

Q. Given the recent EU announcement of their contribution to BEQUAL as a whole, is DFAT able to provide an update on the total funding that will be allocated to civil society consortium activities?

A. The Request for Tender included an allocation of \$6 million for the NGO consortium, the third largest allocation for Program Costs (see page 114 of Part III). Funding from the EU cannot be confirmed until an agreement is in place. If the funding envelop for BEQUAL does increase, the Steering Committee will determine how this funding will be allocated. This will take into account the recommendations from the design document (p61) to consider: enhancing financial management; expanding teacher education and resource materials; expanding participation and infrastructure initiatives; increasing the interface and interaction between the primary and lower secondary sub-sectors.

Q. Para 6.3 a – Could DFAT provide a definition or examples of activities that would qualify as activities related to “access to education”? Specifically would DFAT consider livelihood-focused activities that increase household income and thus their ability to send children to school or activities that focus on Women’s Empowerment as meeting this definition?A. Livelihood activities which contribute to increased participation of children in primary school are eligible. Other examples of eligible activities include:

- a) supporting communities, including VEDCs, as active participants in school level planning, budgeting and monitoring the quality of education services;
- b) increasing participation and learning by girls and boys with disability;
- c) developing a culture of reading at the community level;
- d) supporting early grade literacy and reading;
- e) supporting 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) complementing 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) enhancing the local learning environment and strengthen community involvement in schools;
- h) improving 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) addressing 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).

Q. Para 8.1 – The first step of the capacity statement assessment process is an eligibility check. If one consortium member is deemed ineligible, how does this affect the consortium bid as a whole? Will the entire bid be deemed ineligible? Will the consortium be given the opportunity to proceed with the bid with the ineligible consortium member excluded? If the bid would be considered without the ineligible consortium member, how would it affect bid scoring?

Please delete paragraph 8.1. A technical assessment panel will review the eligibility of members of a nominated consortium during the capacity statement assessment process.

The eligibility criteria outlined in paragraph 6 b) requires that:

NGOs that are registered with the Lao Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 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.

Applicant NGOs must be registered with the Lao Ministry of Foreign Affairs. If any members of the consortium are not registered, the capacity assessment process will proceed with remaining members after the exclusion of ineligible members. The finalisation of consortium members and the consortium agreement will be the first step after the selection of the preferred consortium based on the capacity assessment.

DFAT has stipulated that NGOs should have five year's experience in Lao PDR to ensure they have a good track record in Laos, strong relationships and detailed knowledge of the Lao context. The Lead NGO must have at least five years experience in Lao PDR. Should the bid include NGOs with less than five years experience in Lao PDR, the technical assessment panel would need to be convinced that the NGO has the appropriate relationships and experience to perform proposed activities effectively. The finalisation of consortium members and the consortium agreement will be the first step after the selection of the preferred consortium based on the capacity assessment.

A. Capacity Statement Template Questions:

Q. Section 2. Where it refers to "DFAT policies in Lao PDR" does this mean specific policies related to how agencies contracted under DFAT contracts relate with Govt of Laos, or general DFAT policies eg. child protection. Could you clarify?

A. DFAT requests a description of experience in Lao PDR, including experience in implementing DFAT's (global) policies such as Child Protection.

Q. Section 3, bullet point 4: Does this question on management, monitoring and reporting experience relate to the consortium members as a group or to the lead agency?

A. This question is directed to the lead agency, however the performance of all consortium members in program management, monitoring and reporting may be relevant.