. entities, or the Standard Provision "Cost Share" for non-U.S. entities.

The AO will perform a risk assessment (2 CFR 200.206). The AO may determine that a pre-award survey is required to inform the risk assessment in determining whether the prospective recipient has the necessary organizational, experience, accounting and operational controls, financial resources, and technical skills – or ability to obtain them – in order to achieve the objectives of the program and comply with the terms and conditions of the award. Depending on the result of the risk assessment, the AO will decide to execute the award, not execute the award, or award with “specific conditions” (2 CFR 200.208).

[END OF SECTION E]

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, the potential applicant is hereby notified of these requirements and conditions for the award. A notice of award signed by the Agreement Officer is the authorizing document that the successful applicant can expect to receive via email for countersignature, following selection.

2. Administrative & National Policy Requirements

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

For US organizations: [ADS 303](#), [2 CFR 700](#), [2 CFR 200](#), and [Standard Provisions for U.S. Non-governmental organizations](#).

For Non US organizations: [ADS 303](#), [Standard Provisions for Non-U.S. Non-governmental Organizations](#).

See **ANNEX 2**, for a list of the Standard Provisions that will be applicable to any awards resulting from this NOFO.

3. Reporting Requirements

This section includes general information regarding the type (e.g., financial or performance), frequency, and means of submission of award reporting requirements. The types and frequency of financial and programmatic reports will be strictly limited to those detailed in [2 CFR 200](#) (For output or unit cost data refer to [2 CFR 200.328](#)).

- **Financial Reporting:** The Recipient will be required to submit on a quarterly basis by e-mail the [Standard Form 425](#) or [Standard Form 425a](#), Federal Financial Report.

Every month when requesting Advance and reporting expenditures send the following supporting documents electronically: Two (separate) SF-1034 with two (separate) Report of Expenditures and Advance Control (REAC), one requesting the advance and the other one reporting expenditures. Attached to each REAC should be two expenditures reports: 1) One for expenditures reported, and 2) For expenditures projected for requesting advance.

- **Annual Performance Reports:** Yearly, USAID requires the recipient to prepare and submit performance reports reflecting more detailed data on achievements and targets. This annual performance report will provide a comprehensive summary of actions, progress towards results, implementation and management issues, and solutions to those issues for a period of

approximately one year. The AOR will receive a narrative report describing the achievement of targets, and for selected indicators the data will be entered into a selected platform. Due dates for these reports are on or about October 31. The report should at minimum include the following: a) explanation of quantifiable output of the programs or projects supported; b) reasons why established goals and objectives were not met, if appropriate; c) cost reporting that follows the Cost Reporting Guidance for USAID-Funded Education Activities (<https://www.edu-links.org/sites/default/files/media/file/USAID%20Cost%20Reporting%20Guidance%202018%20FINAL%20%281%29.pdf>) and an analysis and explanation of cost overruns or high unit costs; and d) information on all awards made to sub-partners. The Recipient must immediately notify USAID of developments that have a significant impact on award-supported activities. Further, notification must include a statement of the action taken or contemplated, and any assistance needed to resolve the situation. The exact format of the annual report will be determined in collaboration with the AOR.

For the final activity year, this report shall also summarize overall activity achievements and issues, and shall be titled as the final activity report. Specific instructions for the submission of the final report will be included in the resulting award from this NOFO.

Cost Reporting. As noted in the previous paragraph, the APR must include a section on cost reporting. The cost reporting section of the APRs must comply with the cost data collection and reporting as outlined in USAID's Cost Reporting Guidance and Annexes. In collaboration with USAID, the Recipient will select from the list of categories found in the USAID Cost Reporting Guidance to create cost codes relevant for the activity and aligned with cost analysis questions of interest to USAID Mission, Partner Government and/or the Recipient. Sub-codes for non-recurrent costs (creation of the intervention) and recurrent costs (implementation of the intervention) for categories with substantial non-recurrent costs must be included. The USAID Cost Reporting Guidance provides a list of additional optional sub-codes.

The cost data noted above must be collected on a continual basis by the Awardee following standard procedures, to ensure that the entirety of activity expenditure is captured. The Recipient must document details of the cost reporting system in a Cost Reporting Manual, to be submitted to USAID by the end of the first quarter of the Award. The Awardee must deliver a cost report and supporting data in Excel format following standard financial reporting format according to the schedule specified in the agreement, with additional disaggregation by agreed-upon standard cost categories. The report must include disaggregated expenditure for the reporting period, with the standard financial reporting categories (labor with local and international reported separately, fringe, materials procured, rent, travel, and overhead recovery) for each cost category. The report must indicate which expenditure was incurred through a sub-award to another organization as well as local versus international expenditure.

Additionally, the Recipient also must document and report a) details of the intervention, both as outputs and the dosage at the beneficiary level, and b) activity-critical inputs from other sources, following templates in the Cost Reporting Guidance. Activity-critical inputs from other sources may include donated resources such as volunteer time, in-kind equipment/ infrastructure and services, and any beneficiary/stakeholder inputs and other unpaid inputs that are often not

accounted for in traditional budgets. The USAID Cost Reporting Guidance provides information and templates for capturing these data. The Recipient is not responsible for monetizing these inputs, unless this information is readily available. The Recipient must follow templates in the Cost Reporting Guidance.

- **Quarterly Reports:** This report shall present progress toward achieving planned results as well as the resources expended over the course of the quarter. The planned timeline, achievements, and expenditures shall be presented for both core and field activities. The format should be concise and include information in both qualitative and quantitative form. The exact format of the quarterly performance monitoring report will be determined in collaboration with the AOR, and shall be submitted within 30 days of the end of the quarter. These reports shall be presented along with a Quarterly Data Registry (QDR) in which all indicators and results are listed. The Quarterly Reports must follow the performance reporting requirements in [2 CFR 200.328 – Monitoring and Reporting Program Performance](#).

- **Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning (MEL) Plan:** Both the recipient and USAID will have specific roles and responsibilities throughout the implementation of this activity. A steering committee composed of USAID, the recipient, and MINERD representatives will guide and monitor the implementation of this activity. USAID will provide oversight during the activity's implementation, and will participate in monthly follow-up sessions to review the progress of this activity, validation/approval of reports, technical and strategic guidance.

At the start of this agreement, the recipient will develop an overall Monitoring, Evaluation, and Learning (MEL) plan for the activity that outlines a process for monitoring, evaluating, learning, and reporting progress towards the achievement of the activity objectives and results. The MEL plan will present the activity's theory of change and a full range of indicators intended to be mutually useful for the activity and for USAID as a tool for monitoring, evaluating, improving the activity, documenting and communicating best practices and lessons learned. The MEL plan will be submitted to the Agreement Officer Representative (AOR) within 90 days of granting the award, and will be revised as appropriate on an ongoing basis in collaboration with the AOR.

The activity's overall MEL plan will include, at a minimum:

1. Indicators that will be used to monitor progress of student reading outcomes, social and emotional skills, and system strengthening;
2. Annual and life-of-activity targets for expected results;
3. Performance Indicator Reference Sheet (PIRS) which contains each indicator's definition, data sources, methods for data collection, management, and reporting;
4. Data quality assurance approaches and how activity data will be used to make management decisions to continuously improve the performance of the activity over the course of implementation period; and
5. Learning and evaluation sections.

While the foundation for the overall MEL plan is the Activity's Objectives and Results Framework, the MEL Plan must also reflect, as appropriate, USAID and other key USG and

GoDR guidelines and reporting requirements. When feasible and appropriate, the activity will rely on existing country information systems as the source of data. All data collection activities described in the overall MEL plan, including evaluation studies, will be determined in consultation with the AOR, and will be driven by country interest and USAID priorities, and will be dependent on the availability of funding. Applicants must include the data source(s) and reporting frequency for each proposed indicator.

Table 1. Illustrative Indicators

Activity Goal and Results	Illustrative Indicators
<p>Activity Goal: Strengthened national education system that promotes and sustains age-appropriate, grade-level reading proficiency and socio-emotional learning of targeted students by the end of third grade.</p>	<p><i>(Outcome) ES.1-48: Percent of learners targeted for USG assistance with an increase of at least one proficiency level in reading at the end of grade 2</i></p> <p><i>(Outcome) ES.1-1: Percent of learners targeted for USG assistance who attain a minimum grade-level proficiency in reading at the end of grade 2</i></p> <p><i>(Output) ES.1-3: Number of learners in primary schools or equivalent non-school based settings reached with USG education assistance</i></p>
<p>Intermediate Result (IR) 1: Third grade students demonstrate increased reading proficiency and decreased student repetition in marginalized schools employing inclusive, remedial reading instruction.</p>	<p><i>(Outcome) Supp-10: Percent of educators providing quality classroom instruction with USG support (quality in the remedial instruction)</i></p> <p><i>(Output) Custom: Number of students receiving remedial education support from USG-assisted program (disaggregates important here: e.g. learners with disabilities, Haitian/other minorities)</i></p>
<p>Sub-IR 1.1: Targeted schools utilize new and existing evidence-based inclusive teaching and learning remedial reading materials in grades pre-first to third.</p>	<p><i>(Output) ES.1-55: Percent of learners targeted for USG assistance who have the appropriate variety of reading materials in the language of instruction with inclusive representation of diverse populations (focused on remedial reading and UDL instruction)</i></p>
<p>Sub-IR 1.2: School staff demonstrate strengthened capacity to deliver inclusive, remedial reading instruction in grades</p>	<p><i>(Output) ES.1-6: Number of educators who complete professional development activities with USG assistance</i></p> <p><i>(Output) Custom: Number of monthly coaching visits per</i></p>

pre-first to third.	<i>teacher</i>
Sub-IR 1.3: Targeted schools strengthen supplemental remedial reading instruction plans in extended school day programs in grades 1 to 3.	<p><i>(Outcome) Custom: Percentage of schools implementing supplemental remedial instruction plan in the extended school day</i></p> <p><i>(Output) Custom: Number of students attending extended school day remedial support program (disaggregates important here)</i></p>
Sub-IR 1.4: Targeted schools implement early warning systems to identify academically at-risk students in grades 1 to 3.	<p><i>(Output) Custom: Number of schools implementing an early warning system</i></p> <p><i>(Outcome) Custom: Percentage of students transitioning from third grade to fourth grade</i></p>
IR 2: Social and emotional wellbeing in targeted schools improved for grades pre-first to third.	<p><i>(Outcome) Custom: Percent of individuals targeted for USG assistance with improved social and emotional skills (disaggregated by learners and school staff).</i></p> <p><i>(Output) ES.1-51: Percentage of learning environments supported by USG assistance that have improved safety, according to locally-defined criteria</i></p>
Sub-IR 2.1: Targeted schools integrate social and emotional learning approach into classroom instruction in grades pre-first to third.	<i>(Outcome) Custom: Percentage of schools implementing strategies developed to improve SEL of staff and teachers</i>
Sub-IR 2.2: Targeted schools utilize SEL teaching and learning materials in grades pre-first to third.	<i>(Output) ES.1-55: Percent of learners targeted for USG assistance who have the appropriate variety of reading materials in the language of instruction with inclusive representation of diverse populations (focused on SEL instruction)</i>
Sub-IR 2.3: School communities demonstrate increased capacity to improve social emotional learning for students in grades pre-first to third.	<p><i>(Outcome) Custom: Percent of educators or school communities implementing SEL best practices in classroom instruction following training with USG assistance</i></p> <p><i>(Output) ES.1-6: Number of educators/school counselors who complete professional development activities with USG assistance (in SEL)</i></p>

	<i>*both of these indicators can be disaggregated</i>
IR 3: Reading attainment and socio-emotional wellbeing best practices institutionalized nationally for pre-first to third grades.	<i>(Outcome) ES.1-59: Education system strengthened through USG-assisted policy reform</i> <i>(Outcome) CBLD-9: Percentage of U.S. Government-assisted organizations with improved performance</i>
Sub-IR 3.1: MINERD demonstrates strengthened institutional capacity to use data for education decision making and resource management in grades pre-first to third.	<i>(Outcome) Supp-16: Education data systems strengthened through USG assistance</i>
Sub-IR 3.2: MINERD adopts standards, curriculum, and/or best practices for reading, remedial instruction, SEL, and reducing grade repetition and rolls out promising interventions in schools in select non-USAID funded education regions.	<i>(Outcome) Custom: Number of standards, curriculum, best practices for reading, remedial instruction, social emotional learning, and reducing repetition scaled to non USAID-funded education regions by the MINERD.</i> <i>(Outcome) Custom: Number of non-USAID funded education institutions with allocated budgets to replicate reforms, modeled by USAID-funded institutions, improving early grade reading and/or social emotional wellbeing</i>
Sub-IR 3.3: MINERD rolls out an early warning system for at-risk pre-first to third grade students in schools in select non-USAID funded education regions.	<i>(Outcome) Custom: Early warning system for at-risk students adopted in non USAID-funded education regions.</i>
Sub-IR 3.4: Private sector stakeholders increase engagement to strengthen the education system.	<i>(Outcome) CBLD-10 Value (\$) of non-donor resources mobilized for local development priorities</i> <i>(Output) PSE-1 Number of USG engagements jointly undertaken with the private sector to achieve a U.S. foreign assistance objective</i> <i>(Output) PSE-2: Number of private sector enterprises that engaged with the USG to support U.S. Foreign Assistance Objectives</i>

4. Program Income

Should program income be anticipated under this award, and upon prior approval of the AO, program income may be added to the Federal award and must be used for the purposes and under the conditions of the Federal award (See [2 CFR 200.307](#)).

5. Environmental Compliance

a) The Foreign Assistance Act of 1961, as amended, Section 117 requires that the impact of USAID's activities on the environment be considered and that USAID include environmental sustainability as a central consideration in designing and carrying out its development programs. This mandate is codified in Federal Regulations (22 CFR 216) and in USAID's Automated Directives System (ADS) Parts 201.5.10g and 204 (<http://www.usaid.gov/policy/ADS/200/>), which, in part, require that the potential environmental impacts of USAID-financed activities are identified prior to a final decision to proceed and that appropriate environmental safeguards are adopted for all activities. Recipient environmental compliance obligations under these regulations and procedures are specified in the following paragraphs of this RFA.

b) In addition, the recipient must comply with host country environmental regulations unless otherwise directed in writing by USAID. In case of conflict between host country and USAID regulations, the latter shall govern.

c) No activity funded under this CA will be implemented unless an environmental threshold determination, as defined by 22 CFR 216, has been reached for that activity, as documented in a Request for Categorical Exclusion (RCE), Initial Environmental Examination (IEE), or Environmental Assessment (EA) duly signed by the Bureau Environmental Officer (BEO). (Hereinafter, such documents are described as "approved Regulation 216 environmental documentation.")

d) As part of its initial Work Plan, and all Annual Work Plans thereafter, the recipient, in collaboration with the USAID Cognizant Technical Officer and Mission Environmental Officer or Bureau Environmental Officer, as appropriate, shall review all ongoing and planned activities under this CA to determine if they are within the scope of the approved Regulation 216 environmental documentation.

e) If the recipient plans any new activities outside the scope of the approved Regulation 216 environmental documentation, it shall prepare an amendment to the documentation for USAID review and approval. No such new activities shall be undertaken prior to receiving written USAID approval of environmental documentation amendments.

f) Any ongoing activities found to be outside the scope of the approved Regulation 216 environmental documentation shall be halted until an amendment to the documentation is submitted and written approval is received from USAID.

[END OF SECTION F]

SECTION G: FEDERAL AWARDING AGENCY CONTACT(S)

1. NOFO Points of Contact

Mr. Chadwick Mills
Regional Agreement Officer (AO)
Regional Office of Acquisition & Assistance (ROAA)
USAID/Dominican Republic
Avenida República de Colombia # 57
Altos de Arroyo Hondo, Santo Domingo, DN
Dominican Republic, 10605
Telephone number: 809.368.7563
E-mail: cmills@usaid.gov

Mr. Omar Trigo
Administrative Agreement Officer
Regional Office of Acquisition & Assistance (ROAA)
USAID/Dominican Republic
Avenida República de Colombia # 57
Altos de Arroyo Hondo, Santo Domingo, DN
Dominican Republic, 10605
Telephone number: 809.368.7738
E-mail: otrigo@usaid.gov

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

[END OF SECTION G]

SECTION H: OTHER INFORMATION

USAID reserves the right to fund or not 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.

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]

ANNEXES

ANNEX 1 - DETAILED & SUMMARY BUDGET TEMPLATE

ANNEX 1 – DETAILED & SUMMARY BUDGET TEMPLATE (Electronic version of the detail budget format is provided as a separate Microsoft Office Excel file).

ANNEX 2 - 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 following “required as applicable” Standard Provisions:

Please note that the resulting award will include all standard provisions (both mandatory and required as applicable) in full text.

REQUIRED AS APPLICABLE STANDARD PROVISIONS FOR U.S. NONGOVERNMENTAL ORGANIZATIONS

Required	Not Required	Standard Provision
TBD		RAA1. NEGOTIATED INDIRECT COST RATES - PREDETERMINED (NOVEMBER 2020)
		RAA2. NEGOTIATED INDIRECT COST RATES - PROVISIONAL (Nonprofit) (NOVEMBER 2020)
		RAA3. NEGOTIATED INDIRECT COST RATE - PROVISIONAL (Profit) (DECEMBER 2014)
		RAA4. INDIRECT COSTS – DE MINIMIS RATE (NOVEMBER 2020)
		RAA5. EXCHANGE VISITORS AND PARTICIPANT TRAINING (JUNE 2012)
		RAA6. VOLUNTARY POPULATION PLANNING ACTIVITIES – SUPPLEMENTAL REQUIREMENTS (JANUARY 2009)
		RAA7. PROTECTION OF THE INDIVIDUAL AS A RESEARCH SUBJECT (APRIL 1998)
		RAA8. CARE OF LABORATORY ANIMALS (MARCH 2004)
		RAA9. TITLE TO AND CARE OF PROPERTY (COOPERATING COUNTRY TITLE) (NOVEMBER 1985)
		RAA10. COST SHARING (MATCHING) (FEBRUARY 2012)
		RAA11. PROHIBITION OF ASSISTANCE TO DRUG TRAFFICKERS (JUNE 1999)
		RAA12. INVESTMENT PROMOTION (NOVEMBER 2003)
		RAA13. REPORTING HOST GOVERNMENT TAXES (DECEMBER 2014)
		RAA14. FOREIGN GOVERNMENT DELEGATIONS TO INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCES (JUNE 2012)
		RAA15. CONSCIENCE CLAUSE IMPLEMENTATION (ASSISTANCE) (FEBRUARY 2012)
		RAA16. CONDOMS (ASSISTANCE) (SEPTEMBER 2014)
		RAA17. PROHIBITION ON THE PROMOTION OR ADVOCACY OF THE LEGALIZATION OR PRACTICE OF PROSTITUTION OR SEX TRAFFICKING (ASSISTANCE) (SEPTEMBER 2014)
		RAA18. USAID DISABILITY POLICY - ASSISTANCE (DECEMBER 2004)
		RAA19. STANDARDS FOR ACCESSIBILITY FOR THE DISABLED IN USAID ASSISTANCE AWARDS INVOLVING CONSTRUCTION (SEPTEMBER 2004)

		RAA20. STATEMENT FOR IMPLEMENTERS OF ANTI-TRAFFICKING ACTIVITIES ON LACK OF SUPPORT FOR PROSTITUTION (JUNE 2012)
		RAA21. ELIGIBILITY OF SUBRECIPIENTS OF ANTI-TRAFFICKING FUNDS (JUNE 2012)
		RAA22. PROHIBITION ON THE USE OF ANTI-TRAFFICKING FUNDS TO PROMOTE, SUPPORT, OR ADVOCATE FOR THE LEGALIZATION OR PRACTICE OF PROSTITUTION (JUNE 2012)
		RAA23. UNIVERSAL IDENTIFIER AND SYSTEM FOR AWARD MANAGEMENT (NOVEMBER 2020)
		RAA24. REPORTING SUBAWARDS AND EXECUTIVE COMPENSATION (NOVEMBER 2020)
		RAA25. PATENT REPORTING PROCEDURES (NOVEMBER 2020)
		RAA26. ACCESS TO USAID FACILITIES AND USAID'S INFORMATION SYSTEMS (AUGUST 2013)
		RAA27. CONTRACT PROVISION FOR DBA INSURANCE UNDER RECIPIENT PROCUREMENTS (DECEMBER 2014)
		RAA28. AWARD TERM AND CONDITION FOR RECIPIENT INTEGRITY AND PERFORMANCE MATTERS (April 2016)
		RAA29. RESERVED
		RAA30. PROGRAM INCOME (AUGUST 2020)
		RAA31. NEVER CONTRACT WITH THE ENEMY (NOVEMBER 2020)

REQUIRED AS APPLICABLE STANDARD PROVISIONS FOR NON-U.S. NONGOVERNMENTAL ORGANIZATIONS

Required	Not Required	Standard Provision
TBD		RAA1. ADVANCE PAYMENT AND REFUNDS (NOVEMBER 2020)
TBD		RAA2. REIMBURSEMENT PAYMENT AND REFUNDS (DECEMBER 2014)
TBD		RAA3. INDIRECT COSTS – NEGOTIATED INDIRECT COST RATE AGREEMENT (NICRA) (NOVEMBER 2020)
		RAA4. INDIRECT COSTS – CHARGED AS A FIXED AMOUNT (NONPROFIT) (JUNE 2012)
		RAA5. INDIRECT COSTS – DE MINIMIS RATE (NOVEMBER 2020)
		RAA6. UNIVERSAL IDENTIFIER AND SYSTEM OF AWARD MANAGEMENT (NOVEMBER 2020)
		RAA7. REPORTING SUBAWARDS AND EXECUTIVE COMPENSATION (NOVEMBER 2020)
		RAA8. SUBAWARDS (DECEMBER 2014)
		RAA9. TRAVEL AND INTERNATIONAL AIR TRANSPORTATION (DECEMBER 2014)
		RAA10. OCEAN SHIPMENT OF GOODS (JUNE 2012)
		RAA11. REPORTING HOST GOVERNMENT TAXES (JUNE 2012)
		RAA12. PATENT RIGHTS (JUNE 2012)
		RAA13. EXCHANGE VISITORS AND PARTICIPANT TRAINING (JUNE 2012)
		RAA14. INVESTMENT PROMOTION (NOVEMBER 2003)
		RAA 15. COST SHARE (JUNE 2012)

		RAA16. PROGRAM INCOME (AUGUST 2020)
		RAA17. FOREIGN GOVERNMENT DELEGATIONS TO INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCES (JUNE 2012)
		RAA18. STANDARDS FOR ACCESSIBILITY FOR THE DISABLED IN USAID ASSISTANCE AWARDS INVOLVING CONSTRUCTION (SEPTEMBER 2004)
		RAA19. PROTECTION OF HUMAN RESEARCH SUBJECTS (JUNE 2012)
		RAA20. STATEMENT FOR IMPLEMENTERS OF ANTI-TRAFFICKING ACTIVITIES ON LACK OF SUPPORT FOR PROSTITUTION (JUNE 2012)
		RAA21. ELIGIBILITY OF SUBRECIPIENTS OF ANTI-TRAFFICKING FUNDS (JUNE 2012)
		RAA22. PROHIBITION ON THE USE OF ANTI-TRAFFICKING FUNDS TO PROMOTE, SUPPORT, OR ADVOCATE FOR THE LEGALIZATION OR PRACTICE OF PROSTITUTION (JUNE 2012)
		RAA23. VOLUNTARY POPULATION PLANNING ACTIVITIES – SUPPLEMENTAL REQUIREMENTS (JANUARY 2009)
		RAA24. CONSCIENCE CLAUSE IMPLEMENTATION (ASSISTANCE) (FEBRUARY 2012)
		RAA25. CONDOMS (ASSISTANCE) (SEPTEMBER 2014)
		RAA26. PROHIBITION ON THE PROMOTION OR ADVOCACY OF THE LEGALIZATION OR PRACTICE OF PROSTITUTION OR SEX TRAFFICKING(ASSISTANCE) (SEPTEMBER 2014)
		RAA27. LIMITATION ON SUBAWARDS TO NON-LOCAL ENTITIES (JULY 2014)
		RAA28. CONTRACT PROVISION FOR DBA INSURANCE UNDER RECIPIENT PROCUREMENTS (DECEMBER 2014)
		RAA29. CONTRACT AWARD TERM AND CONDITION FOR RECIPIENT INTEGRITY AND PERFORMANCE MATTERS (April 2016)
		RAA30. RESERVED
		RAA31. NEVER CONTRACT WITH THE ENEMY (NOVEMBER 2020)

ANNEX 3 - BRANDING STRATEGY & MARKING PLAN TEMPLATE

GENERAL INSTRUCTIONS - ASSISTANCE AWARDS BRANDING/MARKING GUIDANCE

USAID’s policy is that programs, projects, activities, public communications, or commodities implemented or delivered under co-funded instruments – such as grants, cooperative agreements, or other assistance awards that usually require a cost share – generally are “co-branded or co-marked.” In accordance with [2 CFR 700.16](#), this policy applies to these assistance awards even when the award does not require any cost sharing.

Co-branding and co-marking means that the program name represents both USAID and the implementing partner and the USAID identity and implementer’s logo must both be visible with equal size and prominence on program materials produced for program purposes.

This sample/template is based on [ADS 320.3.3](#) and [2 CFR 700.16](#) branding and marking requirements for assistance awards only. The recipient, by responding to the questions in italics, will be able to substantially comply with the ADS and CFR requirements.

THIS PORTION TO BE COMPLETED BY THE RECIPIENT:

“USAID BRANDING STRATEGY”

AWARD TITLE: _____

AWARD NUMBER: **TBD**

DATE OF PLAN: _____

1) Positioning

What is the intended name of this activity?

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

2) Program Communications and Publicity

Who are the primary and secondary audiences for this activity?

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

What is the main activity message?

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

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

3) Acknowledgements

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

GENERAL INSTRUCTIONS

USAID’s policy requires non-U.S., non-governmental organizations, including cooperating country non-governmental organizations (and in rare cases, Public International Organizations) to follow marking requirements for assistance awards. Marking requirements, including requests for presumptive exceptions and waivers for assistance awards must be in accordance with [2 CFR 700.16](#).

With reference to ADS Sections [320.3.3](#) and [2 CFR 700.16](#) the Recipient shall prepare a Marking Plan containing information substantially similar to the sample provided below:

“USAID MARKING PLAN”

AWARD TITLE: _____

AWARD NUMBER: **TBD**

DATE OF PLAN: _____

- (1) Requirement: A description of the public communications, commodities, and program materials that the recipient will produce as a part of the grant or cooperative agreement and which will visibly bear the USAID identity. These include: (i) program, project, or activity sites funded by USAID, including visible infrastructure projects or other programs, projects, or activities that are physical in nature; (ii) technical assistance, studies, reports, papers, publications, audiovisual productions, public service announcements, websites/Internet activities, and other promotional, informational, media, or communication products funded by USAID; (iii) events financed by USAID, such as training courses, conferences, seminars, exhibitions, fairs, workshops, press conferences, and other public activities; and (iv) all commodities or equipment provided under humanitarian assistance or disaster relief programs, and all other equipment, supplies and other materials funded by USAID, and their export packaging.
- (2) Table of Supplies and Equipment to be used in a visible manner in the fulfillment of the goals of the “Leap Activity” and an indication of how and where they will be tagged with the USAID identity.

Supply/Equipment	Type of Marking	Where Marking Placed
Computers?	USAID Identifying vinyl label	On front of monitor
Printers?	USAID Identifying vinyl label	On top of printer

Field Backpacks?	USAID Identifying vinyl label	On outside of backpack

- (3) Table of Deliverables expected to be produced in the conduct of this program: All deliverables will be marked in a visible manner with the USAID identity; below is an indication of what type of marking will be used and where on the deliverable the USAID identity will be placed.

Deliverable	Type of Marking	Where Marking Placed
Reports?	USAID printed identity	Front cover
Publications (brochures)?	USAID printed identity	Front cover
Website?	USAID web identity	Front page

- (4) Sub-recipient: As specified in the standard provisions, the marking requirements will “flow down” to sub-recipients or sub-awards, and will include the USAID-approved marking provision in all USAID funded sub-awards, as follows: “As a condition of receipt of this sub-award, marking with USAID identity of a size and prominence equivalent to or greater than the recipient’s, sub-recipient’s, other donor’s or third party’s is required.”
- (5) Any “public communications,” as defined in [2 CFR 700.16](#), funded by USAID, in which the content has been approved by USAID, will contain the following disclaimer:

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

- (6) As specified in the standard provisions, _____ will provide the Agreement Officer’s Representative (AOR) or other USAID personnel designated in the grant or cooperative agreement with two copies of all program and communications materials produced under the award. In addition, _____ will submit one electronic or one hard copy of all final documents to USAID’s Development Experience Clearinghouse.

ANNEX 4 - PAST PERFORMANCE INFORMATION FORM TEMPLATE

ANNEX 4 - PAST PERFORMANCE INFORMATION FORM TEMPLATE (Electronic version of the form template is provided as a separate Microsoft Office Word file).

[END OF ANNEXES]

[END OF FUNDING OPPORTUNITY]