

Australian Government  
Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade  
Australian Aid Program

**Request for Submission of Capacity Statement**  
**for**  
**Basic Education Quality and Access in Lao PDR (BEQUAL)**  
**NGO/NPA Consortium**

Guidelines and Templates

## **PART 1 – Program Description**

### **1. Introduction**

- 1.1 DFAT is seeking submissions of Capacity Statement from NGO Consortia for their possible participation in Basic Education Quality and Access in Lao PDR (BEQUAL), a new program between the Governments of Lao PDR and Australia, working through the Lao Ministry of Education and Sport.
- 1.2 This Request for Capacity Statements should be distinguished from a Call for Proposals. At this stage, activity proposals are not required. Capacity Statements will be assessed primarily on program quality and organisational capacity, with consideration also given to the need to achieve a balance of funding across the districts targeted under BEQUAL. Full details of the selection processes are contained in Section 2.
- 1.3 Consortia may include both accredited and non-accredited Australian and International NGOs. Lao Non-Profit Associations (NPAs) are expected to play an important role in the consortium but do not need to be named in the Capacity Statements. The winning Consortium will work with DFAT to identify partner NPAs.
- 1.4 Capacity Statements should use the template at Attachment A. This Request for Submission of Capacity Statements should be read in conjunction with the BEQUAL Investment Design Document of May 2014. The Design Document is the primary reference from which to gain an understanding of the context, objectives and features of the program.

### **2. Background**

- 2.1 Together with the Government of Lao PDR, Australia has developed a new basic education program to target the Lao Government's highest education priorities. Basic Education Quality and Access in Laos (BEQUAL) will be Australia's flagship intervention in Lao PDR, and is designed to be rolled out over 10 years. The first phase (2014-2018) will work in up to 66<sup>1</sup> of the most educationally disadvantaged districts, to increase participation of disadvantaged children, improve learning environments (such as construction of new classrooms) and teacher quality.

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<sup>1</sup> The original 65 districts are listed in the BEQUAL design document available on the DFAT website address <http://aid.dfat.gov.au/apps/businessnotifications/Pages/notification18062014.aspx>. Khouan is a new district which will be targeted under BEQUAL, as it was formerly part of Xamneua and Xamtai districts – which were both included in the original list of districts to be supported by BEQUAL.

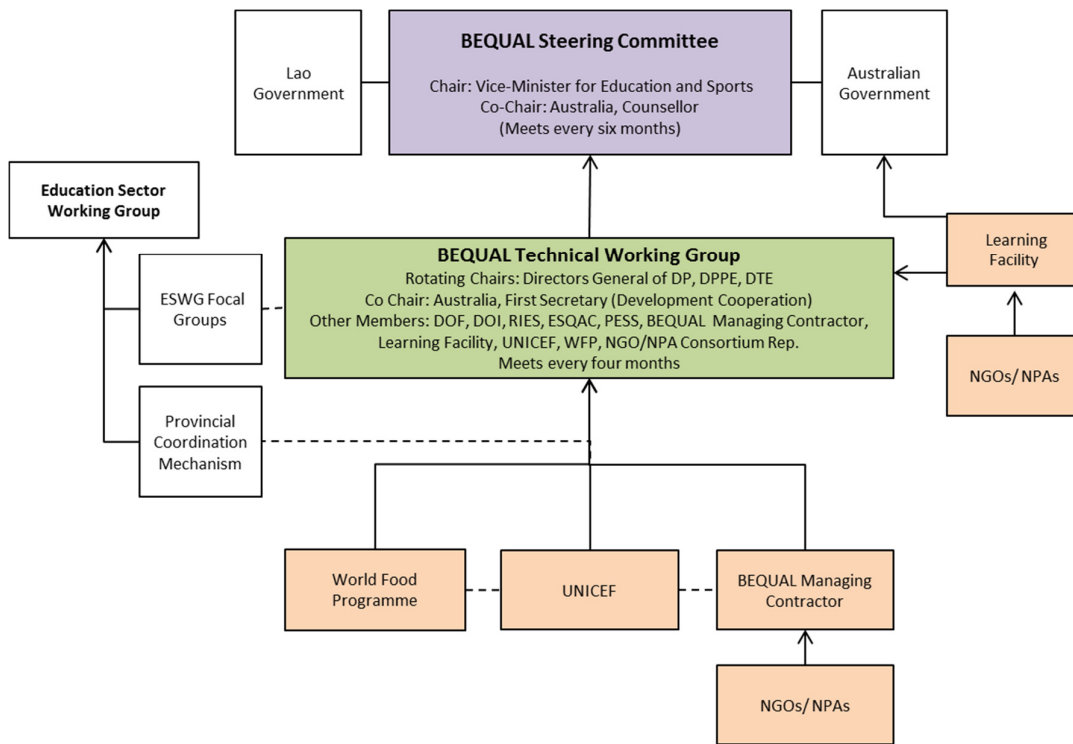
- 2.2 The **goal** of BEQUAL is that more girls and boys, especially those experiencing disadvantage, complete good quality basic education, achieving literacy, numeracy and other relevant life skills.
- 2.3 In order to achieve this goal, BEQUAL is structured around three **intermediate outcomes** of:
- a) **Participation:** more disadvantaged children and young people will participate in primary education daily and are ready to learn;
  - b) **Resourcing:** learning environments in targeted geographic areas will be more equitable and adequately resourced; and
  - c) **Effective Teaching:** more effective teaching will enable more disadvantaged girls and boys to learn more and perform better.
- 2.4 To achieve these outcomes, BEQUAL will draw on the expertise and experience of several complimentary partners, including a Managing Contractor, multilateral agencies and Non-Government Organisations (NGOs) and Not-For-Profit Associations (NPAs).
- 2.5 BEQUAL will be implemented across five Key Result Areas (KRAs):
- a) **Education Policy, Planning and Coordination:** strengthening the capacity of central; provincial and district MoES educational entities to better manage administrative and financial resources for education delivery in Lao PDR – to be delivered by the Managing Contractor in partnership with MoES
  - b) **Increased Participation:** ensuring more girls and boys (including those with disabilities) from remote and ethnic communities are able to enrol and complete their primary education. This KRA consists of two components:
    - i. Participation and Access – to be delivered by the Managing Contractor in partnership with MoES, INGOs and NPAs;
    - ii. School Meals – to be delivered by the World Food Program (WFP) in partnership with MoES.
  - c) **Teacher Education and Support:** ensuring primary teacher trainees, including ethnic women, are receiving modern and pedagogically appropriate pre-service training from qualified teacher trainers. This KRA will have two components:
    - i. Pre-service Teacher Education – to be delivered by the Managing Contractor in partnership with MoES; and
    - ii. In-service Teacher Education– to be delivered by the Managing Contractor in partnership with MoES.

- d) **Teaching and Learning Resources:** ensuring educators, teachers and students have access to, and are using, relevant gender inclusive teaching and learning resources, e.g. curriculum materials; lesson plans and resources; textbooks; notebooks and student materials – to be delivered by the Managing Contractor in partnership with MoES.
- e) **School Infrastructure:** ensuring teachers and students in remote and disadvantaged communities are accommodated in schools and classrooms ‘fit for purpose’ i.e. which provide a safe, hygienic, inclusive and well equipped physical learning environment. This KRA will have two components:
  - i. Classrooms, Furniture and Rehabilitation of Primary Schools – to be delivered by the Contractor in partnership with MoES; and
  - ii. Water and Sanitation (WASH) Facilities in Primary Schools – to be delivered by UNICEF in partnership with MoES. A total of \$10.5 million has been allocated for this component to date.

2.6 In addition to the above components, the **Australian Learning Facility (ALF)** will provide high quality, integrated monitoring and evaluation, learning, research and knowledge generation to facilitate performance management of BEQUAL at the program level.

2.7 BEQUAL will use a shared program framework and governance structure that will promote effective cooperation and coordination between all program stakeholders. A two level management structure will involve all implementing partners and will link to the Education Sector Working Group, as illustrated in Figure 1.

Figure 1: BEQUAL Management and Governance Arrangements



### 3. Role of the NGO/NPA Consortium

3.1 Under Component 2.1, the NGO/NPA Consortium (the Consortium) will manage and implement a package of education activities that promote participation in and access to education by communities in remote and rural locations.

3.2 Activity proposals are **not required** at this stage, but an indicative description of the eventual role of the Consortium follows for information purposes. Once designed and agreed, the package of activities delivered by the Consortium should:

- a) have good coverage across the 65 BEQUAL target districts ;
- b) take a holistic approach to improving education participation in disadvantaged communities;
- c) be highly complementary to the work of other BEQUAL components; and
- d) maximise synergies with other sector programs, namely the Laos-Australia Rural Livelihoods Program;

3.3 The package of activities delivered by the Consortium should be based on known and existing activities that have good potential to be replicated, scaled-up, and are

consistent with MoES' policy framework. The package should include activities that:

- a) support communities, including VEDCs, as active participants in school level planning, budgeting and monitoring the quality of education services;
- b) increase participation and learning by girls and boys with disability;
- c) develop a culture of reading at the community level;
- d) support early grade literacy and reading;
- e) support teaching of Lao language to non-Lao speaking boys and girls with an emphasis on those districts where grade 1 repetition and dropout rates are high;
- f) complement the training and deployment of ethnic teachers, particularly female teachers, through support for village-based school readiness programs in those villages from which teacher trainees may be recruited and deployed;
- g) enhance the local learning environment and strengthen community involvement in schools;
- h) improve student health and hygiene, particularly activities that maximise the impact of improved water and sanitation facilities being provided by the program;
- i) health screening, including eyesight and hearing testing, working in partnership with appropriate MoES and Ministry of Health personnel; and
- j) address particular gender-based barriers (both through activities that specifically target girls or boys and through activities that cover the community as a whole or boys as well as girls), for example through the managing and implementing scholarships for ethnic girls to attend lower secondary school, aimed at supporting enrolment and attendance.

3.4 Once the Consortium has been selected, the process for finalising Consortium arrangements and designing a comprehensive package of activities under KRA2 will occur in 3 stages:

- a) The **Preliminary Phase**: the Consortium will develop a detailed Consortium Agreement (for example, Memorandum of Understanding) and undertake a preliminary activity design process. This will be an opportunity to expand on the information provided in the capacity statement, including developing the consortium governance arrangements, and providing a more detailed outline of planned activities, geographic scope, and respective roles of each member. NPA members can be identified and named at this stage. This preliminary work plan will outline the respective activities and roles of each consortium member, and which

needs or activities identified in the BEQUAL Program Design they will be addressing. An Australia-Mekong NGO Engagement Platform (AMNEP)<sup>2</sup> resource will be available to support this preparation process if needed.

- b) The **Mobilisation Phase**: will occur after Managing Contractor commences in early 2015. During the design phase, there will be a partnership development process between the Consortium, the Government of Lao PDR, DFAT and the Managing Contractor to define respective roles in the consortium operation. During this phase, the details of final designs, implementation plans and work plans will be negotiated and finalised. An AMNEP resource will be available to assist the NGO Consortium through this process. The design should include specific plans for monitoring and evaluation (M&E), gender, disability and social inclusion, environment and climate change, institutional and knowledge management and a sustainability and exit strategy plan. A first year operational plan will also be required.
- c) The **Implementation Phase**: during which projects will be implemented.

#### **4. Administration and governance arrangements**

- 4.1 The Consortium will operate under the management of the BEQUAL Managing Contractor and will work closely with the Ministry of Education and Sports (MoES) Department of Pre-Primary and Primary Education.
- 4.2 The Consortium will be sub-contracted by the Managing Contractor through a lead NGO. The Lead NGO should: be the primary point of contact with the BEQUAL Managing Contractor; provide day to day management and coordination between NGOs; be responsible for ensuring quality reporting on outcomes; and be accountable for funds channelled to the Consortium and through sub-grants.
- 4.3 DFAT expects the Consortium to develop its own governance arrangements and framework for collaboration, with support from AMNEP if required.
- 4.4 The Consortium will be part of the BEQUAL program level framework and governance structure, a two level management structure involving all implementing partners and linking to the Education Sector Working Group (as represented in **Figure 1** above). The Consortium will provide a representative on to the BEQUAL Technical Working Group and will participate in joint activity planning with the BEQUAL managing contractor.

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<sup>2</sup> AM-NEP is a platform designed to provide technical support and administrative services to DFAT and NGOs in the Mekong region.

## PART 2 - Selection Process

### 5. Selection Process Particulars

- 5.1 DFAT seeks Capacity Statements from Consortiums comprising effective and experienced NGOs to manage and implement a package of education activities that promote participation in and access to education by communities in remote and rural locations.

ISSUE DATE	Monday 3 November 2014
CLOSING TIME	Monday 8 December 2014
SUBMISSION METHOD	Electronically in PDF format, and with a copy of the proposal in Microsoft Word to: <a href="mailto:bequal.consortium@dfat.gov.au">bequal.consortium@dfat.gov.au</a>
CONTACT POINT	DFAT Contact Officer Email: <a href="mailto:bequal.consortium@dfat.gov.au">bequal.consortium@dfat.gov.au</a>
NUMBER OF COPIES OF THE SUBMISSION	One copy is required in the PDF format, with a Microsoft Word version also submitted.
CONTENT REQUIREMENTS AND PAGE LIMITS	Capacity Statement – <u>no more than 10 pages</u> Annex A: Summary of Consortium Members Annex B: Profile of Consortium Members

### 6. Eligibility Criteria

#### *Consortium Eligibility*

- 6.1 DFAT expects NGOs to make their own decisions about consortium arrangements, including arrangements for founding and other types of members. There will be a minimum of two named NGOs for each consortium bid.
- 6.2 The NGO Consortium should harness the different approaches of NGOs (and NPAs) and build on their particular strengths in relation to their long-term experience, capacity and linkages with partner organisations and communities in Laos. Consortia submissions must outline where and how each member offers value; **but names of specific NPA members are not required at this stage.**

#### *Organisation Eligibility*

- 6.3 The following organisations are eligible to be members of the Consortium:



- a) NGOs that are registered with the Laos Ministry of Foreign Affairs and are eligible to operate in Lao PDR, with at least five years demonstrated experience in effective development work in Lao PDR, including experience in delivering activities related to education or access to education in rural communities.
- b) National Non-Profit Associations (NPA) that are legally registered with the Laos Ministry of Home Affairs, with demonstrated experience in effective development work in a thematic area related to delivering primary education programs in rural, remote and ethnic minority communities.

6.4 All members of the winning Consortium that do not have current accreditation status with DFAT will be required to undergo a DFAT Due Diligence Assessment in order to confirm their eligibility.

## **7. Assessment**

7.1 The purpose of this process is for DFAT to identify a Consortium that demonstrates strong capacity to contribute to the strategic objectives of BEQUAL, under Key Result Area 2. The Assessment Panel will use the following Criteria to assess the Consortium Capacity Statements.

### **7.2 Criteria A: the Consortium**

*Demonstrated experience and ability to manage and administer high quality and effective programs in Lao PDR- Weighting 20%*

- a) NGOs participating in the Consortium demonstrate the following:
  - i. At least five years demonstrated experience in effective development work in Lao PDR, including experience in delivering activities related to education and/or access to education in rural communities;
  - ii. Experience working collaboratively with other NGOs, and of working within a program based approach;
  - iii. Evidence of good collaboration with relevant Lao ministries;
  - iv. Demonstrated participatory and community development experience; and
  - v. Appropriate technical capacity to implement activities described in Section 3.4 above.

- b) The Consortium Lead demonstrates the following:
  - i. Previous experience as a Consortium Lead or similar (in Lao PDR or elsewhere);
  - ii. Demonstrated understanding of partnership principles;
  - iii. Strong capacity to provide appropriate management, administrative and financial systems for the Consortium (including financial safeguards and grants administration); and
  - iv. Established methods and approaches for consortium management, including for example admitting new consortium members and the ability to draw on organisational resources to establish a successful Consortium.

### 7.3 **Criteria B: Partnership and Program Approach**

*A highly collaborative approach that promotes coherence both within the consortium and with the wider program – Weighting 40%*

- a) The Capacity Statement demonstrates an understanding of working in partnership with the BEQUAL managing contractor, donors and stakeholders;
- b) Evidence of good quality analysis of the role the Consortium plays within the overall program approach;
- c) The relationship between the consortium members demonstrates genuine collaboration;
- d) The Capacity Statement demonstrates a clear understanding of the NGO members' role in capacity development with local partners and evidence that the opportunity for organisational development with NPAs has been addressed through mutually agreed objectives.

### 7.4 **Criteria C: Technical Approach**

*A coherent and strategic approach to the delivery of the program – Weighting 40%*

- a) The capacity statement presents a coherent and strategic response to KRA2. There is a sound rationale for the particular combination of members and the Consortium presents a considered synthesis of skills, technical capacity, experience and linkages with partner organisations and communities in Laos.
- b) The key principles and Theory of Change of BEQUAL are well understood and integrated into the described approach;
- c) There is potential for good geographic coverage;

- d) There is clear potential to achieve outcomes for marginalised groups. To meet the requirements of BEQUAL, specific skills and experience on gender and disability are required; and
- e) There is evidence of how the Consortium proposes to aggregate and analyse project/activity evidence to contribute towards policy dialogue.

## **8. Assessment process**

- 8.1 Capacity Statements received by the deadline will first be checked by DFAT to ensure the organisations meet the eligibility criteria detailed in Section 7.
- 8.2 Submissions will be assessed by a Selection Panel convened in Vientiane, comprising:
  - a) a Chairperson - a DFAT Officer;
  - b) a Government of Laos representative; and
  - c) other individual(s) or organisations DFAT deems appropriate who possess relevant technical skills and/or experience.
- 8.3 The Selection Panel is conducted on a confidential basis and Selection Panel members must not discuss matters relating to the assessment of any Capacity Statement with any party.
- 8.4 Capacity Statements will be assessed on the merits of their responses to the individual selection criteria as outlined in Section 8, and any other factors which at DFAT's sole discretion, may impact upon the suitability of any Capacity Statement.
- 8.5 As part of the assessment process, DFAT may invite short listed Consortiums to be interviewed. Applicant Consortiums will be notified no later than one week before the interviews take place. A Consortium representative(s), including a representative from the Lead NGO will be required to answer any generic and specific questions asked by the Selection Panel.
- 8.6 In making its assessment of a Capacity Statement, the Selection Panel may have regard to other factors relevant to the suitability, capacity and qualifications of Consortium members including but not limited to:
  - a) checking with nominated referees and with other persons or organisations as DFAT chooses, the accuracy of information and quality of previous work performed, including the resourcing of previous work; and
  - b) information obtained from any source, which is relevant to the capacity of the Applicant NGOs.

8.7 The Selection Panel will provide the DFAT delegate with a Selection Report that summarises the Panel's assessment of each Submission against both the eligibility criteria and the selection criteria. The Selection Report will include the Panel's recommendations for Submissions to be funded in ranked order for the delegate's consideration and approval.

## **9. Conditions for Consortium Negotiations**

9.1 Should the Selection Panel find none of the submitted Capacity Statements satisfactory, DFAT will ask Consortiums to resubmit their Capacity Statements based on feedback given by the Selection Panel. DFAT reserves the right to determine if and when a second round will be required.

9.2 DFAT reserve the right to enter into negotiations with the winning Consortium to address technical gaps within the winning membership, including proposing a more optimal membership.

## **10. Submission Conditions**

### *Late Submissions*

10.1 The Applicant Consortium is responsible for the delivery of their Capacity Statement. In order to show fairness, DFAT will not accept applications after the advertised closing date and time.

10.2 DFAT may extend the Closing Time at its sole and absolute discretion, and will issue a notice on the Australian Embassy website and the Learning House for Development website notifying any decision to extend.

### *Non-conforming Submissions*

10.3 Capacity Statements must include all information specified in the Guidelines. Consortiums accept that their failure to provide all information, in the format specified, may result in their Capacity Statement being considered as a nonconforming Submission and liable to rejection. DFAT reserves the right to seek clarification of non-conforming Capacity Statements.

### *Submission Enquiries*

10.4 If an applicant Consortium wishes to make any enquiry concerning the process, including seeking clarification about this Request for Capacity Statements, they must notify the Contact Person referred to in Section 1 as soon as possible and not later than 7 days before the Closing Time.

- 10.5 Enquiries must be made in writing to the Contact Person in Section 1 and may be sent by email as detailed in Section 1 (Contact Person). DFAT reserves the right to issue or publish answers to any Applicant Consortium's enquiries on its website without identifying the Applicant Consortium which submitted the question.

*DFAT's rights*

- 10.6 DFAT reserves the right to:
- a) terminate, extend or vary this process;
  - b) evaluate Submissions as DFAT sees appropriate;
  - c) request clarification in relation to a Submission;
  - d) accept or reject any Submission;
  - e) terminate negotiations with any suitable Applicant Consortium and commence negotiations with any other Applicant Consortium; and
  - f) negotiate with the number of Applicant Consortiums it considers appropriate.

*Applicant Consortium's acknowledgement*

- 10.7 A Capacity Statement is submitted on the following basis:
- a) no legal obligation or agreement whatsoever is intended to be or is created between DFAT and any Applicant Consortium by virtue of this Request for Capacity Statements (this includes, but is not limited to statements contained in the Guidelines or any other guidelines);
  - b) the Applicant Consortium acknowledges and agrees that DFAT, its officers, employees, agents and advisers are not, and will not be responsible, or liable for the accuracy or completeness of any information contained in the Guidelines, or any other guidelines issued subsequent to the evaluation of Submissions;
  - c) the Applicant Consortium is responsible for all costs of and incidental to the preparation and delivery of their Capacity Statement, or any subsequent stage of the application process, including answering any queries and providing any further information sought by DFAT; and
  - d) the Applicant Consortium warrants that the Capacity Statement is accurate in every respect. In particular the Applicant Consortium warrants that the information and certification included in the Capacity Statement is accurate, and that DFAT has the authority to make any inquiries deemed necessary to confirm information included in the Submission.

### *Complaints handling*

- 10.8 Any complaints that may arise regarding the application and selection process should be directed and addressed in the first instance to the First Secretary, Development Cooperation, Australian Embassy, PO Box 292, Vientiane, Lao PDR.

### *Debriefing of applicant Consortiums*

- 10.9 Applicant Consortiums are entitled to request a written debriefing on the results of the assessment of their Capacity Statements once agreements have been signed with successful Consortium to proceed to the design phase. This debriefing will provide information on scores achieved against individual selection criteria and comments from the Selection Panel. Generic feedback on the qualities of the successful applicant(s) will also be provided.
- 10.10 DFAT will not enter into discussion or communications on the content of the debrief once it has been completed.

## **Attachment A: Capacity Statement Template**

### **Basic Education Quality and Access in Lao PDR (BEQUAL)**

#### **NGO/NPA Consortium Capacity Statement**

*(No more than 10 pages)*

**1. Capacity to work in Partnership**

*Outline the background to the Consortium, the basis of your collaboration and why you agreed to work together. Describe any previous collaboration between some or all of Consortium members working in Lao PDR including the nature of that relationship.*

**2. Experience in Lao PDR and Education.**

*Describe the experience of the Consortium working in Lao PDR, including examples of high quality implementation of education / access to education activities, existing good relationships with the Government of Lao PDR and of DFAT policies in Lao PDR. Appreciation of the role of civil society in Lao PDR*

**3. Capacity to Manage the Consortium.**

*Outline the operating processes and structures established for the Consortium.*

- *Who will take the Lead Role in the Consortium? How was this determined and what experience does the Lead NGO have to demonstrate capacity for this role?*
- *What is the broad indicative division of labour?*
- *What are the proposed governance structure, budgeting process and management arrangements?*
- *Outline relevant program management, monitoring and reporting experience.*
- *Proposed plan for accountability, capacity development, organisational strengthening and shared learning*

**4. Capacity Development and working with Lao National Civil Society**

*Demonstrate how this Consortium will work with participating Lao NPAs and how it will support participating Lao NPAs to develop their organisational capacity, and the process used to develop this approach or arrangement, including examples and strategies previously used.*

5. **Capacity for Learning and Partnership Assessment**

*Describe how the Consortium will assess and review the collaboration and partnership within the Consortium and within BEQUAL.*

6. **Capacity for Policy Dialogue**

*Describe how the Consortium will utilise project information to inform and engage in policy dialogue within BEQUAL, DFAT, GoL Partners and other stakeholders. Provide examples of successful approaches in Lao PDR.*

7. **Capacity for Quality Implementation of BEQUAL KRA2**

*Demonstrate the capacity of the Consortium to achieve outcomes under KRA2 Component 1. How does the particular combination of members provide a coherent and strategic response to this component? How does the combination of specialist and technical skills contribute to the key outcomes of KRA2?*

8. **Capacity to work within an Integrated Program approach**

*Describe how the Consortium proposes to work within the BEQUAL management and governance structure and how the approach connects and complements other key result areas (as described in the Program Concept, IDD page 22-24). Describe how the Consortium proposes to engage with the BEQUAL Steering Committee, Technical Working Group and Managing Contractor – provide examples and demonstrate how this is important in the context of BEQUAL.*



**Attachment B: NGO/NPA Consortium Capacity Statement – Annex 1**

**Summary of Consortium Members**

Name of Organisation	Date of Legal Registration in Laos	Years operating in Laos	Provincial Reach	Sectoral Focus
Lead Member:				
Location of Head Office:				

*Please complete a profile of each Consortium member and include at Annex 1 to the Template.*

*Members must meet eligibility requirements set out in Part 2, Section 6 of the Guidelines*

## Attachment C: NGO/NPA Consortium Capacity Statement - Annex 2

### Profiles of Consortium Members:

*Only named Consortium members are required to complete this form. DFAT has a strong expectation that Lao NPAs will play an important role in the Consortium but specific NPAs are not required to be named at this stage. NPA involvement will be formalised after consortium selection, during the inception and design phases.*

- Organisational profile, including location of Head or Country office, location of branches or regional offices.
- Staffing profile (number and role of relevant expatriate and national staff and location).
- Systems/resources to support the NGO's role in the Consortium.
- Experience delivering activities related to education and/or access to education in rural communities.
- Experience working collaboratively with other NGOs and relevant Lao ministries.
- Participatory and community development experience.
- *For Australian NGOS accredited with DFAT:* date and level of DFAT Accreditation.
- *For other International NGOs<sup>3</sup>:* current or previous contracts with DFAT. Attach DFAT Due Diligence Assessment if one has been conducted. If none, attach evidence of previous successful donor funded projects in Lao PDR.

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<sup>3</sup> All members of the winning Consortium that do not have current accreditation status with DFAT will be required to undergo a DFAT Due Diligence Assessment in order to confirm their eligibility.