

QUESTIONS & ANSWERS

Date: March 3, 2021

Reference Request for Proposal Number: RFP-CATALYZE-Edu-2021-087

Dear Offerors,

Please see below answers to the questions submitted catalyze.procurements@thepalladiumgroup.com.

No	Question	Answer
1	Would you consider extending the submission deadline for this procurement?	Yes, please see the accompanying amendment to this RFP. The deadline for this submission is now Friday, March 26, 2021 at 12:00pm ET.
2	Ethical clearance plan indicated in Item 1.b) - We note that IRBs are not meeting as regularly due to COVID-19 restrictions on travel. These delays can cause significant delays for evaluation timelines. While the need to budget for ethical clearance is noted, is Palladium/CATALYZE also open to time contingencies to be built into the proposed work plan?	Time contingencies must be incorporated in the proposed work plan.
3	Under Item 3 - How long have Edufinance activities been conducted in each country? What is the time period of focus for the evaluation ?	Activities in each partner country began in 2021. CATALYZE Implementation Activities will occur through 2024.
4	Is Palladium/CATALYZE able to share the details of each Edufinance implementing partner in each country?	Details of CATALYZE partners will be shared with the winning bidder(s).
5	Is Palladium/CATALYZE able to share the details of the progress of Edufinance activities implemented by each partner? Information like what type of Edufinance activities have been funded, how much time has lapsed since the activities kicked off, etc. will help us to develop a more comprehensive evaluation methodology ?	Details of CATALYZE partner activities will be shared with the winning bidder(s).
6	Have any of the EduFinance activities been a form of follow on support from other USAID Programmes support mechanisms or are all the projects expected to be new funding granted specifically through USAID CATALYZE?	This activity is new, under the CATALYZE mechanism.
7	In the RFP's performance countries where there are existing USG-funded EGRA mechanisms, does Palladium expect the contractor to use implementing partner data, such as EGRA datasets? Or is the expectation that the contractor collect all primary EGRA and/or ASER data relevant to every evaluation task order?	Primary data will be collected by the contractor for each evaluation task order. EGRA and ASER are the recommended assessment tools for assessing learning outcomes.
8	On pp. 4-5 under Technical Proposal, items 1.1-6, mention 50 schools per unit of analysis	Yes. The contractor would be expected to develop strategies for comparisons across rural and urban

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	and go on to list rural and urban as well as other geolocation splits. Does Palladium intend to suggest that rural, urban, peri-urban, etc. are the units of analysis? Does Palladium expect the offeror to devise strategies to directly compare rural and urban learning outcomes? Closely related, does Palladium expect the offeror to devise a strategy to compare learning outcomes across countries?	learning outcomes, as well as across countries, where applicable and feasible.
9	Will Palladium allow offerors to directly recover IDIQ management costs as direct labor costs? Allowing the contractor to directly bill IDIQ management costs, such as Task Order preparation, would allow the contractor to maintain greater cohesion and continuity across task orders.	Cost proposals will be evaluated per the guidelines and criteria articulated in the RFP. Offerors should include the costs they deem reasonable and justifiable to accomplish the scope of work. Palladium reserves the right to request additional cost justification as needed.
10	On P. 3 of the RFP under <i>Type of Contract</i> , it states: "Palladium intends to issue an IDIQ umbrella mechanism to at least one offeror." Can Palladium please confirm how many IDIQ holders are anticipated? We strongly recommend this IDIQ remain limited to a single IDIQ award holder to ensure greater measurement continuity across task orders and consistent value for money.	As indicated, Palladium intends to issue an IDIQ to at least one offeror. The number of IDIQ awardees will depend on the quality of the proposals received and Palladium's final determination.
11	Please let us know what types of contract mechanism(s) Palladium anticipates will govern this IDIQ (e.g. Cost Plus Fixed Fee Completion, Firm Fixed Price, Time and Materials, etc.)?	As indicated, Palladium intends to issue an IDIQ award. Task Orders will be Firm Fixed Price.
12	On p. 5, item 2a. of the Cost Proposal section, Palladium requests that the offeror include unit costs to conduct the work. Can Palladium please clarify if the labor costs associated with each unit should be presented as costs of the labor category required to perform the work? In other words, does Palladium expect team member costs to appear in the detailed cost budget as specific individual base salary costs or as labor category costs based upon the offeror's staff compensation plan?	Palladium will review either team member base salary costs or labor category costs, as presented. All cost elements should be realistic and justifiable. Palladium reserves the right to request additional cost justification as needed.
13	In regard to p. 14 Evaluation Question 2f, will the contractor be expected to evaluate the portfolio performance of the EduFinance partner's involvement in any debt-based financing of an activity? This may include granting the contractor access such things as actual project expenditure data, projected Profit and Loss statements, etc.	The contractor may be expected to evaluate the portfolio performance of financing partners. This will be developed further upon award.
14	Will an offeror's table of contents count as part of the twenty page technical proposal limit?	No.
15	What is the expected timeline from the award of the IDIQ (May 2021) to the first Task Order? Will all baseline assessments be carried out	Activities are already underway in some EduFinance Activity countries. Baseline assessments will be carried out in parallel with these early activities.

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	before any EduFinance activities are expected to commence?	
16	In regards to the stakeholder focus of the evaluation, does the evaluation of the upcoming activities require the contractor to also scrutinize the blended finance partners involved in financing that activity?	No, the subcontractor(s) will not be required to scrutinize the finance partners themselves.
17	In regards to p. 15, Evaluation Question 2i, under IR 4, can Palladium please clarify what is meant by "activity" in this context? Does it refer to CATALYZE EduFinance's own effort to improve the enabling environment?	Yes, "activity" refers to efforts supported by CATALYZE EduFinance to improve the enabling environment at the country level.
18	In regards to p. 15, Evaluation Questions 2i and 2j, is Palladium referring to an activity's contribution to the enabling environment for financial investment and/or for the education system?	The question refers to both financial investment and the education system.
19	On page 3, under Purpose , the RFP states that Palladium is seeking "a qualified organization". Also, on page 3, under Type of Contract , the RFP states that "Palladium intends to issue an IDIQ umbrella mechanism to at least one offeror." Finally, on page 8, the RFP states that Palladium may make multiple awards. Could Palladium clarify if they will make one or multiple awards? If multiple awards, how should offerors prepare the budget given that economies of scale exist for the complete project that are not present if only pieces are awarded? If multiple awards, how would Palladium determine which offeror should draft the synthesis/overall evaluation report mentioned on page 19?	<p>As stated, Palladium intends to issue at least one IDIQ award, from which it will issue Firm Fixed Price Task Orders.</p> <p>Regarding economies of scale, offerors should present their best offer to complete the entirety of the scope of work. Should Palladium determine that multiple awardees will be equally capable of completing the scope, we reserve the right to award multiple IDIQs.</p> <p>Palladium will work with its internal MEL Experts as well as the External Evaluator(s) to determine how best to address the requirements of this scope of work.</p>
20	On page 5 of the RFP, the sampling plan for the DRC includes 50 schools in Kinshasa and 50 schools in Goma/Lubumbashi/Kisuvu. Is Palladium open to considering schools in other areas with higher levels of security and lower risk of Ebola? If not, what measures will Palladium fund to ensure contractor safety?	Regarding contractor safety, subcontractor(s) should have in place their own duty of care policies which should encompass their staff safety. Subcontractors are expected to be responsible for their own professional liability, including having necessary precautions for safety and security risk in place.
21	Kisuvu is not a location we recognize in DRC. Does this perhaps refer to Kivu?	Yes, this refers to Kivu.
22	Could you provide more information on program's theory of change, and how each intervention planned will translate into short-term and intermediate outcomes that will produce changes in student EGRA scores?	Relevant information about interventions will be shared with the winning bidder(s).
23	Could Palladium share more information on the nature of the specific EduFinance activities planned (or occurring) in each country (DRC, Kenya, Rwanda, Tanzania, South Africa, and Zambia)?	Relevant information about EduFinance activities will be shared with the winning bidder(s).
24	What is the current implementation stage of EduFinance activities in each country?	EduFinance implementation activities began in early 2021.

No	Question	Answer
25	The RFP calls for submitting data to USAID's Development Data Library. Are the data sets expected to be for public use or restricted use?	Subcontractor(s) will be expected to submit data to CATALYZE/Palladium. The data sets will be available to USAID staff through the Development Data Library. Palladium will submit datasets to USAID's Development Data Library in accordance with the guidelines provided in ADS579.
26	The timeline for completing proposals is tight and our ability to respond fully depends on responses to these questions. Would Palladium consider a two-week extension to March 26 of the deadline to allow for a fuller development of proposals?	Yes, please see the accompanying amendment to this RFP. The deadline for this submission is now Friday, March 26, 2021 at 12:00pm ET.
27	Is it allowable to include CVs of proposed staff as an annex?	Yes, this is allowable.
28	Given that the data collection approach outlined in the RFP does not call for a comparison group, and that many factors aside from the EduFinance activities could drive changes in students' EGRA test scores between baseline and endline data collection, could Palladium indicate how the pre-post EGRA data should be used to understand improvements in learning that might be driven by the EduFinance activities?	The offeror may propose a suitable and cost-effective methodology. The contractor may use one-group pre-test post-test (quasi-experiment), where a single group that receives the treatment is observed at two time points. Qualitative data could supplement comparison.
29	Research question 2g refers to "pre-primary schools or equivalent non-school settings reached with USG assistance." In what ways would the referenced non-school settings be equivalent?	Please refer to the USAID standard F indicator definitions ES 1-53, ES 1-3, and ES 1-4, available here .
30	What data is available from implementers?	Implementing partners will have data for a few output level indicators. The subcontractor(s) will be expected to collect baseline and end-line data for top line outcomes and impact level indicators.
31	Related to question 13 about data available from implementers, will implementers be able to provide data on investments in non-state schools (to respond to questions 2e and 2f) or on the percent of teachers providing quality classroom instruction with USG support (given as an example for question 2h) or is the offeror expected to collect such data?	Implementers will be able to provide data on investments in non-state schools to respond to questions 2e and 2f.
32	Are offerors expected to conduct the surveys of youth to respond to questions 2c and 2d and mentioned on page 17 of the RFP? If so, does Palladium have an expectation of the sample size for these surveys?	Illustrative sample size information is provided in the RFP for ASER/EGRA learning assessments. Offerors are expected to submit sample size for surveying youth to address questions 2c and 2d.
33	What will be the contract type for this award?	As indicated, this will be an IDIQ umbrella mechanism. Palladium will issue firm fixed price Task Orders up to the ceiling of the IDIQ.
34	How should offerors indicate subcontractor costs in the budget template?	Offerors are encouraged to use the template provided on the CATALYZE Procurement website as a guide for presenting all budget elements.