

## QUESTIONS & ANSWERS

**Date:** April 26, 2021

**Reference Request for Proposal Number:** FON-CATALYZE-Edu-2021-0138

Dear Offerors,

Please see below answers to the questions submitted to [catalyze.procurements@thepalladiumgroup.com](mailto:catalyze.procurements@thepalladiumgroup.com).

Responses to questions received after April 15 are included between pages 4-6 (question 37-62).

No	Question	Answer
1	Can you do this for India?	Focus of this activity is on the five countries listed in the FON. At this time, CATALYZE EduFinance will not be implementing in India.
2	Is there a list of priority USAID Key Performance Indicators for education projects that applicants should be aware of?	CATALYZE EduFinance will identify appropriate Key Performance Indicators that capture key results for each objective of the FON, e.g. capital mobilized will be captured by \$ mobilized from other sources.
3	When will successful applicants be notified?	Unless there are exceptional circumstances, we will be able to notify successful applicants within 4 weeks of submission deadline.
4	What is the earliest anticipated project start date?	At this time, the earliest anticipated start date is July 2021.
5	Is there a maximum or minimum implementation time for the project?	At this time, EduFinance anticipates an end date for this activity no earlier than September 2023 and no later than September 2024. Offerors are encouraged to submit their best proposals using a timeline beginning July 2021 and ending no earlier than September 2023 and no later than September 2024.
6	For applications which intend to leverage funds from other donors/philanthropies, is there a particular time frame within which these funds need to be secured/approved?	There is no specific timeframe for securing funds, but we are looking at seeing results of providing blended finance so we would like to see the funds raised and deployed within the life of project, and a significant portion of those to be deployed within 1.5-2 years to see the results before the project ends.
7	How many awards will be given through this FON?	We anticipate as few as one and as many as four awards under this FON.
8	What is the expected period of performance/duration for this FON?	See question 5.
9	What is the expected timeline for review, approval, and award of this FON?	Illustrative timeline: Selection decision - within 4 weeks after submission deadline Submission for USAID Consent - 3-4 weeks after selection decision Award – within 2 weeks of receiving USAID consent to subcontract
10	Can you provide examples of sources of blended finance?	Private or philanthropic sources, anyone other than a public/government source.

No	Question	Answer
11	What are the criteria to award funding as a subcontract vs. grant?	The award mechanism will be determined following proposal evaluation, pending the needs and qualifications of the final awardee.
12	Grants shall not include any profit or fee when priced; does it include indirect and admin. costs?	Yes. Supporting documentation justifying all indirect rates will be needed.
13	If you could please share with us some of the projects that have been funded under this initiative?	This is the first activity/project being funded in the Latin America and the Caribbean (LAC) region. To date, in Sub Saharan Africa, we have funded activities in Zambia, Democratic Republic of Congo, and South Africa.
14	What is the project timeframe or length?	See question 5.
15	What have blended finance activities looked like in other projects like this?	While it varies by country/region, some of the activities funded so far include financing to schools, pre-primary centers, Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) students, etc.
16	Is there a minimum commitment the implementer needs to commit to the project?	There is no minimum, but this is a blended finance activity so we will be looking at who else is committing resources into the activity besides USAID.
17	What time on May 3rd does the application need to be submitted by ?	5 pm ET
18	Is there a specific time on May 3 that proposals are due?	See question 17.
19	The solicitation emphasizes the need to mitigate the effects of COVID-19 on education, particularly through distance learning approaches. In many countries we have observed the trend towards school reopening and a normalization of education service delivery with in-person teaching. Does USAID/CATALYZE envisage that this trend will reverse over the next three years?	Solicitation does not recommend any one solution for mitigating effects of COVID-19, but aims to identify some of the approaches currently being tried.
20	What is the expected start and end date of activities awarded through this FON?	See question 5.
21	Does USAID/CATALYZE have any indication of how many awards it intends to make through this FON?	See question 7.
22	Has USAID/CATALYZE earmarked any of the funding for specific countries? Are these funds from specific Missions' budgets or are they regional in nature?	Funds are not earmarked for any of the countries.
23	The solicitation outlines four objectives of the activity. In a multi-country approach do all four objectives need to be achieved in all countries, or could some be achieved in one country and others in another country?	All objectives should be achieved in each country where the activity is implemented.
24	Are multi-laterals (such as the World Bank) eligible to apply?	Yes.
25	Just to clarify, the proposals must address all four objectives in ALL target countries? Or can we propose activities that accomplish those objectives in a subset of those countries?	Bidders can choose to propose the activity in one or multiple countries, but all four purposes must be addressed in each country.

No	Question	Answer
26	For the Blended Finance from a private investor + USAID - is there a minimum or maximum? Does it have to be a 1-1 match?	There is no minimum or maximum contribution amount. Applicants are encouraged to aim for highest amount of blended finance possible and demonstrate ability and track record for mobilizing this funding.
27	Must the additional financial sources be secured and committed at the time of the proposal application?	No.
28	You mentioned blended finance includes private and philanthropic funds, does that exclude local government funding?	There is no expectation/ rule that excludes government funding. We have funded proposals where the activity was funded by a public-private funding partnership. Proposed activity(s) and the funding source(s) will be evaluated in totality.
29	Can private matching funds that are part of an existing Global Development Alliance be considered as funds needed for matching USAID funds in this opportunity?	Again, there is no expectation/ rule. The proposed activity(s) and the funding source(s) will be evaluated in totality.
30	Do you have a preferred budget template?	Please email <a href="mailto:catalyze.procurements@thepalladiumgroup.com">catalyze.procurements@thepalladiumgroup.com</a> for a copy of the Palladium budget template.
31	Should the proposed budget include both consultancy services and the budget toward the proposed solution/ blended finance mechanism? In other words, can the budget include the expenses associated with the design and planning of the mechanism as well as the costs to deploy the actual solution?	All relevant costs to complete the scope of work should be included.
32	The non-state education sector is often partially subsidized by the government. Can we still consider them as a non-state education sector?	Yes, in many instances, Government partly or wholly funds the non-state education sector. Non-state schools are considered distinct from public (government-owned) schools on basis of their ownership and management, not just sources of funding. Sometimes these lines are blurry and boundaries can be unclear. If there are still any questions, please send us an email at: <a href="mailto:catalyze.procurements@thepalladiumgroup.com">catalyze.procurements@thepalladiumgroup.com</a>
33	If we have formal and informal education settings as our target, is there any minimum formal education ratio as required?	No minimums required.
34	"...Increase in access to education for low-income households..." How can we identify the low-income households for each country? At provincial, district or household level?	See definition provided on page 2 of this FON.
35	What do you mean then you say formal or non-formal education settings? Are we talking about schools or out-of-school settings?	Definitions can vary by country, but generally, formal education is always organized and structured with learning objectives. Schools, colleges, TVET institutes, and workplace trainings are considered formal education settings. Non-formal settings are more nebulous, generally referring to adult/ lifelong learning.
36	Could you please provide us an estimated timeline after the submission of concept papers, such as	See question 9.

No	Question	Answer
	the final result release date, project start/duration date, and others?	
37	Should the proposed budget include both consultancy services and the budget toward the proposed solution/ blended finance mechanism? In other words, can the budget include the expenses associated with the design and planning of the mechanism as well as the costs to deploy the actual solution?	Budget should include detailed breakup of total funding, including all expenses and any other associated costs, requested from USAID/CATALYZE
38	Where can we see the answers to the questions of the previous sessions?	Responses to all previous questions are included in this document
39	Could you give an example and/or explain the blended finance requirement?	There are many different examples of blended finance. See <a href="#">USAID Blended Finance Starter Kit</a> , especially graphic shown on page 11, and the <a href="#">Blended Finance Primer</a> by Convergence  The requirement is to mobilize capital from private or other sources, in addition to funding requested from USAID/CATALYZE.
40	The blended finance model means that we need to include a third party that is a financial institution?	Finance from a third party financial institution is one example of blended finance but its not the only example. See above response.
41	The blended finance model means that cash needs to be provide to the schools?	See above response
42	The funding received can be fully focus on training and certifications of students and teachers?	Yes, so long as the students and teachers are within the Basic Education definition of USAID. See definition provided on page 2 of the FON
43	What should be the duration of the project by using the funding? (one year, three years, ect?)	At this time, we anticipate an end date for this activity no earlier than September 2023 and no later than September 2024
44	Will Palladium consider assets - like computers, phones, radio, tablets - USAID property and be requiring they be returned after the project as USAID normally does? These items are planned to be used for teachers and parents, and we wouldn't include if they need to be returned.	For assets under fixed price subcontracts and fixed price grants, return of purchases are not necessary. For assets purchased under cost reimbursable subcontracts, assets will need approval from USAID before being disposed of after the program is complete. Palladium will reserve the right to assess that the proposed assets are critical for the delivery of the scope of work. Also do keep in mind that all purchases must comply with USAID procurement rules and are not supplied by prohibited telecommunications providers such as Huawei or ZTE Communications. For more information, please see <a href="#">USAID's website on Section 889 Prohibitions</a> and also their <a href="#">informational flyer</a> .
45	In the budget sent to me by this email, there is only one total budget, do we need to break it out by what will be covered by USAID and what will be covered by Hope for Haiti to show the breakdown?	In the budget sheet you have received from CATALYZE please include expenses to be covered by USAID only. Separately, in your proposal, you may also include explanation for what is to be covered by other sources.
46	Will Palladium consider infrastructure improvements? Like	USAID/CATALYZE funds cannot be used directly for funding infrastructure improvement, WASH or any other construction activities. However, USAID/CATALYZE funds can be used to

No	Question	Answer
	classroom construction, WASH facilities, and R&M as part of something that would be appropriate?	mobilize funds from other sources (e.g. loan from banks) for construction purposes
47	Is there any staff eligibility/qualification criteria for the project? Can we hire a US citizen as an independent contractor?	There are no eligibility criteria other than the staff/consultants should be eligible to work on the activity as per the labor and immigration laws of the country where the activity is being implemented. International staff/ consultants must also be hired per their respective local laws.
48	Reporting system: how often should we report the project progress during the project?	A one-hour monthly update call, and a detailed quarterly report will be required. Report template will be provided
49	Budget: What percentage of the budget should administrative expenses be?	There is no fixed percentage for this, but bidders must demonstrate that the proportion of administrative costs paid for with USAID funding is equal to the proportion of costs paid for by the bidder's other projects/clients. Bidders should include as much detail as possible explaining the allocation of expenses across all their projects to ensure that the US Government is paying a fair and equal share relative to other clients.
50	Budget: There is no column for cost-sharing in the budget template you shared with us. How can we add this column? Should we prepare another budget, including this one?	The budget template is only for the funding requested from USAID/CATALYZE. Cost sharing or additional funding sources mobilized for the activity should be explained in the main proposal
51	Proposal package: we understand the proposal should include the concept paper and the budget. Do we need to submit any other supporting documents, such as the Bylaw, Tax ID, or the list of board of directors?	Not required at this stage. Bidders whose proposals are selected for further development will be given more detailed due diligence requests at the later stage.
52	I notice that we missed a Live Q&A session, and are hopeful that there is a recorded version available. If so, can you share it with me?	The live session was not recorded but all the questions and responses discussed at the live session are also included in this written document
53	Our understanding is that the contribution from our partner can be a mix of cash and in-kind. Is that correct?	Cash contributions are preferred. In-kind contributions are notoriously difficult to measure and to verify
54	What is the minimum ratio of counterpart funding to USAID/Palladium funding? i.e. if we are seeking \$500,000 from USAID/Palladium, how much would our partner in Guatemala need to contribute?	No minimum, partners are encouraged to raise the largest amount of counterpart funding as possible
55	Are purchases of equipment, such as basic tablets for student use, allowable costs?	Yes, as long as they comply with USAID procurement rules and are not supplied by prohibited telecommunications providers such as Huawei or ZTE Communications. For more information, please see <a href="#">USAID's website on Section 889 Prohibitions</a> and also their <a href="#">informational flyer</a> .
56	Likewise, would it be allowable to focus the project on the construction of an intranet platform which would strengthen student access to learning programs?	Yes

No	Question	Answer
57	What is the timeline that you envision? When do you expect to issue awards? Do projects need to start and finish within a certain time window?	At this time, we anticipate an end date for this activity no earlier than September 2023 and no later than September 2024
58	Due the amount of funds that we need to get locally and the length (short one) of time that we must submit the proposal, there is going to be a “grace time” to submit it or the May 3, 2021 deadline is firm?	May 3 deadline for proposal submission is firm. The funds don’t have to be raised before the deadline but your proposal should articulate what is your plan to raise these funds, how much and from where, and your track record in doing so. Any letters of support or letter of intent that you can include in the proposal will be helpful.
59	Do we have to have all the local funding to submit the proposal?	No, funding can be local or international, and does not have to be secured before submitting the proposal
60	BID under \$500,000.00 will be accepted or considered?	Only proposals with a total life of project budget of at least \$500,000 or higher will be considered
61	We currently have \$16 million in support for programming in Haiti through a GDA with USAID, Porticus, and the Kellogg Foundation. In addition, we have secured \$2.5 million in financing from other sources. Should we indicate both of these sources in our blended financing or just the latter (funds unconnected to USAID)?	All funding sources should be indicated in the proposal. If you already have USAID financing then the need and justification for additional financing has to be very clearly articulated
62	Are construction and renovation costs allowable through this award? School renovations would be aimed at improving the quality of and access to education in Haiti.	See question 46