ISSUANCE DATE:	September 26, 2017
DEADLINE FOR QUESTIONS *or* REQUESTS FOR CLARIFICATIONS:	October 02, 2017 (09:00 AM Nepal Standard Time (NPT))
CONCEPT PAPER SUBMISSION CLOSING DATE:	October 25, 2017
CLOSING TIME:	17:00 PM NPT

SUBJECT: Reading for All: Disability Inclusive Education for Nepali Children

REFERENCE: Notice of Funding Opportunity (NOFO) Number: RFA-367-17-000009

Dear Potential Applicants,

As per the Foreign Assistance Act (FAA) of 1961, as amended, the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) Mission in Nepal invites submission of concept papers and, if later requested, oral presentations in response to this NOFO. USAID issues this NOFO per the Automated Directive System (ADS) 303.3.5.2.a for a cooperative agreement to support the "Reading for All: Disability Inclusive Education for Nepali Children" project.

Subject to availability of funds, USAID/Nepal intends to award one cooperative agreement per ADS 303.3.11 and 304.3.3 under this NOFO. Nevertheless, USAID reserves the right to fund any *or* none of the concept papers submitted. As per ADS 303.3.6.1, USAID does not restrict eligibility for this award and we encourage any eligible U.S. or non-U.S. organization, individual, non-profit, or for profit entity interested in submitting a concept paper read this NOFO thoroughly to understand the type of program sought, application submission requirements, and evaluation process. Please review NOFO **Section III** for additional eligibility requirements. USAID shall make the resultant award per the evaluation procedures provided under **Section V** below and administer the award per the ADS Chapter 303 Standard Provisions for U.S. and non-U.S. non-governmental organizations (NGOs) or the Federal Acquisition Regulations (FAR) Part 31 for for-profit organizations.

This NOFO consists of the cover letter and the following sections:
   a.   SECTION I: PROGRAM DESCRIPTION (PD);
   b.   SECTION II: FEDERAL AWARD INFORMATION;
   c.   SECTION III: ELIGIBILITY INFORMATION;
   d.   SECTION IV: APPLICATION AND SUBMISSION INFORMATION;
   e.   SECTION V: APPLICATION REVIEW INFORMATION;
   f.   SECTION VI: FEDERAL AWARD AND ADMINISTRATION INFORMATION;
   g.   SECTION VII: FEDERAL AWARDING AGENCY CONTACTS; *and*
   h.   SECTION VIII: OTHER INFORMATION.

This NOFO is posted on www.grants.gov, and may be amended. Thus, potential applicants should continue to consult Grants.gov for future NOFO announcements as well as modifications to the announcements and the corresponding application packages. Applicants must have or download the appropriate Adobe program to their computers to view and save the Adobe forms properly. It

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remains the applicant's responsibility to ensure that the applicant has received the entire NOFO in its entirety from the internet. USAID bears no responsibility, explicit or implied, for data errors resulting from the NOFO transmission or conversion process. If you experience difficulty registering on www.grants.gov or accessing the NOFO, please contact the Grants.gov Helpdesk at +001.800.518.4726 or via email at support@grants.gov for technical assistance.

The successful applicant shall bear the responsibility for ensuring successful achievement of the program objectives. Thus, USAID requests that each applicant please read each section of the NOFO thoroughly.

Please send any questions to the point of contact identified in **Section IV** no later than the deadline for questions indicated above. USAID will provide responses to all questions received from all potential applicants through an amendment to this notice posted to www.grants.gov no later than Monday, October 09, 2017.

Issuance of this NOFO neither constitutes an award commitment on the part of the U.S. Government (USG) nor commits the USG to pay for costs incurred in the preparation and submission of a concept paper or oral presentation. Applicant submits concept papers and make an oral presentation at its own risk and should circumstances prevent award of a cooperative agreement, the applicant bears all preparation and submission costs at its own expense.

Thank you for your interest in USAID programs.

Yours truly,

Jack M. Adrien
Agreement Officer

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ABBREVIATIONS, ACRONYMS, AND INITIALISMS

Abbreviations, acronyms, and initialisms used in this NOFO

ADS	Automated Directives System
AO	Agreement Officer
AOR	Agreement Officer's Representative
AT+	AIDTracker Plus
CDC	Curriculum Development Center
CFR	Code of Federal Regulations
CLAs	Central Line Agencies
CRPD	Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities
CwDs	Children with disabilities
DPOs	Disabled Persons' Organizations
DPs	Development Partners
EGRP	Early Grade Reading Program
EMIS	Education Management Information System
EPRP	Emergency Preparedness and Response Plan
GESI	Gender Equality and Social Inclusion
GIS	Geographic Information System
GoN	Government of Nepal
HTs	Head teachers
M	Million
M&E	Monitoring and Evaluation
MEL	Monitoring, Evaluation, and Learning
MoE	Ministry of Education
MTDC	Modified Total Direct Costs
NCED	National Center for Education Development
NEGRP	National Early Grade Reading Program
NGO	Non-governmental organization
NOFO	Notice of Funding Opportunity
NSL	Nepali Sign Language
PIO	Public International Organization
PMP	Performance Management Plan
PTAs	Parent Teacher Associations
PwDs	People with disabilities
RC	Resource class
RF	Results Framework
RTs	Resource teachers
SAM	Systems for Award Management
SC	Selection Committee
SMCs	School Management Committees
SSDP	School Sector Development Plan
STRIDE	Strengthen Rehabilitation in District Environs
WHO	World Health Organization

SECTION I: PROGRAM DESCRIPTION

1.1 BACKGROUND

1.1.1 COUNTRY CONTEXT

As a result of 10 years of armed conflict and a fragile democratic transition, the Government of Nepal (GoN) has recognized the importance of inclusion to promote social justice and equality. There is a robust legal and policy framework that clearly demonstrates the GoN's commitment to promoting inclusion. The most recently promulgated constitution of September 2015 emphasizes inclusion as a way to establish a more equal and fair society, and highlights education as a key mechanism to achieve this goal. Furthermore, Nepal has ratified a number of international conventions, including the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, the Convention on the Rights of the Child, and the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD). Most notably, in 2016, the GoN approved the Inclusive Education Policy for Persons with Disabilities, which outlines clear objectives, strategies/operational approaches, and recommended organizational structures, to ensure children with disabilities (CwDs) are included in the education mainstream and afforded their constitutional right to education.

In addition to the legal framework, the new School Sector Development Plan (SSDP) for 2016-2023, which guides priority education reforms as agreed between the Ministry of Education (MoE) and Development Partners (DPs), also emphasizes inclusive education as a key area for strategic intervention. Specifically, the MoE has committed to providing appropriate learning environments for CwDs by supporting 380 resource classes for CwDs in MoE public schools over the next five years. The MoE also provides small scholarships to CwDs to facilitate access to education and improved learning outcomes. With the transition to federalism, the Reading for All activity will work with relevant education actors at the central and local level to ensure that CwDs have access to quality education. The applicant should coordinate and collaborate with other DPs and civil society actors to advance inclusive education objectives, and specifically as it relates to USAID's focus to support the GoN to improve reading skills of students in grades 1 – 3.

1.1.2 MAIN CHALLENGES

While Nepal has a strong legal and policy framework to support inclusive education and made significant steps to institute these policy commitments, full and effective implementation of policies and laws to date has been challenging due to:

(a) inadequate data and evidence to support impactful inclusive education programming;
(b) limited institutional and technical capacity; *and*
(c) entrenched discriminatory practices such as gender, disability and caste/ethnicity.

1.1.2.1 LACK OF QUALITY DATA ON CHILDREN WITH DISABILITIES (CwDs)

The quality of data on people with disabilities in Nepal is poor and gaps abound. According to the National Population and Housing Census (2011), there are a total of 513,321 persons with disability, with a prevalence rate of 1.94 percent: physical disabilities are the most common (36.3 percent), followed by visual (18.5 percent), deaf or hard of hearing (15.5 percent), speech related disability (11.5 percent), mental (8.9 percent), multiple disabilities (7.5 percent), and 1.8 are deaf-blind. The

estimated prevalence of disability in Nepal is extremely low compared to global data, which estimates that people with disabilities currently represent around 15 percent of the total world's population[1], and 5.8 percent of children ages 0 to 14 have a moderate to severe disability. Furthermore, existing data is not always disaggregated by sex, socioeconomic status, or caste/ethnicity; such disaggregation can reveal the double, or triple disadvantage of CwDs. If applying government's estimate of 1.94 percent prevalence or the WHO's estimate of 5.8 percent prevalence for children age 0 to 14, there would be between 250,000 to 735,000 CwDs in Nepal, a significant variance. WHO data includes children with mild disabilities, such as low vision, hard of hearing and learning disabilities, all of which are rarely identified or diagnosed in Nepal. Thus, as a majority of students with disabilities are enrolled in mainstream classrooms, with many unidentified students with disabilities and teachers not trained on inclusive approaches and pedagogies, this seriously impacts children's ability to access education and effectively participate in the classroom.

Therefore, early identification and detection of CwDs is critical to enabling families and teachers of CwDs to create an empowering environment for CwDs early on that lead to successes both in and out of school and later in life. This includes appropriate accommodations and support to both CwDs, as well as families and communities. Currently, at the national level, the lack of identification and screening of CwDs prevents the GoN from effectively budgeting and developing responsive implementation plans. At the local level, without accurate data, communities and service providers are not able to adequately contextualize and implement responsive mechanisms that support effective instruction and learning.

1.1.2.2   LIMITED INSTITUTIONAL AND TECHNICAL CAPACITY

While GoN schools are legally bound to provide free basic educational services to children, regardless of the type of disability, in practice there are limited options for support and resources to adequately serve CwDs.

While teachers are responsible for educating CwDs, many teachers do not have adequate competencies to employ a range of appropriate pedagogical techniques and approaches for teaching diverse groups of students, including CwDs, in various education settings. Currently, pre-service teacher training does not include a mandatory course on inclusive education, and in-service trainings provide minimal specific training in disability for mainstream teachers. Various modules on inclusive education have been developed by the GoN with support from different partners; these can be integrated in the regular teacher professional development program, but to date such training is not yet required. Only resource teachers (RTs) in integrated schools have a mandatory, 30-45-day training for working with children with a specific disability, such as learning Nepali Sign Language, but specialized refresher trainings for these teachers are extremely limited. To better support teachers to address diverse learning needs in the classroom, more training, coaching, mentoring, and supervision are required.

To further build a cadre of professionals dedicated to education for CwDs, additional capacity building is required among GoN education staff and other stakeholders, especially in the context of federalism when all responsibilities for basic and secondary education service provision are devolved to the local level. Tribhuvan University has a Department of Special Needs Education in the Faculty

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[1] World Report on Disability. World Health Organization. 2011. p24.

of Education, which is a potential resource draw on along with other local Disabled Persons' Organizations (DPOs).

In addition to teacher capacity, support and supervision, there are limited resources to ensure an inclusive learning environment and teaching and learning process. Most schools are not equipped to support all learners, particularly CwDs. There is a significant lack of adapted learning materials in mainstream and in integrated/special schools to adequately support effective learning for CwDs. There is also a dearth of variety and quantity of reading materials developed for learners with low vision and blind and lack of other assistive technologies to facilitate learning for CwDs.

While Assessment Center Coordinators are responsible for reaching out to parents to inform them about resource classes or scholarships and facilities for CwDs, they lack sufficient resources to effectively conduct outreach activities, especially to poorer and marginalized households. As a result, parents are unaware of the different benefits available to CwDs and ways to possibly best support their child (i.e. physiotherapy and speech therapy skills, Nepali Sign Language training, etc.). Cultural beliefs and poor understanding of disability within the family lead parents to counterproductive behaviors such as overprotection and shame, and even hiding their child, particularly when they have intellectual or multiple unique needs. Educating parents about services and support available to CwDs will empower them to more proactively support their child with disability and enable students to access their right to a quality education.

1.1.2.3   GENDER AND CASTE/ETHNICITY CHALLENGES

In Nepal, young girls with disabilities confront additional challenges. They may experience multiple forms of discrimination due to their socio-economic status, caste, ethnicity or language. Globally, women and girls with disabilities are discriminated against differently from men and face a higher risk of sexual violence, harassment, forced sterilization, forced abortion and exposure to HIV/AIDS. Girls with disabilities experience discrimination and heightened marginalization on account of their sex, age, and disability, and girls with intellectual disabilities are particularly marginalized. Around the world, it is estimated that between 40 to 70 percent of girls with disabilities will be sexually abused before they reach 18 years of age. The number of girls and women with disabilities is substantial, and the World Health Organization's (WHO's) 2011 World Report on Disability indicates that the female disability prevalence rate is 19.2 percent, whereas it is 12 percent for men.

Additionally, Nepal's complex social structure--consisting of more than 100 caste and ethnic groups and languages--creates educational challenges even for children from marginalized groups who don't have disabilities. For example, less than half of Nepalis speak Nepali as their mother tongue, and USAID's Early Grade Reading Program assessments found that non-native Nepali speakers have lower reading outcomes. The parents of children from marginalized groups have much lower levels of education and literacy than the general population, which can affect their ability to advocate for and support their children's education. Some marginalized groups, such as Muslims, have lower school enrollment rates than the national average, and in general the education gender gap in Nepal is highest among historically lower castes and lower socioeconomic groups. While caste- and ethnic group-disaggregated data on CwDs are scarce, given marginalized groups' overall educational challenges, it is likely that CwDs from such groups are at an even greater disadvantage.

1.2   PROJECT GOAL, OBJECTIVES, AND THEORY OF CHANGE

1.2.1   GOAL

The goal of the Reading for All activity is to improve reading outcomes for children with disabilities (CwDs) in grades 1 – 3 in USAID-supported Early Grade Reading Program (EGRP) districts.

1.2.2   OBJECTIVES

The three main objectives of the Reading for All activity are:

(a) Improve data quality on CwDs;
(b) Enhance institutional and technical capacity at various levels to deliver quality reading instruction and support to CwDs; *and*
(c) Test inclusive instructional models that can be scaled for specific groups of CwDs.

1.2.3   THEORY OF CHANGE

Improved quality of data on CwDs--including early detection with gender and caste/ethnicity disaggregation--increased institutional and technical capacity of GoN staff, teachers, head teachers/principals, resource persons, resource class facilitators and aides, and testing inclusive reading instructional models, will improve delivery of quality inclusive education, thereby improving reading outcomes for CwDs. The Reading for All activity will help the GoN implement its policy commitments to inclusive education by institutionalizing the use of the early detection tool in the MOE's education information management system (EMIS), establishing a pre-service orientation and in-service teacher training program that ensures head teachers and early grade teachers are skilled in inclusive education methodologies, and providing the GoN evidence and data on effective, low-cost instructional models for specific groups of CwDs that can be expanded by the MoE and other local government units.

1.2.4   EARLY GRADE READING PROGRAM (EGRP) HISTORY

The extensive and collective experiences of USAID/Nepal, GoN and partners in early grade reading reform serve as a strong foundation to further promote inclusion education within the 16 EGRP operating districts. USAID's EGRP aligns with the Mission's Country Development Cooperation Strategy and the Agency's Global Education Strategy to improve reading skills for primary grade students, including CwDs. EGRP has an established field presence and network that this activity can quickly build upon to enhance current reading instruction already happening in the classrooms. EGRP's efforts to engage communities to build a culture of reading can be enhanced by bringing parents and guardians of CwDs into a range of activities to support strong reading practice at home. Close coordination between Reading for All and EGRP will be necessary and integral to the success of this activity.

In the 16 USAID-supported Early Grade Reading Program districts, there are 11,702 students at the basic education level with disabilities; 5,823 (49.8 percent) are girls, and 5,879 are boys (50.2

percent).[2] See Annex 1: Number of Resource Classes and Students by Types of Disabilities (2016-2017) by District.

1.2.5   FUNDING PRIORITIES/PROGRAMMATIC FOCUS AREA

1.2.5.1   OBJECTIVE 1: IMPROVE DATA QUALITY ON CwDs

Reading for All aims to improve the accuracy and reliability of data and evidence on inclusive education for CwDs to ensure evidence-based advocacy, effective policy development and implementation, and adequate resource allocation. The DOE supported the use of an early detection tool that is in line with international standards developed by the Washington Group on Disability Statistics (International Classification on Functionality) and was recently piloted by Handicap International in 40 schools, in four districts, with approximately 2,800 students. The short set of disability measures includes six core functional domains: seeing, hearing, walking, cognition, self-care and communication. Building on this pilot, Reading for All will:

A. **Review, revise, and integrate the use of the early detection tool into the National Early Grade Reading Program (NEGRP)** – To better capture the number of CwDs and types of disabilities within the 16 USAID supported EGRP districts, Reading for All will support the MoE to review and revise the early detection tool, then integrate the early detection tool mentioned above (in variable formats) into the GON's teacher professional development training package and also train head teachers (HTs) on the identification and monitoring of CwDs in all EGRP schools. The training will include a set of guidelines on what type of support is needed for different types of disabilities and how to access various resources to provide appropriate support or referrals for CwDs. Reading for All will work with the MoE to consider the use of the tool as part of the minimum reading package related to teacher training and professional development in the GoN's National Early Grade Reading Program, which is being scaled up across the country by the GoN and other organizations supporting early grade reading.

B. **Strengthen the national education management information system (EMIS) to improve data collection on CwDs** – The MoE introduced a new template for collecting school- and student-level EMIS data and implemented it in 68 (out of 75) districts. Drawing on EMIS data, the GoN, with support from UNICEF, is developing and implementing the Equity Index to better target resources to address remaining disparities in access, participation, and learning outcomes, especially for CwDs, and particularly girls and children from marginalized and disadvantaged groups. Reading for All and USAID will work with the multi-donor and GoN *Access and Equity Technical Working Group* to support the MoE to include early detection data on students with disabilities in the school-level EMIS data collection process. This will ensure that the collection of disability data (disaggregated by sex and caste/ethnicity) is institutionalized, data is used to support inclusive planning and resource allocation, and Nepal's disability data can be standardized and compared with other countries.

C. **Pilot a mobile education assessment team** – Establishing a mobile education assessment team within the Assessment Center, utilizing existing staff, will support HTs and teachers in screening, identification, assessment, referral and determination of educational provisions and accommodations, and provide counseling and information to parents following screening.

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[2] MoE Flash Report I- 2016 – 2017

Qualified adults with mobility, hearing, visual and learning disabilities should be engaged in the piloting process, especially for the referral, determination of education provisions and accommodations and counseling and information. Reading for All will support the MoE to pilot mobile education assessment teams in two EGRP districts. Mobile education assessment teams will conduct regular follow-up visits to schools to provide refresher trainings to HTs and teachers on screening and identification, and orientations to the school management committees (SMCs) and parent teacher associations (PTAs) on engaging parents and families of CwDs. The mobile education assessment team should also provide technical trainings and orientations to relevant district and local level offices and committees on early detection and identification of disabilities. Capacity building and training for the mobile assessment teams are planned under Objective 2B.

1.2.5.2 OBJECTIVE 2: ENHANCE INSTITUTIONAL AND TECHNICAL CAPACITY AT VARIOUS LEVELS TO DELIVER QUALITY READING INSTRUCTION AND SUPPORT TO Cwds

A. **Provide technical assistance and capacity building to central level education officials on inclusive education** – Reading for All will embed a technical assistance team in a central line agency or Ministry to build staff capacity on inclusive education, through mentoring and on-the-job training, to effectively drive evidence-based policy reform and implementation; improve the monitoring and evaluation (M&E) system on CwDs; and enhance coordination with the Curriculum Development Center (CDC) and National Center for Education Development (NCED). The embedded team should have strong relationships and connections with DPOs and ensure people with disabilities are consulted and their expertise are drawn upon. The embedded team will also serve as a resource for district- and local-level actors implementing inclusive education activities. To improve coordination with local-level actors, the embedded team will support the central level to map and track the activities of DPOs and partners to better maximize resources and inclusive education expertise outside of the government.

B. **Develop capacity at the central and district levels** – There also needs to be further development of skills on inclusive education and CwDs for education staff at the national, district, and local levels. Reading for All will coordinate with relevant stakeholders to develop and refine a capacity building plan and determine priority capacity building activities for national, district- and local-level actors. Reading for All will also work with relevant GoN entities to update and customize an in-service training module on inclusive education. At the same time, Reading for All will help the GoN refine the pre-service orientation package to include sessions on inclusive education that could be required for all new GoN teachers prior to serving in schools. Both pre- and in-service training programs should cover knowledge, attitude, and skills to both accommodate CwDs (with any disability) and to augment students without disabilities' learning, rights-based and gender-inclusive approaches to working with CwDs, inclusive ways to manage classrooms, and adapted pedagogical techniques and monitoring tools. Part of the training package will include a set of guidelines on what type of support is needed for different types of disabilities and how to access various resources to provide appropriate support or referrals for CwDs. Based on the capacity building plan, Reading for All will also target the Assessment Centers in two EGRP districts and strengthen the coordinators' skills in early detection (See 1.C above), assessment, and decision-making on education provisions and referrals for CwDs. Coordinators also need to learn how to provide effective technical support, referrals, and supervision to special schools and mainstream schools with resource classes, and

conduct outreach, orientation, and sensitization on inclusive education with parents and families with CwDs. Parent and community engagement and empowerment to support inclusive education for CwDs, especially those from marginalized groups, may need to be emphasized.

1.2.5.3 OBJECTIVE 3: TEST INCLUSIVE READING INSTRUCTIONAL MODELS THAT CAN BE SCALED FOR SPECIFIC GROUPS OF CwDs

Reading for All will test two inclusive instructional models to reduce disparities in reading outcomes for CwDs. Each model can be tested any of the current 16 EGRP districts. Reading for All will consult with the GoN and EGRP, in coordination with USAID, to determine the districts for the classroom-based interventions given the existing number and types of CwDs in these districts (See Annex 1: Number of Schools and Students by Types of Disabilities in EGRP Districts).

Both models will target grades 1-3, ensure monitoring systems to track and evaluate children's progress (i.e. tailored assessments to monitor reading outcomes), and promote parent-teacher communication. Reading for All will look at the following two modalities (Model A, that the GoN currently implements; and Model B, which will be introduced), examine ways to strengthen those modalities and then measure the effectiveness of those modalities on reading outcomes. DPOs must be included in the design and refinement of each model, and sustainability beyond the life of Reading for All needs to be considered. Community, school, and family orientation on CwDs should be included in both models to promote positive perceptions and attitudes towards CwDs.

A. **Nepali Sign Language (NSL) and Low Vision Resource Classes (Existing)** – This model will be implemented in a fully inclusive school where students who are deaf and hard of hearing learn using bilingual education methods with Nepali Sign Language and written Nepali in the resource class (RC) in grades 1 and 2. A pilot bilingual class will be tested where hearing students also acquire NSL and reinforce their reading/writing skills to better facilitate communication among deaf and hearing peers. The transition to a mainstream class should be supported by peer exchanges and teachers' increased fluency with NSL, facilitated by a Resource Teacher (RT) fluent in NSL. For students with low vision, Reading for All should consider effective, low-tech accommodations to support the learning of children who have low vision. This model will build capacity of resource teachers and RCs to ensure they have the necessary and high quality skills (as described in the CRPD) and materials to support children with visual and hearing disabilities in learning to read. The RTs will provide advice to mainstream teachers on inclusive pedagogical techniques, support mainstream teachers and build their skills, and set up monitoring systems to track and evaluate children's progress and promote overall class participation. The RT will also ensure parent-teacher communication and the school's overall use of inclusion tools.

B. **Community-based Approach Model** – This model will be a community-based approach to promote early grade reading for all CwDs in integrated schools in selected local government units (nagarpalika or gaunpalika). This model will be developed and refined through working with newly elected local government officials, local DPOs, parents, community members, CwDs, SMCs, PTAs, teachers, students, resource centers, local health clinics, and other community actors. The community-based approach model may not look the same in each community. The community-based model should include activities that sensitize the community, school, and family levels on disability biases, methods of communication, share international best practices that could be adapted to the local context (i.e. Small Group Skills Reinforcement Model for Children with Moderate Cognitive Differences), and promote a whole-of-community attitude

and approach to inclusive education. This approach must work with teachers to employ adaptive, appropriate, and inclusive pedagogical techniques, specifically in reading, for students with all types of disabilities, to include cognitive disabilities, deaf or hard of hearing, low vision, and physical disabilities.

1.3   MONITORING AND EVALUATION, REPORTING, AND LEARNING

The figure below depicts the higher level results framework for the Reading for All activity.
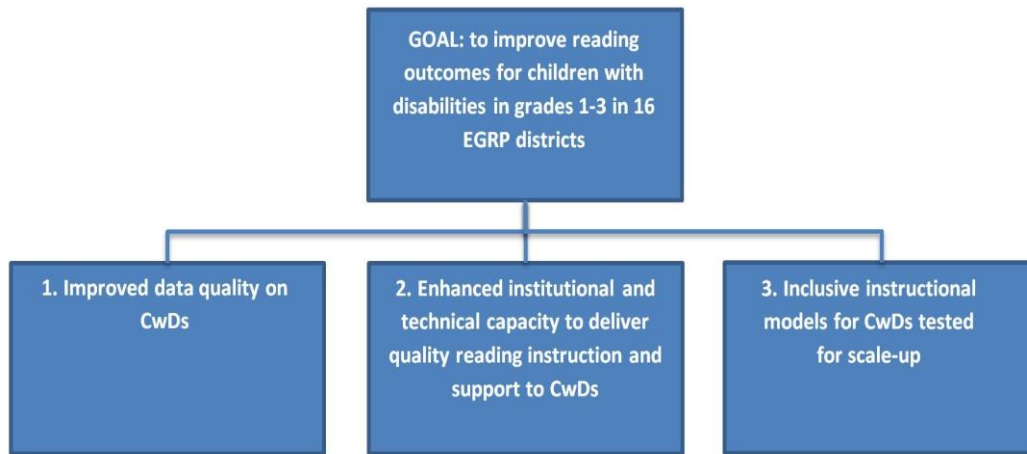
Reading for All will closely monitor and track activity progress through a number of required indicators, including:

- **Goal:** Custom Indicator 1: Percent of CwDs demonstrating increased reading fluency and comprehension skills in targeted schools in EGRP districts;
- **Objective 1:** Custom Indicator 2: Percent of EGRP schools administering early detection tool;
- **Objectives 1 – 3:** ES. 4 – 3 Number of USG-assisted organizations *or* service delivery systems that serve vulnerable persons strengthened;
- **Objective 2:** Custom Indicator: Number of GoN officials and district level personnel trained to provide inclusive education support to schools
- **Objective 2 & 3:** Custom Indicator: Number of educators trained who demonstrate increased Nepali Sign Language skills;
- **Objective 2 & 3:** ES. 4 – 2 Number of service providers trained who serve vulnerable persons;
- **Objective 2 & 3:** ES.1 – 8 Number of primary or secondary school educators who complete professional development activities on teaching students with special educational needs with USG assistance;
- **Objective 3:** ES. 4 – 1 Number of vulnerable persons benefiting from USG-supported social services.

Reading for All can also include other appropriate and relevant performance monitoring indicators and related reference sheets in the final Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning Plan.

1.3.1   LEARNING AGENDA

Given the limited evidence base around institutional capacity building and effective instructional models for inclusive education in the global south, and particularly in more resource constrained environments, Reading for All will build on EGRP and existing evidence on reading in Nepal, and further examine the following evidence gaps:

1. What are the institutional and capacity requirements within the education system and societal factors within the community to support inclusive education in mainstream public schools?
2. How effective and impactful are the selected inclusive education models in improving reading outcomes for students with disabilities (disaggregated by disability) in grades 1 – 3?

Reading for All will closely collaborate and coordinate with external evaluators that will be commissioned by USAID/Nepal to answer these questions.

1.4   COORDINATION/LINKAGES WITH THE GOVERNMENT OF NEPAL (GON) AND OTHER PROJECTS/PROGRAMS

- **Government of Nepal:** The Reading for All activity will coordinate closely with the GoN, specifically the Ministry of Education and relevant local level government officials. As a large component of this activity is aimed to strengthen GoN systems and capacity, a collaborative relationship with the government is essential. The partner will embed a technical assistance team, with clear terms of references, at the Ministry of Education or relevant central line agency (CLA) to work alongside GoN officials to implement this project. Reading for All should align and support the following GoN's policy commitments to CwDs: the Ministry of Education's Inclusive Education Policy 2016, the Consolidated Equity Strategy 2014 and Equity Index, and the School Sector Development Plan 2016 – 2023. A Steering Committee for Reading for All will be established to ensure strong coordination and communication between MoE, related CLAs, USAID, and the implementing partner. Furthermore, a memorandum of understanding will be established that outlines expectations, roles and responsibilities of the technical assistance team and the GoN.

- **Non-Government Entities/Civil Society:** The Reading for All activity will coordinate, link with, and leverage ongoing global, regional, national, sub-national, district, and civil society efforts and resources to promote inclusive education. These may include existing schools for the deaf, hard of hearing, blind, low vision, and other cognitive disabilities. Reading for All should also leverage knowledge and expertise within DPOs and ensure people with disabilities (PwDs) are involved throughout the activity planning, implementation, and monitoring and evaluation processes. Reading for All must coordinate closely with USAID's EGRP, which is implementing early grade reading activities within the same 16 districts where Reading for All will be working. There are also potential opportunities to link with other USAID-funded disability activities like the Strengthen Rehabilitation in District Environs (STRIDE) activity, which has community disability workers in five districts in common with EGRP (Banke, Bardiya, Kailali, Kanchanpur, *and* Dadeldhura), and a related health facility-based early detection and referral pilot. Finally, Reading for All will work with USAID to coordinate activities with other DPs.

[END OF SECTION I]

SECTION II: FEDERAL AWARD INFORMATION

2.1   PURPOSE OF AWARD

The principal purpose of the relationship with the Recipient[3] and under the subject program is to transfer funds to accomplish a public purpose of support or implementation of the Project entitled "Reading for All" 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. The Recipient using its own unique combination of staff, facilities, and experience, has the primary responsibility for employing whatever form of sound organization and management techniques may be necessary in order to assure proper and efficient administration of the resulting award.

2.2   ESTIMATE OF FUNDS AVAILABLE AND NUMBER OF AWARDS CONTEMPLATED

Subject to funding availability, USAID intends to provide USD $3.5 million (M) in total of USAID funding over a three year period. Nevertheless, actual funding amounts remain subject to availability of funds, progress, and necessary approvals.

Please note that this NOFO consists of multiple phases and the final award will be determined after a Program Description is jointly developed between the selected organization and USAID. USAID may issue a pre-authorization letter to the selected Recipient to ensure co-development phase costs are reimbursed. No costs chargeable to the proposed award may be incurred before receipt of either a written authorization letter from the AO or a fully executed cooperative agreement.

USAID intends to award one cooperative agreement in response to this NOFO. Nevertheless, USAID reserves the right to fund any one **or** none of the concept papers submitted.

2.3   PERIOD OF PERFORMANCE

The anticipated Reading for All cooperative agreement period of performance spans 3 years. USAID plans to fund approved activities starting in 2nd quarter of USG fiscal year 2018 (i.e., March 2018 to February 2021), but reserves the right to incrementally fund activities over the duration of the program, if necessary, depending on program length, performance against approved program indicators *and* availability of funds.

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[3] As per the Automated Directives System (ADS) 303.6, a Recipient is "[a]n organization that receives direct financial assistance (a grant *or* cooperative agreement) to carry out an assistance program on behalf of USAID, in accordance with the terms and conditions of the award and all applicable laws and regulations."

2.4   PLACE OF PERFORMANCE

Whilst USAID anticipates the Recipient shall conduct a majority of the work in Kathmandu, district and school-based interventions will be implemented in two of the 16 EGRP districts, which will be determined after award in consultation with USAID, EGRP, and the GoN, based on the existing number, and types of CwDs in the selected districts.

2.5   SUBSTANTIAL INVOLVEMENT

USAID plans to negotiate and award a cooperative agreement given that USAID has determined its proposed involvement in the Reading for All project as reasonable and necessary per the policy contained in ADS Chapter 303 concerning non-governmental assistance activities. This Agreement Officer (AO) will monitor and maintain this substantial involvement, except to the extent that the AO delegates authority to the Agreement Officer's Representative (AOR) in writing. USAID/Nepal will be substantially involved with the Recipient during the performance of the Cooperative Agreement to ensure that implementation proceeds as planned and is consistent with the Mission's Development Objectives. USAID/Nepal will be involved in the following areas:

(a) Approval of the Recipient's Implementation Plans;
(b) Approval of Specified Key Personnel; *and*
(c) Agency and Recipient Collaboration or Joint Participation

2.5.1   APPROVAL OF RECIPIENT'S IMPLEMENTATION WORK PLAN

The annual work plans and revisions thereto, are subject to AOR approval prior to implementing substantive work for each year of the Agreement.

2.5.2   APPROVAL OF SPECIFIED KEY PERSONNEL

For this program, the applicant should identify and propose two Key Personnel positions for Agreement Officer's approval. After award, the Recipient shall request prior approval from the USAID Agreement Officer for the replacement of key personnel or changes in the key personnel positions.

2.5.3   AGENCY AND RECIPIENT COLLABORATION OR JOINT PARTICIPATION

When the Recipient's successful accomplishment of program objectives would benefit from USAID's technical knowledge, the AO may authorize the collaboration or joint participation of USAID and the Recipient on the program. There should be sufficient reason for Agency involvement and the involvement should be specifically tailored to support identified elements in the program description. When these conditions are met, the AO may include appropriate levels of substantial involvement such as the following:

(1) Collaborative involvement in selection of advisory committee members, if the program will establish 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.

(2) Concurrence on the substantive provisions of sub-awards. Title 2 Code of Federal Regulations (CFR) 200.308 already requires the Recipient to obtain the AO's prior approval for the subaward, transfer, or contracting out of any work under an award. This is generally limited to approving work by a third party under the agreement. If USAID wishes to reserve any further approval rights for sub-awards or contracts, it must clearly spell out such Agency involvement in the substantial involvement provision of the agreement.

(3) Approval of the Recipient's monitoring, evaluation, and learning (MEL) plan.

(4) Monitor to authorize specified kinds of direction or redirection because of interrelationships with other projects. All such activities must be included in the program description, negotiated in the budget, and made part of the award.

2.6   TITLE TO PROPERTY

Property title under the resultant agreement shall vest with the Recipient in accordance with the Requirements of 2 CFR 200.310 and 2 CFR 200.316 regarding use, accountability, and disposition of such property.

2.7   AUTHORIZED GEOGRAPHIC CODE

The authorized geographic code under the resultant cooperative agreement is 937. As per ADS 310.3.1.1, Code 937 is defined as "the United States, the recipient country, and developing countries other than advanced developing countries, but excluding any country that is a prohibited source. Procurement of agricultural commodities and related products, motor vehicles, and pharmaceuticals remain subject to the limitations in 22 CFR 228.19 and may require a waiver. Applicants can find further guidance on geographic Code 937 under ADS 310.3.1.1 available at the following link: https://www.usaid.gov/sites/default/files/documents/1876/310.pdf.

2.8   RESULTS FOR GEOGRAPHIC INFORMATION SYSTEM (GIS) FORMAT

2.8.1   METHODS OF DATA REPRESENTATION

During project implementation, the Recipient will provide USAID with geo-coded data sets for the following:

a.   Baseline;
b.   Indicators (Results/Outcomes); *and*
c.   Beneficiaries.

Where applicable, the Recipient shall geo-code the above categories of data for geo-enabled performance management reporting using local government unit (nagarpalika *or* gaunpalika). This data should be provided to USAID every reporting period (i.e. written reports, AIDTracker Plus (AT+, etc.). At the end of the Project, the Recipient shall provide all the accumulated data from the reporting periods using a reporting template provided by USAID and recorded in the Development Data Library at www.usaid.gov/data. This data collection should be reflected in the Project's monitoring and evaluation plan.

a. Baseline

If a baseline survey or analysis is required and data is collected by the Recipient (rather than by a third party contracted by USAID), then the Recipient should provide USAID with numeric baseline data, geo-coded at the local government unit as appropriate. This will allow for comparison of pre- and post-intervention situations.

b. Indicators (Results/Outcomes)

As appropriate, for all indicators in the MEL Plan that are reported in numeric form, the Recipient should record their source local government unit and organize the data to show targets and actual results by local government. Such indicators will be designated in the approved MEL Plan.

c. Beneficiaries

The Recipient shall provide data on the number of beneficiaries in each local government unit where the Project is implemented and the location coordinates of their worksites and administrative units. *Recipients shall establish and follow data security practices and honor the privacy of individuals.*

2.8.1.1   GIS AND DATA POLICY

Data: If the Recipient creates, collects, purchases, or acquires any data, spatial or non-spatial, that supports the aim of the Project, but is not specifically included in part one (1. Baseline), with USG funds, in whole or in part, either as a component or as part of design and implementation of the Project, then the Recipient must document digital spatial data according to Federal Geographic Data Committee Level 1 metadata standards (see www.fgdc.gov). (Free tools are available to create this metadata at the following link: http://www.fgdc.gov/metadata/geospatial-metadata-tools). The Recipient must:

- Deliver to USAID digital copies of spatial data with accompanying metadata;
- Provide USAID all processed, intermediate and raw data;
- Make spatial data available to the public at the cost of reproduction; *and*
- Upload data to a web-based data repository that has ability to search and discover per directives and systems provided by USAID *or* the Geo-Center in Washington, DC.

2.8.1.2   SOFTWARE

If the Recipient develops software such as applications/apps (i.e. GIS, other software, etc.) to process project-related data, the Recipient must provide such software, documentation of the software, and copy and source code of the software to USAID/Nepal. If the Recipient develops an online repository of project-related information, then it is mandatory for the Recipient to provide USAID/Nepal full access to this information, including the right to extract and use of data. If the Recipient buys software with significant resources, a mechanism must be worked out with USAID with regards to its use after the Project closes out.

Geo-spatial data described above is guided and regulated by the following USG regulations, circulars and Executive Orders (EO):

- EO 12906 – Coordinating Geographic Data Acquisition and Access: The National Spatial Data Infrastructure (April 13, 1994) – for sharing and coordinating the production and use of geospatial data;
- Office of Management and Budget (OMB) Circular A-16 Revised (August 19, 2002) – An elaboration on EO 12906;
- OMB Circular A-130 Revised – Management of Federal Information Resources;
- USAID's ADS 507 (August 24, 2012) – Freedom of Information Act;
- USAID's ADS 551 – Data Administration;
- USAID's ADS 557 (August 5, 2011) – Public Information;
- ADS Chapter 201 (March 23, 2012) – Planning;
- ADS Chapter 202 (January 25, 2012) – Achieving; *and*
- ADS Chapter 203 (February 12, 2012) – Assessing and Learning

2.9   DISASTER READINESS

Nepal is exposed to multiple natural disasters, including flood, landslide, drought, fire, and earthquake. As such, Nepal is a seismically active zone and is considered at high risk of earthquakes. Minor tremors are not uncommon. Earthquakes are impossible to predict and can result in major devastation and loss of life. There are several websites focusing on earthquakes preparedness, including http://www.ready.gov/earthquakes. The Emergency Preparedness Guide created by the U.S. Embassy Nepal's Consular Section will be shared with apparently successful applicant. In the event of a major natural or manmade disaster, entities operating in Nepal must be prepared to be self-sufficient. To facilitate emergency preparedness, USAID requires implementing partners to develop sound Emergency Preparedness and Response Plan (EPRP). USAID also requests implementing partners to incorporate disaster risk reduction into their activities when applicable.

2.9.1   DISASTER RISK REDUCTION

Addressing vulnerabilities to, and preparation for, anticipated and recurring natural hazards requires sound awareness and advocacy within the government, external development partners, civil society and the general public. The Implementer is encouraged to promote disaster resilience and continually seek creative opportunities for incorporating disaster risk reduction into program activities. This includes such activities as awareness raising and advocacy for emergency preparedness and disaster risk reduction within the Government of Nepal. The Implementer is expected to ensure that project training, where appropriate and as directed, include appropriate emergency preparedness and disaster risk reduction elements.

2.9.2   IMPLEMENTER PREPAREDNESS

The successful Applicant must develop an EPRP that prepares for the impact of a large-scale disaster on both staff and program implementation. After award, the implementer has 90 days to prepare and submit its EPRP. The EPRP will contain the following:

Table of Contents

1. Primary contacts within the implementer's organization and sub-partners, noting if back up communications (i.e. radio, satellite phone, etc.) are available.

2. Primary contacts with USAID/Nepal and their information. In the event of a major disaster, USAID wants to maximize the possibility of Implementer being able to contact USAID. This should include contact information and backup communications information of:

   - AOR and Alternate AOR;
   - Office Director and Office Deputy Director; *and*
   - Agreement Officer

3. Plans for awareness raising, information sharing and educating of staff and sub-partners, including drills and other practice in an event of an emergency. The Implementer is expected to inform its staff about the contents of its EPRP through training and drills or other similarly effective methods.

4. Resource list identifying items on-hand and items necessary during an emergency. This may include solar-powered satellite phones with numbers, contents of go-bags and stay-bags, portable generators, essential survival equipment first-aid and other medical resources, etc., and their locations. For example, the items should have mention of specific locations in an identified room, car, or other location in offices, work vehicles, or project locations which is understood by the entire staff and sub-partners.

5. Communications plan identifying the chain of communication for staff and their families, head office, field offices, and sub-partners.

6. Description of post-disaster recovery activities within the manageable interest of the partner which could be undertaken in the case of a natural disaster. The Implementer should not dedicate resources beyond preparedness for responding to staff needs. However, partners should be prepared for contingencies, including the possibility that USAID may modify activities within the award as a result of a disaster.

The brevity required for the EPRP submission to USAID does not in any way restrict the Implementer from developing a fuller emergency preparedness manual for use by project management and staff. Additionally, the Implementer can request the U.S. Embassy to share details of its own earthquake preparedness planning for staff.

2.10   NOTICE OF AWARD

As per ADS 303.3.7.1, only the AO may notify the apparently successful awardee regarding further considered for an award. The AO shall transmit the signed Notice of Award (i.e., the authorizing document) electronically to the authorized agent of the successful organization for countersignature to be followed by original copies for execution.

2.11   IMPLEMENTATION OVERSIGHT

The Recipient shall be responsible to USAID/Nepal for all matters related to the execution of the agreement, specifically, the Recipient shall report to the USAID AOR and to the AO per ADS 303.2(d) and 303.2(f), respectively.

[END OF SECTION II]

SECTION III: ELIGIBILITY INFORMATION

3.1   ELIGIBLE APPLICANTS

All qualified potential applicants are eligible to apply. USAID seeks to make awards to a U.S. or non-U.S. non-governmental organization (NGO) or a private, non-profit organization (or a for-profit company willing to forego profits) that has concrete assets for strengthening equitable and quality service delivery within national and local policies and implementation plans. This includes a strong track record in implementation, monitoring & evaluation (M&E), local capacity building with a focus on learning and use of data for decision-making, and credibility in policy engagement processes. Since USAID aims to work with experienced organizations to focus on and build local and community capacity, USAID will not provide separate technical assistance to partners. Any anticipated technical assistance needs (i.e., for M&E, knowledge management, etc.) must be built into activity design.

In the case of a consortium, the Applicant must be the consortium lead and must identify any other members of the consortium or individuals tied to the implementation of the activity as described in the application, along with all sub-awardees. The respective roles of any other members of the consortium or individuals, including all sub- awardees, must be described and separate budgets must be attached for each.

USAID welcomes applications from organizations that have not previously received financial assistance from USAID. Applicants must have established financial management, monitoring and evaluation processes, internal control systems, and policies and procedures that comply with established USG standards, laws, and regulations.

To be eligible for a Cooperative Agreement, an organization must be any of the following types of organizations:

1. **Non-Federal Entities (referred to as U.S. NGO)** – U.S. NGOs that meet the definitions in 2 CFR 200.69.

2. **Nonprofit Organization (also referred to as U.S. NGO)** – U.S. non-profit organizations that meet the definition in 2 CFR 200.70.

3. **Foreign Entities (referred to as non-U.S. NGOs)** – either non-profit or for profit organizations not affiliated with a foreign government that meet the definition in 2 CFR 200.47.

4. **Public International Organization (PIO)** – PIOs that meet the definitions in ADS 308.

Applicants must have established financial management, monitoring and evaluation processes, internal control systems, and policies and procedures that comply with established USG standards, laws, and regulations. The successful applicant(s) will be subject to a responsibility determination assessment (Pre-award Survey) by the Agreement Officer (AO).

The Recipient must be a responsible entity. The AO may determine a pre-award survey is required to conduct an examination that will determine whether the prospective Recipient has the necessary organization, experience, accounting and operational controls, 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.

3.2   MULTI-TIERED REVIEW

As per ADS 303.3.6.1(d), USAID will utilize a two-tiered solicitation and review system. Potential Applicants must submit a Concept Paper per **Section 4.4.1** below. After reviewing these submissions per **Section 5.3**, USAID will invite the highest rated applicants to participate in the oral presentation phase **Section 5.4** with the selected applicants per specific merit review criteria.

3.3   COST SHARING OR MATCHING

As per ADS 303.3.10 cost share refers to the resources a Recipient contributes to the total cost of an agreement. Cost share becomes a condition of an award when it is part of the approved award budget. The cost share must be verifiable from the Recipient's records; for U.S. organizations it is subject to the requirements of 2 CFR 200.306, and for non-U.S. organizations it is subject to the Standard Provision "Cost Share;" and can be audited.

USAID has established a suggested, but not required, cost share of 10 percent for the Recipient of the award under this NOFO. Although there is no general legislative requirement that Recipients of grants or cooperative agreements must cost share, USAID policy is that cost sharing is an important element of the USAID-recipient relationship. Further, Concept Papers and requested Full Applications that include in-kind or cash cost share contributions will be more competitive. In addition to USAID funds, applicants are encouraged to contribute resources from their own private or local sources for the implementation of this program, where feasible. Such funds may be mobilized from 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. Nevertheless, as per Procurement Executive's Bulletin (PEB) No. 2007-02 contributions "[a]re not paid by the Federal Government under another award, except where authorized by Federal statute to be used for cost sharing or matching "(i.e., applicant may not make cost share contributions by other USG funding sources). Applicants can find further guidance on cost sharing in grants and cooperative agreements under ADS 303.3.10, 303.3.10.1 and 303.3.10.2, respectively.

3.4   PROGRAM INCOME

Any program income generated under the award(s) will be added to USAID funding (and any cost-sharing that may be provided) and used for program purposes. Program income will be subject to 2 CFR 200.307 for U.S. NGOs or the standard provision entitled "Program Income" for non-U.S. NGOs.

[END OF SECTION III]

SECTION IV: CONCEPT PAPER AND SUBMISSION INFORMATION

4.1   AGENCY POINT OF CONTACT

USAID/Nepal's Point of Contact email address is as follows for inquires *or* submission of applications: kathmanduoaaexchange@usaid.gov.

4.2   QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

Applicants should submit all questions regarding this NOFO in writing to kathmanduoaaexchange@usaid.gov no later than the date indicated in the cover page of this NOFO to provide sufficient time to address the questions and incorporate the questions and answers as an amendment to this NOFO. Applicants must refrain from any communication with any other USAID staff, including the Technical Office, during the solicitation and evaluation phases.

If that information requested is necessary for adequate submission of an application or if lack of the information would prejudice any other prospective Applicant, USAID will furnish any information given to a prospective Applicant concerning this NOFO to all other prospective Applicants as an amendment to this NOFO.

4.3   DEADLINE AND ELECTRONIC SUBMISSION

This announcement is found on the internet at www.grants.gov.

Concept Papers are due to USAID/Nepal no later than the date and time indicated on the Cover Letter, and as amended to this NOFO. USAID should receive Concept Papers no later than the indicated deadline. The AO may review and consider late or incomplete per ADS 303.3.6.6. For those Applicants invited to participate in the Oral Presentation phase, USAID will provide specific submission deadlines in the Oral Presentation invitation letters.

All application files submitted must be compatible with Microsoft (MS) Office in a MS Windows environment *or* portable document format (.pdf). The subject of each e-mail must read as follows:

"NOFO: RFA-367-17-000009 – Reading for All"

Applicants are reminded that email is NOT instantaneous, in some cases delays of several hours may occur from transmission to receipt. For this NOFO the initial point of entry to the government infrastructure is USAID/Nepal mail server.

Applicants must retain for their records copy of the e-mails and application and all enclosures which accompany the application. Telegraphic or faxed application is not authorized for this NOFO and shall not be accepted.

Questions *or* requests for clarifications regarding this NOFO must be submitted via email to: kathmanduoaaexchange@usaid.gov no later than the time indicated on the Cover Letter, and as amended. The response to all the questions and clarifications received from the prospective Applicants will be posted as an Amendment to the RFA in the: http://www.grants.gov.

4.4 APPLICATION AND SUBMISSION PROCESS

The Government intends to award a cooperative agreement. USAID conducts the "Reading for All: Disability Inclusive Education for Nepali Children" assistance selection process per 2 CFR 200, 2 CFR 700, and ADS Chapter 303 through the use of a multi-tiered review process per ADS 303.3.6.1(d) consisting of the following phases:

4.4.1 CONCEPT PAPER

Applicants must submit concept papers that respond to the objectives outlined in this NOFO. USAID will conduct a merit review of the concept papers. USAID will invite the organizations that have submitted the most highly rated concept papers to the oral presentation phase. Moreover, USAID will individually notify each applicant in writing on the success of its application per ADS 303.3.7.1, which will include strengths and weakness identified during the merit review process. The Applicant must **not** provide and USAID will **not** accept any budget or cost application at this stage. USAID will identify weaknesses, questions, and request clarifications resulting from the merit review with those applicants invited to the oral presentation phase, during which applicants will be expected to address the identified weaknesses and questions.

4.4.2 ORAL PRESENTATION

Applicants invited to participate in the oral presentation phase must appear in person in Kathmandu, Nepal. The proposed Program Manager must lead the presentation and USAID encourages the presence and participation of other proposed Key Personnel. The maximum number of participants who may attend on behalf of each Applicant is four from the Prime applicant and one from each major subcontractor (defined as any subcontractor expected to perform 20 percent or more of the scope of work). A maximum of five persons will be allowed to formally participate with the Oral Presentation. However, Applicants may opt to bring additional personnel (maximum of three) for the purpose of preparing responses to Selection Committee (SC) questions, but not formally participate with the Oral Presentation

USAID will review and evaluate each oral presentation against the merit criteria as defined in the NOFO.

Applicants bear sole responsibility for any and all costs associated with participation in the oral presentation phase. One applicant will present per day. USIAD expects that there will be a maximum of two rounds of questions and answers per applicant during the day. Applicants will have opportunities to prepare responses to questions posed by the SC prior to each round.

Applicants must present a top line summary budget during the oral presentation phase, for which USAID will provide a budget template that all applicants must follow. The MS PowerPoint slide deck used during the oral presentations (maximum 15 slides) will become an official part of the source selection file and the SC may refer to the slides during evaluation. The applicant oral presentation letter shall indicate the slide deck submission deadline.

4.4.3 JOINT APPLICATION DEVELOPMENT

Following the oral presentation phase, the apparently successful awardee (i.e., Applicant) will collaborate with USAID, the Ministry of Education, and other major stakeholders to develop a full Program Description. USAID anticipates the joint application development process should last approximately two weeks. Thereafter, the applicant will have additional time to prepare a final application, including a final Program Description; Monitoring, Evaluation, and Learning Plan; Sustainability Plan; Management and Staffing Plan; Implementation Plan; *and* a Cost Application with a detailed budget and budget narrative. USAID will evaluate this final application as Pass/Fail.

4.5 CONTENT AND FORMAT OF APPLICATION SUBMISSION

It is USAID policy that English is the official language of all award documents because a translation may not convey the full meaning of the original. If an application or any supporting documents are provided in both English and a foreign language, each document must state that the English language version is the controlling version.

Applications must include only one prime Applicant, which may enter into sub-agreements or contracts with partner institutions. In this case, the prime Applicant shall be responsible for establishing and maintaining sub-agreement *or* contracting relationships with proposed partners. For the purposes of this NOFO, the term "Applicant" is used to refer to the prime and any proposed partners.

Applicants shall submit the concept paper via email to: kathmanduoaaexchange@usaid.gov with the subject line:

"NOFO: RFA-367-17-000009 – Reading for All"

In the event of technical difficulties during electronic submission of an application, applicants must contact kathmanduoaaexchange@usaid.gov.

4.5.1 CONCEPT PAPER REQUIREMENTS

Concept papers made in response to this funding opportunity shall be specific, complete and presented concisely and within the page limit. The concept papers shall demonstrate the applicant's capabilities, knowledge of the context, expertise, and approach with respect to achieving the goal and objectives of this program. Concept papers shall take into account requirements of the program and the merit review criteria found in this NOFO. Applicants should be specific and realistic in stating what will be achieved given the proposed activities, budget and timeframe. The applicant should focus on the content of its concept paper on the proposed approach. The applicant must take into account the merit review criteria found in **Section V** below.

All applications received by the deadline shall be reviewed for responsiveness to the specifications outlined in these guidelines and compliance with the application format. Applicants are expected to review, understand, and comply with all aspects of this NOFO. Failure to do so shall be at the applicant's risk. Each applicant must provide the information required by this NOFO. Applicants must sign the application and print or type their name on the cover page. Erasures or other changes

must be initiated by the person signing the application. Applications signed by an agent must be accompanied by evidence of that agent's authority, unless that evidence has been previously furnished to the issuing office.

Applicants who include data that they do not want to disclosed to the public for any purpose or used by the USG except for evaluation purposes, shall mark the title page with the following legend: "This application includes data that are not to be disclosed outside the U.S. Government."

The application must be prepared according to the structural format set forth below.

4.5.1.1   CONCEPT PAPER FORMAT

- **Paper Size:** A4 or Standard 8.5 x 11 inches
- **Type Size:** 12 font
- **Font Style:** Times New Roman
- **Spacing:** Single spaced
- **Margins:** 1 inch (top, bottom, left, and right)
- **Page Limitation:** Not to exceed 10 pages, not including, cover page, table of contents, acronym list, the executive summary, dividers, and annexes. Any pages of the concept paper that exceed the page limitation will not be considered.
- **Page Limitation Annexes:** Past Performance not to exceed 3 references with 1 page per reference. Each CV not to exceed 3 pages.
- **List of required Annexes:** Monitoring, Learning and Evaluation Plan; Sustainability Plan; Management and Staffing Plan; Implementation Plan; Institutional Capacity; Past Performance.

Documents must be in Microsoft Word or Portable document Format (pdf). Do not send files in ZIP format.

The concept paper should take into account and be arranged in the order of the criteria specified in **Section V: Application Review Information**.

4.5.1.2   CONCEPT PAPER CONTENT

The concept paper, at a minimum, must contain the following:

(1) Cover Page

The cover page does not count toward the page limitation. The cover page is a single page with the Project title and NOFO number, the names of the organizations/institutions involved, and the lead or primary applicant clearly identified. In addition, the cover page must provide a contact person for the prime applicant, including this individual's name (both typed and his/her signature), title or position within the applicant's organization/institution, address, telephone and fax numbers and e-mail address. The cover page also states whether the contact person is the person with authority to contract for the applicant, and if not, the person with authority should also be listed with the same required contact information. The USG Tax Identification Number and Dun and Bradstreet Universal Numbering System (DUNS) of the Applicant's

organization must be listed on the cover page.

(2) Table of Contents and Acronym List

The table of contents and acronym list do not count toward the page limitation. The table of contents lists all parts of the concept paper with page numbers and attachments. The acronyms list spells out all acronyms used in the application in alphabetic order.

(3) Executive Summary (1 – 2 pages)

In two pages or less, the applicant will summarize the a) proposed goals, a) Key activities to achieve the goal and three objectives, (b) anticipated results, and c) management approach of the Applicant.

(4) Program Narrative (10 pages)

The Program Narrative should be a comprehensive and realistic approach to achieve the goal and objectives described in **Section I**. This section must include a clear description of the conceptual approach and describe the applicant's methodology and techniques. Proposed activities should be informed by evidence or promising practices, lessons learned *or* relevant international standards that will effectively achieve the desired goal. The narrative should describe the applicant's technical understanding of the challenges, needs, and opportunities to meet the goal and objectives of disability inclusive education, especially in early grade reading.

In this section, the Applicant must not repeat what is already described in the NOFO. The Applicant must present a convincing and compelling articulation of their technical approach, while meeting this NOFO's criteria. Applicants must focus on describing *how* they propose to achieve the program goal and objectives. The Applicant must elaborate in their technical approach, the most effective way to develop and realize the results of this program including the reasonable course of action and tasks that are relevant to the current needs and political context of Nepal. The Applicant should also demonstrate knowledge of Gender Equality and Social Inclusion (GESI) by describing how GESI will be integrated in each objective. The applicant must also describe their understanding of disability inclusive education and how they will collaborate with the GON, the private sector (where relevant), and existing USG and other donor programs.

Required Annexes:

(5) Monitoring, Evaluation, and Learning (MEL) Plan (3 – 4 pages)

The MEL Plan must explain how the applicant proposes to monitor the project performance and measure results. The MEL Plan must include indicators, targets, data sources, frequency of data collection, collection methods, data verification, and responsible parties for data collection and baseline information. The applicant must discuss the ways in which the collection, analysis and reporting of performance data shall be managed under the Project. All data collected must be disaggregated by sex, caste/ethnicity (MOE categories), and disability. The Applicant's GESI approach must be highlighted throughout the MEL Plan. The Applicant's proposed measures and benchmarks for sustainability should also be included in the MEL Plan.

(6) Sustainability Plan (2 – 3 pages)

The applicant must explain how their approach, to the extent possible, as described in the Program Narrative, can be sustained after the project period. The application should outline benchmarks by objective for achieving sustainability, successfully transitioning inclusive education efforts for local ownership and continuation. These indicators and benchmarks should be highlighted in the MEL Plan and bolster the applicant's approach to achieve sustainability.

(7) Management and Staffing Plan (2 – 3 pages)

The management and staffing plan must present the applicant's strategy for managing the implementation of the tasks in coordination with the Ministry of Education to achieve the Project's goal and objectives described. This narrative is an opportunity for the applicant to elaborate on its vision for implementation through its personnel choices, describing how the proposed individuals are uniquely qualified for their respective roles and how they will fulfill the responsibilities of this Project. The applicant must propose a staff, team *or* consortium structure, which provides a wide range of strategic and technical assistance to achieve the project's objectives.

a. *Management*

The management section of the plan must provide detailed information about the organizational and management structure. The management plan must be appropriate and aligned with the proposed technical approach. The Applicant shall propose an organizational arrangement that clearly demonstrates an effective mechanism for managing project resources and working with the GoN and partners to implement the proposed activities successfully. This section must address how the structure ensures effectiveness and efficiency, in order to achieve maximum benefits and results at minimum cost. It also must demonstrate the proposed effective management systems and procedures for personnel, sub-contracts, commodities, training, and information technology solutions.

b. *Staffing*

The staffing section of the plan must specify the composition and organizational structure of the project team and describe each staff member's role, responsibilities, technical expertise, and estimated percentage of time each will devote to completing tasks under this Project. It should clearly describe the roles and responsibilities of the applicant's home office/headquarters, field staff, consortium partners, *or* sub-partners, as applicable. The applicant must describe how any proposed additional long-term or short-term positions will carry out the applicant's technical approach to achieving each of the Project's goal and objectives. The Applicant must indicate the employer for each staff - prime or partner; local, U.S., or other.

Applicants must propose two key personnel to implement the Project:

(1) Program Manager; *and*
(2) Technical Advisor

If the applicant wishes to propose an additional key *or* non-key personnel, then a detailed description of the proposed personnel's title, qualifications, and their roles in the management structure with justifications are required. Applicants will submit resumes for all proposed key personnel. Each proposed key personnel must sign a letter of commitment, which is different from a letter of exclusive relations. Letters of exclusive relations are not necessary.

c. Key Personnel

Applicants must submit resumes for all proposed key personnel. Copies of certificates that verify applicable expertise for the proposed key personnel may be included. The resumes must be no more than three pages each and should include at least three professional references with current telephone numbers or email addresses for each reference. Each resume must be accompanied by a signed letter of commitment from each candidate indicating his/her availability to serve in the stated position on a specific date and for a definitive term of service. Please note that documentation that reflects an exclusive relationship between an individual and an applicant is not requested and should not be submitted.

The following personnel are essential to the successful implementation of Reading for All:

i. Program Manager:

The Program Manager serves as the primary point of contact with USAID and the GoN with regards to day-to-day activity implementation and management matters relating to the cooperative agreement. The Program Manager must be a full-time staff and have overall responsibility for assuring that all assistance provided under the award is technically sound and appropriate for the needs to be addressed and for adequately managing and supervising the work of any field staff, long-term staff, short-term staff, consortium partners, *or* sub-partners, as proposed. She *or* he will be a part of the team which sits within the Ministry of Education or relevant central line agency. Offerors will identify and clearly describe the professional qualifications, education and relevant experience of its proposed Program Manager. The candidate should be fluent in English and have excellent writing skills. The Program Manager should possess and demonstrate the following:

1. A minimum of ten years of relevant experience in a senior management position in a program of similar magnitude and complexity.
2. Experience working directly with government counterparts to build capacity of government systems required.
3. Past technical experience in any of the following areas: disability inclusive education, social inclusion, education, and gender equality.
4. Experience mentoring local staff and local organizations and transferring skills and knowledge.
5. Experience working in Nepal or the South Asia region is strongly preferred.
6. Ability to coordinate and collaborate with other donor programs and with USAID implementing partners for creative solutions, and complementarities

to maximize results.

ii. Technical Advisor (Capacity Development Specialist):

The Technical Advisor will work closely with the government on identifying and responding to capacity development needs. She *or* he will be part of the Reading for All activity team, which sits within the Ministry of Education or relevant central line agency. The position reports to the Project Manager. She *or* he has the responsibility to identify government capacity building needs, work on the capacity development plan, build capacity within the government, and ensure Reading for All's activities are supporting the institutional and technical needs of the government. She *or* he will maintain effective working relationship with government and attends coordination meetings at government offices.

The Technical Advisor should possess and demonstrate the following:
1. Bachelor's Degree in Education Planning and Management, Disability Studies, Public Administration or a relevant field of study.
2. A minimum of 7 years of experience of capacity building in disability inclusive education, basic education, disability rights, social inclusion, policy advocacy, education policy or other related fields.
3. Experience teaching students with disabilities desirable.
4. Experience working at a DPO desirable.
5. Fluency in English and Nepali is required.
6. Demonstrated successful experience working closely with the government is required.

d. *Management Organogram (1 – 2 pages)*

The Applicant will map out how Reading for All will be managed using an organogram. The proposed roles and responsibilities of full-time and part-time personnel, the management responsibilities per Objective, relationship to the Government of Nepal, and to any proposed partners should be depicted clearly.

(8) Institutional Capability (1 page)

It is up to the applicant to clearly demonstrate the institutional capability and experience of all proposed organizations to implement this Project. This section demonstrates all proposed partners' capability and experience in managing projects with similar objectives, magnitude, and complexity. The applicant must clarify the applicant's and its partners' institutional roles and responsibilities, and how those responsibilities complement one another to implement all three objectives of Reading for All.

(9) Implementation Plan (3 pages)

As an overall roadmap of Reading for All, the implementation plan is the higher level plan spanning the total period of performance and will be detailed later by the annually submitted work plans and the MEL Plan. The plan also clearly outlines the links between the proposed results, conceptual approach, and performance milestones, and should include a realistic timeline

for achieving start-up, midpoint, and end-of-program results.

(10) Past Performance Summary (1 – 2 pages)

Applicants must provide a list of all its cost-reimbursement contracts, grants, or cooperative agreements involving similar or related programs during the past three years. The reference information for these awards must include the performance location, award number (if available), a brief description of the work performed, and a point of contact list with current telephone numbers. This summary should include a description of the past performance of the Applicant (and consortium partners, if applicable) and will include a description of the following:
- Organizational history and relevant experience;
- Institutional strength as represented by breadth and depth of experienced personnel in Project relevant disciplines and areas;
- Accomplishments in developing and implementing similar projects;
- Relevant experience with proposed approaches.

4.5.2   ORAL PRESENTATION FORMAT

The oral presentation is an opportunity for the Applicant to convey their knowledge, skills and abilities. Both the technical and management components of this NOFO will be discussed during oral presentation. The oral presentation must be organized by the format of the merit review criteria.

4.5.2.1   COST APPLICATION

A top line summary budget must be presented during the Oral Presentation phase by applicants whose concept papers are selected by USAID as most highly rated. In general, the top line summary budget will include applicant's proposed total estimated cost of the project with a brief cost breakdown (salaries, sub-awardee's/partners' cost). Detailed instruction on the cost template will be provided to applicants invited for oral presentation. USAID will select one apparently successful Applicant from the oral presentation for joint development of a full program description. After the program description is finalized by USAID, the apparently successful Applicant will be requested to submit a Cost Application with a detailed budget and budget narrative. The apparently successful applicant will be asked to include the following documents with their cost application:

1. SF-424 and SF-424A: A budget for each program year with an accompanying detailed budget narrative which provides in detail the total costs for implementation of the program. The budget must be submitted using Standard Form 424 which can be downloaded from the following web site at: http://apply07.grants.gov/apply/FormLinks?family=15

2. Budget Narrative: The application must have an accompanying detailed budget narrative and justification that provides in detail the total program amount for implementation of the program your organization is proposing. The budget narrative should provide information regarding the basis of estimate for each line item, including reference to sources used to substantiate the cost estimate (e.g. organization's policy, payroll document, vendor quotes, etc.).

   A breakdown of all costs associated with the program according to the costs of, if applicable, headquarters, regional *or* country offices. Applicants who intend to utilize contractors or sub-

recipients should indicate the extent intended and a complete cost breakdown. Extensive contracts/agreement financial plans should follow the same cost format as submitted by the primary Applicant. A breakdown of all costs according to each partner organization, contract or sub/awardee involved in the program should be provided.

Pursuant to 2 CFR 200 Contract means a legal instrument by which the Applicant purchases property or services needed to carry out the project or program under a resulting award. The term does not include a legal instrument when the substance of the transaction meets the definition of a Federal award or sub-award (see § 200.92 Sub-award), even if the Applicant considers it a contract. The Applicant must select the sub-contractor based on the work to be performed, the risk borne by the contractor, the contractor's investment, the amount of subcontracting, the quality of its record of past performance, and industry profit rates in the surrounding geographical area for similar work.

Cost Sharing: If applicable, applicants should estimate the amount of cost-sharing resources to be mobilized 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 Assistance award.

3. Negotiated Indirect Cost Rate Agreement: The Applicant must submit a Negotiated Indirect Cost Rate Agreement (NICRA) if the organization has such an agreement with an agency or department of the U.S. Government. If applicant wishes to propose indirect cost rate(s), but does not have a NICRA, the applicant must choose one of the two options below:
Option 1: Applicant should submit one of the following:

Reviewed Financial Statements Report: a report issued by a Certified Public Accountant (CPA) documenting the review of the financial statements was performed in accordance with Statements on Standards for Accounting and Review Services; that management is responsible for the preparation and fair presentation of the financial statements in accordance with the applicable financial reporting framework and for designing, implementing and maintaining internal control relevant to the preparation. The accountant must also state the he or she is not aware of any material modifications that should be made to the financial statements; or

Audited Financial Statements Report: An auditor issues a report documenting the audit was conducted in accordance with Generally Accepted Auditing Standards (GAAS), the financial statements are the responsibility of management, provides an opinion that the financial statements present fairly in all material respects the financial position of the company and the results of operations are in conformity with the applicable financial reporting framework (or issues a qualified opinion would have if the financial statements are not in conformity with the applicable financial reporting framework).

Option 2: de minimis rate Any non-Federal entity that has never received a NICRA (with some exception) may elect to charge a de minimis rate of 10 percent of modified total direct costs (MTDC) which may be used indefinitely in accordance with CFR 200.414 (see below the exact regulation). 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 for a rate, which the non-Federal entity may apply to do at any time. Please note that once an organization

elects to charge the de minimis rate of 10 percent, they cannot propose a separate fringe benefit rate to be applied to staff salaries that are directly attributable to individual grants/projects. For fringe benefits associated with direct labor, the organization will need to provide actual cost estimates for each type of benefit that the individuals charging direct will be paid and supporting documentation to support their estimated cost. For instance, instead of providing 19 percent for fringe, applicant should provide estimated cost for FICA, Medical Insurance, Retirements plan, etc. separately.

§200.414: Indirect (F&A) costs (f) Any non-Federal entity that has never received a negotiated indirect cost rate, except for those non-Federal entities described in Appendix VII to Part 200—States and Local Government and Indian Tribe Indirect Cost Proposals, paragraph D.1.b, may elect to charge a de minimis rate of 10 percent of modified total direct costs (MTDC) which may be used indefinitely. As described in §200.403 Factors affecting allowability of costs, 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 for a rate, which the non-Federal entity may apply to do at any time.

Modified Total Direct Cost (MTDC) - As described under 2 CFR §200.68 Modified Total Direct Cost (MTDC) means all direct salaries and wages, applicable fringe benefits, materials and supplies, services, travel, and up to the first $25,000 of each subaward (regardless of the period of performance of the subawards under the award). MTDC excludes equipment, capital expenditures, charges for patient care, rental costs, tuition remission, scholarships and fellowships, participant support costs and the portion of each subaward in excess of $25,000. Other items may only be excluded when necessary to avoid a serious inequity in the distribution of indirect costs, and with the approval of the cognizant agency for indirect costs.

Unique Entity Identifier and System for Award Management: USAID will not award to an applicant until the applicant has complied with all applicable unique entity identifier and SAM requirements. Each applicant is required to:

(i)   Be registered in SAM before submitting its application. SAM is streamlining processes, eliminating the need to enter the same data multiple times, and consolidating hosting to make the process of doing business with the government more efficient.;

(ii)   Provide a valid unique entity identifier in its application; and

(iii)   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.

4. *Branding Strategy and Marking Plan* - The apparently successful Applicant will be required to submit a Branding Strategy and Marking Plan to be reviewed and approved by the Agreement Officer. A Branding Implementation Strategy and Marking Plan must be in accordance with USAID Branding and Marking Plan as required per ADS 320 at the

following link: http://www.usaid.gov/policy/ads/300/. The Recipient must comply with the requirements of the USAID "Graphic Standards Manual" available at www.usaid.gov/branding, or any successor branding policy.

5. *Certifications & Assurances:* The applicant shall complete and return the certifications as per ADS 303.3.8 Pre-Award Certifications, Assurances, and Other Statements of the Recipient.

[END OF SECTION IV]

SECTION V: APPLICATION REVIEW INFORMATION

5.1   MERIT REVIEW CRITERIA

The merit review criteria presented below have been tailored to the requirements of this particular NOFO. Applicants should note that these criteria serve to: (a) identify the significant matters which applicants should address in their applications and (b) set the standard against which all applications shall be evaluated. To facilitate the review of applications, applicants must organize their applications in the same order as the guidance provided under NOFO **Section IV**.

5.2   REVIEW AND SELECTION PROCESS

A Selection Committee reviews the applications according to the criteria described below. Committee members examine the logic, feasibility and appropriateness of the technical approach, including responsiveness to cross-cutting themes, indicators and anticipated development results or impacts; quality and availability of personnel in response to stated qualifications or requirements, and other institutional factors. To make an objective review possible, applicants must clearly demonstrate how the organization and the application meet these criteria. The merit review focuses on the applicant's overall ability to achieve results under the framework provided in this NOFO.

Recognizing that various approaches may have merit, this NOFO seeks an implementing partner that, on the basis of its experience, that can propose cost-effective ways of implementing this project. USAID may reject any or all applications if they are not deemed sufficiently responsive.

5.3   MERIT REVIEW CRITERIA FOR CONCEPT PAPER

USAID will conduct a merit review of all concept papers received that comply with the instructions in this NOFO. The factor of Program Narrative and GESI approach will be considered the most significant determinant of the overall rating of a concept paper. The second most significant determination will be the MEL Plan and Sustainability Plan, which are considered approximately equal in weight to each other. The factors Management and Staffing Plan and Key Personnel, Implementation Plan, and Institutional Capability are considered the third most significant factors in determining the overall rating and are considered approximately equal in weight to each other.

All the applications will be reviewed and evaluated in accordance with the following criteria:

1. **Program Narrative and GESI:**

    The program narrative will be evaluated to the extent to which the program narrative describes an approach that is technically sound, evidence-based and GESI-sensitive; demonstrates a clear understanding of the goals and objectives of the program; narrates a convincing and feasible plan that engages, coordinates and collaborates with GON, the community, other actors in the field to contribute in tangible ways to the implementation of disability inclusive education, and specifically to improve early grade reading.

2. MEL Plan

The MEL plan will be evaluated based on the extent to which it presents realistic indicators to measure achievements with appropriate dis-aggregations, feasible targets, clear data collection methodology and verification plans, and achievable benchmarks for sustainability.

3. Sustainability Plan

The application will be evaluated to the extent to which the Sustainability Plan is achievable, accounts for realities, and overcomes challenges to ensure that activities started and milestones achieved under each objective will continue to progress after the life of the project.

4. Management and Staffing Plan and Key Personnel

The Management and Staffing Plan will be evaluated to the extent to which the Plan convincingly demonstrates the applicant's strategy for managing relationships with the GON, and other key stakeholders and for implementation of tasks to achieve project objectives and results. Key Personnel will be evaluated to the extent to which the Key Personnel meet the qualifications and have practical and relevant experience, knowledge, and capability in managing and implementing the activities proposed.

5. Implementation Plan

The Implementation Plan will be evaluated based on the extent to which the applicant provides a clear and realistic timeline and sequencing of activities and tasks for achieving start-up, mid-point, and end-of-program results.

6. Institutional Capability

Institutional Capability will be evaluated to the extent to which the applicant and its sub-recipients convincingly demonstrate their experience in implementing disability inclusive education *or* early grade reading activities with similar scope and complexity.

5.4   MERIT REVIEW CRITERIA FOR ORAL PRESENTATION

The oral presentation will be reviewed based on the following merit review criteria, which contain both technical and communication factors, which are of equal weight.

1. Technical Comprehension

The extent to which the oral presentation participants communicated a comprehensive understanding of **how** the concept paper will achieve the program objectives. Please note the emphasis on 'how' program objectives will be achieved.

2. <u>**Response to Weaknesses and Clarifications**</u>

The extent to which the Applicant provided clear and sufficient responses to the questions and weaknesses posed to the Applicant during the Concept Paper phase and during the oral presentation phase.

3. <u>**Management and Staffing**</u>

The extent to which the oral presentation participants articulated a clear staffing and management plan for managing implementation of the tasks in coordination with the Ministry of Education and its vision for implementation through its personnel choices.

4. <u>**Team Strength**</u>

The extent to which the oral presentation participants demonstrate a strong team dynamic, a clear understanding of their individual roles and responsibilities, effective communication skills and a readiness to be involved and committed to achieving the program objectives.

5.5   MERIT REVIEW CRITERIA FOR FINAL APPLICATION

USAID will evaluate this final application as Pass/Fail.

5.6   COST APPLICATION EVALUATION

The cost application of the apparently successful applicant will be evaluated for cost reasonableness, allowableness and allocability. The cost application must be complete with adequate budget detail and must be consistent with elements of the technical application. USAID will assess whether the overall costs are realistic for the work to be performed, whether the costs reflect that the applicant understands the requirements, and whether the costs are consistent with the technical application.

USAID reserves the right to determine the resulting level of funding for any awards made under this NOFO.

[END OF SECTION V]

SECTION VI: FEDERAL AWARD ADMINISTRATION INFORMATION

6.1   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, potential applicants are hereby notified of these requirements and conditions for the award. The Agreement Officer is the only individual who may legally commit the Government to the expenditure of public funds. No costs chargeable to the proposed Agreement may be incurred before receipt of either a fully executed Agreement or a specific, written authorization from the Agreement Officer.

Following the selection for award and successful negotiations, a successful Applicant will receive an electronic copy of the notice of the award signed by the AO, which serves as the authorizing document. The AO will only do so after making a positive responsibility determination that the applicant possesses, or has the ability to obtain, the necessary management competence in planning and carrying out assistance programs and that it will practice mutually agreed upon methods of accountability for funds and other assets provided by USAID.

The award will be issued to the contact as specified in the application as the Authorized Individual in accordance with the requirements in the Representations and Certifications. For organizations that are new to working with USAID or for organizations with outstanding audit findings, USAID may perform a pre- award survey to assess the applicant's management and financial capabilities. If notified by USAID that a pre-award survey is necessary, applicants must prepare, in advance, the required information and documents. Please note that a pre-award survey does not commit USAID to make any award.

Issuance of this NOFO does not constitute an award or commitment on the part of the U.S. Government to make any awards, nor does it commit the U.S. Government to pay for costs incurred in the preparation and submission of an application. Please be advised that only limited funding is currently available for education programs. Request for additional information from unsuccessful Applicants will not be considered.

6.2   ADMINISTRATIVE AND 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. Nongovernmental organizations.

For Non US organizations: ADS 303, Standard Provisions for Non-U.S. Non-governmental Organizations. The links to these regulations are as follows:

●   ADS-303: https://www.usaid.gov/ads/policy/300/303
●   2 CFR 700: https://www.ecfr.gov/cgi-bin/text-idx?SID=531ffcc47b660d86ca8bbc5a64eed128&mc=true&node=pt2.1.700&rgn=div5

- 2 CFR 200: https://www.ecfr.gov/cgi-bin/text-idx?tpl=/ecfrbrowse/Title02/2cfr200_main_02.tpl
- Standard Provisions for U.S. Nongovernmental Recipients can be accessed through USAID's website: https://www.usaid.gov/sites/default/files/documents/1868/303maa.pdf
- Standard Provisions for Non-U.S., Nongovernmental Recipients can be accessed through USAID's website https://www.usaid.gov/sites/default/files/documents/1868/303mab.pdf
  All the applicable standard provision will be attached to the final award document.

6.3   REPORTING REQUIREMENTS

Applicants should note that all the reports listed below shall be submitted by the specified due dates for approval of the USAID Agreement Officer's Representative unless otherwise agreed upon with the AOR. USAID will develop a reporting schedule with the Recipient during the start-up phase of the activity to provide final guidance on this.

6.3.1   ANNUAL WORK PLAN

Within 60 days of signing the agreement, the Recipient will submit an Annual Work Plan for Year 1, designed in consultation with key stakeholders including the Government of Nepal, other USAID implementing partners and donors, and USAID. Work plans are expected to reflect extensive discussions and joint planning exercises.

This and subsequent Annual Work Plans, will describe the activities and interventions to be carried out and the corresponding time frames. The proposed activities and interventions shall fall within the approved Program Description of the Cooperative Agreement with USAID. Each newly proposed activity in the annual work plan shall be justified with measurable results which clearly contribute to achieving one or more activity objectives. The Annual Work Plan will also incorporate an annual budget plan and, from year 2 onward, a Financial Report on the prior year's expenditures.

USAID will review and approve plans and ensure that they are within the Program Description. Work plans changes *or* revisions shall describe activities at a greater level of detail than the Program Description, but shall not serve to change the Program Description in any way. Therefore, all work plans changes *or* revisions thereto shall cross-reference the applicable section(s) in the Program Description. The Program Description shall take precedence over the work plans and any changes *or* revisions thereto, in the event of any conflicts or inconsistencies between the Program Description and the work plans and any changes *or* revisions thereto. The AO must approve any changes to the Program Description by means of a modification to this Agreement.

The Annual Work Plan must include, at a minimum:
  i.   Proposed accomplishments and expected progress towards achieving results and performance measures tied to agreed upon indicators;
  ii.   (Year 2 and later only) Any new activities planned and their justification;

iii. Timeline for implementation of the year's proposed activities, including target completion dates;

iv. Information on how activities will be implemented;

v. Personnel requirements to achieve expected outcomes;

vi. Major commodities or equipment to be procured, an explanation of the intended use of each item and the source and origin of each item;

vii. Details of collaboration with other major partners, including how activities will be coordinated with other USAID implementing partners;

viii. Detailed budget, which aligns with the approved Cooperative Agreement budget;

ix. International travel planned for the year.

6.3.2 MONITORING, EVALUATION, AND LEARNING (MEL) PLAN

The Recipient is required to have a MEL Plan capable of tracking and documenting progress against Project objectives. The MEL Plan must be reviewed annually alongside the Annual Work Plan in collaboration with USAID and may need to be adapted to evolving Project requirements and those from USAID. The Recipient is required to work with USAID to ensure that the MEL plan aligns with USAID/Nepal's Performance Management Plan (PMP). A MEL plan developed in consultation with USAID is to be submitted for AOR approval within 90 days of the award date. USAID and the Recipient will conduct periodic performance reviews to monitor the progress of work and the achievement of results as based on the targets specified in the MEL Plan.
The MEL Plan must include:

(i) A Results Framework (RF) that reflect the objectives described in the award;

(ii) Development hypothesis and critical assumptions;

(iii) Baseline values and targets to show progress over time. Baselines must be established within 3 months of the award;

(iv) Performance data table summarizing key performance monitoring information;

(v) Performance indicator reference sheets for each indicator that include a description of the indicator to be tracked, source, method and schedule of data collection, known data limitations and plans to address the limitations;

(vi) Geolocated indicator results and beneficiaries;

(vii) Capacity building in evidence and data use;

(viii) Knowledge products and dissemination plans; and

(ix) Evaluation approach (if applicable) to inform adaptation and learning.

6.3.3 PROGRESS AND PERFORMANCE REPORTS

The Recipient must submit Quarterly Progress Reports and Annual Performance Reports to USAID for the duration of this Agreement. These reports must be submitted within 30 days following the end of the reporting period.
Quarterly Progress Reports must briefly present the following information:

(i) A comparison of actual accomplishments versus targets by program objective; and reasons why established targets were not met, if applicable;

(ii) Anticipated future problems or delays that may adversely affect implementation of the activity, including those related to security, management or administration;

(iii) Other pertinent information including the status of finances and expenditures and, when

(iv)   appropriate, analysis and explanation of cost overruns or high unit costs;
List of upcoming activities with dates, where applicable.

Annual Performance Reports will be submitted in lieu of a the last quarterly progress report of the year. Annual Performance Reports must contain the following information:

(i)   A comparison of actual accomplishments versus targets by activity objective for the reporting period using quantitative data; and reasons why established targets were not met, if applicable;
(ii)   Financial update, including expenditure data and, when appropriate, analysis and explanation of cost overruns or high unit costs;
(iii)   Information on problems or delays that affected implementation, including those related to management or administration;
(iv)   Documentation of best practices and lessons learned;
(v)   Prospects for the next year's performance

6.3.3.1   AIDTRACKER PLUS (AT+) PARTNER PORTAL FOR REPORTING PERFORMANCE

USAID/Nepal utilizes a performance management information system called AT+ to track progress for mission-funded activities at the national, provincial, district, and municipal/village levels. As established in its agreement and approved work plan and MEL plan, the Recipient must provide a quarterly or semi-annual update of performance results against each indicator in the approved MEL plan by entering this information into the AT+ Partner Portal. In addition to the indicator performance results the Recipient shall enter geospatial coordinates, success stories, photographs, and other documents as applicable. The Recipient shall enter information via an Internet website; USAID/Nepal will provide the URL address or Access Database, and a user ID/password.

USAID/Nepal will train implementing partner's Monitoring and Evaluation staff on the AT+ Partner Portal. Once trained, the Recipient will enter and manage the data in consultation with the respective AOR or the Activity Manager.

6.3.4   FINANCIAL REPORTING

Financial Reports shall be in keeping with 2 CFR 200.327. In accordance with 2 CFR 200.327, the SF-425 will be required as follows:

(1) The Recipient must submit the Federal Financial Form (SF-425) on a quarterly basis via electronic format to the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (http://www.dpm.psc.gov). The Recipient must submit a copy at the same time to the AO, AOR, and the USAID/Nepal Controller. These reports shall be submitted within 30 calendar days from the end of each quarter, except that the final report shall be submitted within 90 calendar days from the estimated completion date of this Agreement.
(2) The Recipient must submit the electronic copies of all final financial reports to USAID/Washington, M/CFO/CMPLOC Unit, the AO, the AOR, and the USAID/Nepal Controller.

6.3.5   FINAL REPORT

The Recipient must submit the Final Report to USAID no later than 90 days after the completion date of the Cooperative Agreement. The Final Report must include:

(i)   Executive summary of the Recipient's technical approach and accomplishments in achieving results;
(ii)   The program model and its implementation in enough detail to allow for replication, including information on: theory of change; interventions and approaches; inputs, outputs, and processes; final performance indicator data; number of people and communities benefited, by each separate component and by multiple components (integration), compared to targets, and for how long; and cost;
(iii)   Overall assessment of progress made toward accomplishing the goal, purpose and objectives, any important research findings, a description of major products or tools;
(iv)   Financial report that describes how the Recipient's funds were used. See 2 CFR 200.328.

6.3.6   DEVELOPMENT EXPERIENCE CLEARINGHOUSE REQUIREMENTS

The Recipient is required to submit any technical reports produced under this activity, in English, to USAID's Development Experience Clearinghouse (DEC) according to the instructions found at https://dec.usaid.gov/dec/content/submit.aspx.

6.3.7   EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS AND RESPONSE PLAN

The Recipient must submit an emergency preparedness and response plan within 90 days after the effective date of this award/modification unless noted otherwise in the delivery schedule of the award.

6.3.8   DEVELOPMENT DATA

The Recipient must submit to the Development Data Library (DDL) at www.usaid.gov/data , in a machine-readable, non-proprietary format, a copy of any Dataset created or obtained in performance of this award, including Datasets produced by a sub-awardee or a contractor at any tier according to the instructions found at www.usaid.gov/data . The submission must include supporting documentation describing the Dataset, such as code books, data dictionaries, data gathering tools, notes on data quality, and explanations of redactions.

6.3.9   CLOSEOUT PLAN

The Recipient will develop and submit to the AOR and AO for approval a closeout plan (administration, information, finance, procurement and management) that will include, but will not be limited to, the following:

1. Dates for final delivery of all goods and services for sub-grants or sub-contracts;
2. A property disposition plan for the Recipient and sub-grantees or sub-contractor
3. s in accordance with agreement requirements, which must be approved by the AO;
4. Review of agreement files for audit purposes and final billing to USAID;

5. A schedule to address office leases, bank accounts, utilities, cell phones, personnel notification, outstanding travel and social payments, household shipments, vehicle; phone subscriptions, etc.;
6. Receipt of all final invoices and agreement performance reports;
7. Report on the estimated amount of funds not required for the completion of the agreement; and
8. Report on compliance with all local labor laws, tax clearances, and other appropriate compliance matters.

The format and outline of contents of this closeout plan will be proposed by the Recipient no later than 180 calendar days prior to the agreement completion date, and approved by the AOR no later than 150 calendar days prior to the agreement completion date.

6.3.10 USAID GLOBAL EDUCATION STRATEGY REPORTING

The Recipient will provide data, technical materials, and other relevant materials produced in the execution of this Cooperative Agreement. This includes technical materials, pedagogical materials, and other technical inputs developed to support the early grade reading outcomes, as well as data and information needed for reporting under the relevant foreign assistance objectives, areas, and elements.

Pedagogical Materials and Technical Inputs
The Recipient is required to provide pedagogical materials and other technical inputs developed to support program outcomes, provision of equitable access to education, and other agreement objectives to the AOR, and Alternate AOR. Examples of technical inputs to be provided to USAID include training modules and guides, adapted reading materials, assessment instruments, detection tools, sampling frames, workshop reports, audio programs, photographs, videos, and other recordings.

Data for Reporting Under Foreign Assistance Objectives
The Recipient is required to provide datasets and codebooks that include data on student learning outcomes and information needed to estimate the number of unique pupils benefiting from reading activities over the life of the program; the Recipient is also required to provide data on the number of unique pupils who benefitted from reading-related activities by year over the life of the program. The implementing partner may be responsible, in collaboration with USAID, for obtaining country level memoranda of understanding that allow for the sharing of the datasets and other data with USAID, as well as public access to the data through the partner organization, where possible, and are expected to treat student achievement information with sensitivity. The Recipient must follow data submission guidance found in the 2011-2015 USAID Education Strategy Update to Reporting Guidance. See link: http://pdf.usaid.gov/pdf_docs/pbaab002.pdf

Within 90 days of the completion of data collection, the Recipient will transmit requested data to USAID. The Data transmittal must be according to the following specifications:

● Datasets must be complete, clean, and final and include any derived or secondary variables used to calculate indicator values provided in assessment reports.
● Datasets must be cleansed of Personally Identifiable Information (PII) prior to transmittal to

USAID. PII includes any information that could be used to identify an individual student, teacher, or administrator for whom data have been collected.

- Datasets will include all variables included in the initial data collection, with the exception of any data that must be edited or cleaned to protect the privacy and anonymity of students, teachers, or administrators represented in the data.

- If variables are edited or removed in order to protect the privacy and anonymity of research subjects, steps must be taken to ensure that sufficient information is retained to allow analyses that require grouping students by school, or track schools/students across datasets if appropriate.

- Data must be transmitted along with relevant supporting materials and instruments. This includes questionnaires and other instruments, codebook, data dictionary, information on sample design, setup and weights, assessment reports, PMP's or other materials that describe the structure of the assessment *or* program, and any other information a researcher may need when working with the data.

- Learning Assessment data can be transmitted in formats including Stata, SPSS, SAS, R, or an open and machine readable format. Supporting documents can be transmitted in MS Office or an open and machine readable format.

- The Recipient is required to provide datasets and codebooks that include data on the number of unique pupils who benefitted from program activities over the life of the program, and EMIS or program tracking data that can be used to measure change in access to education (e.g. numbers of pupils entering and dropping out of education programs).

- Recipient will provide information on the number of pupils benefiting from the program, disaggregated by sex, caste/ethnicity, grade, and type of disability for each year that the program is active.

- Datasets will be delivered through email, addressed to the AOR and Alternate AOR. The Recipient may also be directed by USAID to submit data and related documents to a third party site (e.g. https://sartdatacollection.org).

- All prerequisites to providing the complete, cleaned datasets must be completed by the implementing partner prior to the provision of the dataset to USAID, such as review and approval by operating units and host country governments, as appropriate.

6.3.11 BRANDING AND MARKING

All USAID-funded foreign assistance (including programs, projects, activities, public communications, or commodities) must be communicated, promoted, and marked as coming from the American people through USAID. Specific communications and promotion measures be described in the "Branding Strategy" and "Branding Implementation Plan," and specific marking be described in the "Marking Plan" for the this award. Branding and marking under this award shall comply with the USAID Automated Directive System Chapter 320 Branding and Marking (ADS 320).

ADS 320 requires that, after the evaluation of the applications, the USAID Agreement Officer request the Apparently Successful Applicant to submit a Branding Strategy that describes how the program, project, or activity is named and positioned, how it is promoted and communicated to beneficiaries and cooperating country citizens, and identifies all donors and explains how they be acknowledged. USAID shall not competitively evaluate the proposed Branding Strategy. ADS 320 may be found at the following website: https://www.usaid.gov/who-we-are/agency-policy/series-

300. The cost application must incorporate the estimated cost of the proposed Branding Implementation and Marking Plan.

[END OF SECTION VI]

SECTION VII: FEDERAL AWARDING AGENCY CONTACT(S)

7.1   EMAIL FOR APPLICATION AND INQUIRY

USAID/Nepal's email address is as follows for inquiries *or* submissions of applications:
kathmanduoaaexchange@usaid.gov

7.2   AGREEMENT OFFICER'S REPRESENTATIVE (AOR)

The AOR and Alternate AOR will be designated prior to award. The AOR designation letter will be provided to the Recipient and to the relevant offices of USAID/Nepal.

[END OF SECTION VII]

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SECTION VIII: OTHER INFORMATION

8.1 LIST OF ANNEXES

8.1.1 ANNEX 1

Number of Resource Classes and students by types of disabilities in USAID Early Grade Reading Program districts

8.1.2 ANNEX 2

Government of Nepal Inclusive Education Policy 2016

8.1.3 ANNEX 3

School Sector Development Program Disbursement-Linked Indicator 6

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Annex 1: Number of Resource Classes and students by types of disabilities in USAID Early Grade Reading Program districts (MOE, Flash Data 2016-2017)

SN	District_name	Resource Classes	Physical (affecting mobility)			Intellectually impaired			Hearing Impaired			Visually Impaired			Low Vision			Hearing and Visually impaired			Vocal and speech related disabilities			Total		
			G	B	T	G	B	T	G	B	T	G	B	T	G	B	T	G	B	T	G	B	T	G	B	T
1	Dhankuta	10	50	56	106	48	46	94	20	25	45	6	10	16	29	27	56	1	0	1	19	15	34	173	179	352
2	Saptari	5	190	205	395	84	126	210	123	112	235	16	5	21	50	27	77	19	18	37	101	116	217	583	609	1192
3	Parsa	5	16	7	23	15	19	34	3	1	4	3	1	4	0	2	2	0	0	0	9	9	18	46	39	85
4	Bhaktapur	7	1	4	5	2	0	2	6	2	8	2	7	9	1	1	2	0	0	0	1	1	2	13	15	28
5	Manang	0	1	2	3	0	1	1	1	0	1	0	0	0	0	1	1	0	0	0	1	1	2	3	5	8
6	Mustang	0	4	1	5	9	7	16	1	2	3	0	0	0	0	3	3	1	0	1	1	2	3	16	15	31
7	Kaski	5	91	92	183	86	68	154	85	98	183	13	10	23	85	69	154	3	5	8	23	27	50	386	369	755
8	Rupandehi	8	127	148	275	172	163	335	77	67	144	8	17	25	67	71	138	2	6	8	59	69	128	512	541	1053
9	Dolpa	2	63	59	122	43	31	74	13	24	37	1	1	2	15	18	33	2	3	5	25	22	47	162	158	320
10	Surkhet	10	212	226	438	132	126	258	69	76	145	16	13	29	51	60	111	10	3	13	35	52	87	525	556	1081
11	Dang	12	11	12	23	2	3	5	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	5	7	0	0	0	0	2	2	15	22	37
12	Banke	5	0	3	3	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	3	3
13	Bardiya	3	177	167	344	133	151	284	120	100	220	1	1	2	75	46	121	5	3	8	49	52	101	560	520	1080
14	Dadeldhura	5	151	176	327	118	136	254	60	66	126	5	7	12	22	32	54	7	7	14	50	86	136	413	510	923
15	Kailali	8	540	547	1087	420	400	820	232	214	446	103	93	196	219	176	395	36	36	72	88	122	210	1638	1588	3226
16	Kanchanpur	5	282	302	584	181	168	349	122	84	206	8	8	16	94	70	164	9	7	16	82	111	193	778	750	1528
	TOTAL	90	1916	2007	3923	1445	1445	2890	932	871	1803	182	173	355	710	608	1318	95	88	183	543	687	1230	5823	5879	11702

Number of Schools and Student by types of disabilities 2016-017 (Basic Education).

Annex 2: Government of Nepal Inclusive Education Policy 2016

Inclusive Education Policy
For the
Person with Disability 2072 (2016)

1. Background

Getting education is right of every child. The Constitution of Nepal has a resolution of building an equitable society on the basis of proportionate inclusion and participation principle. In addition, the Constitution has provisioned compulsory and free basic education right to every citizen. Nepal has ratified Convention on Rights of Persons with Disabilities 2006 and Convention on the Rights of Child 1989. By expressing the commitments to the Education for All related international campaign, to include children with disabilities in the education mainstream by ensuring right to education, this Inclusive Education Policy 2072 (2016) has been issued.

Inclusive education is an education development approach that ensures rights to life long education in one's own community in a non-discriminatory environment by respecting the cultural, class, caste and geographical diversities. With due importance to the ownership of community, this policy believes in the assumption that all can learn if appropriate environment is created and support is given by adapting to the needs of children in school.

Inclusive education approach helps to creates a learning opportunity to the children who are denied of education due to whatever situational causes or are at the risk of dropping out from the school due to lack of adaptive and accessible environment, and support system. Based on this, inclusive education encourages adopting child centered teaching-learning process to fulfill social, cultural and educational needs by identifying child with disability.

2. Past Efforts

Nepal has been working to promote education to children with disabilities through provisioning different laws and programs. Section (6a) of the Education Act 2028 (1981) has mentioned that the operation of special education shall be similar to that of general education. Similarly, the education regulation 2059 (2002) has provisioned to operate Special Education by establishing a Special Education Council under the Chairpersonship of Education Minister. The Special Education Council is active to perform policy and program related regular tasks under the special education.

Special Education Policy 2053 (1996) has mentioned to provide education to blind, deaf, children with intellectual disability and physical disability with residential facility. Section (60) of the Education regulation 2059 (2002) has Claus to provide special education to the child with disability whereas section (66) of the same regulation and section (15) of the Disabled Protection and Welfare regulation 2051 (1994) has mentioned to provide facilities as prescribed by the Government of Nepal to the educational institutions that impart special education. Similarly section (151-2) of the education regulation 2059 (2002) has made compulsory provision for the institutional schools to provide scholarships to the students belonging to poor, person with disability, women, Dalit and Janjati community, and such number of scholarships should not be less than 10 percent of the total students of the school. In this respect, a Special Education Operation Directive 2060 (2003) has been issued and under implementation.

Children with disabilities have got opportunity to study in different community schools, Resource Classes and Special Schools with scholarships. Provision of residential facility and Resource teacher has been made to the children with special needs in the Resource class and Special schools. Children with disabilities have been provided text books, teaching materials and equipments free of cost. In addition Assessment Centre has been established in 62 districts to identify disability, to provide disability related services, support and suggestion and to formulate other programs.

The UN Declaration of Human Rights 1948 and Convention on the Rights of Child 1989 have mentioned to have basic education right by all in free of cost. The UN Standard Rules on the Equalization of Opportunities for Persons with Disabilities 1993, Asia Pacific Decade of Persons with Disabilities 1993-2002, Salamanca Declaration 1994, UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities 2006 has stressed to include persons with disabilities and other person with special education needs in the national educational mainstream. In addition Incheon Declaration 2015 has encouraged the governments to make improvements in the policy to promote education of children with special education needs

Nepal has been making efforts in the area of policy and legal improvements to promote education to children with disabilities upon expressing commitments in different international forums including to the Jomtien Declaration 1990, Dakar Conference 2000 and Millennium Development Goals 2000. Based on these, the need of Inclusive Education Policy for person with disabilities has been felt necessary and proposed there off.

3. Present Situation

In Nepal integrated school for blind children and special school for deaf children was started was in 2021 (1964) 2023 (1966) respectively. Similarly special school for blind and children with physical disability was started in 2036 (1979) and another special school for children with intellectual disability was started in 2038 (1981).

The Government of Nepal has issued and implemented Special Education Policy in 2053 (1996) in order to increase access of children with disabilities and also to impart education based on their physical, mental and functional capacity.

Accepting the fact that children with disabilities have their own identify and special educational approach is needed for the different natured disability, special schools have been provisioned to the children with deaf, physical disability, blind and intellectual disability. Different programs are under implementation to make the schools accessible and develop the friendly environment so that children can reach to the schools. These include operation of Resource classes, establishment of Assessment Centers and provision of accessible textbooks in Braille script and sign language. Policy has been adopted to make the school buildings accessible to all types of disabilities.

Through out the country, there are 380 Resource classes, 32 Special schools and 22 Integrated Schools under operation for the education of deaf and hard of hearing, blind and children with intellectual disability. Currently a total of 74,829 children with disabilities of different natured are studying from pre-primary to higher school level.

4. Problems and Challenges

In the process of imparting quality education to the children with disabilities, there are following problems and challenges:

4.1 Despite several efforts in creating educational opportunity to children with disabilities, such children are not fully included in the educational mainstream due to less accountability of the family, community and school.

4.2 Despite the fact that there is mission of promoting social inclusion of persons with disabilities, expected results in the area of having quality livelihood and making the persons with disabilities independent have not achieved.

4.3 There is still risk of exclusion from educational mainstreaming and social inclusion of persons with disabilities due to the fact that pair learning and supporting work to child activities are not being effective as per the culture of inclusion.

4.4 Human resource development and management related efforts in the area of quality education and training to the children with disabilities are still incomplete.

4.5 Data collection and management of different category of children with disabilities is yet to be managed in a scientific manner.

4.6 Provision and utilization of advanced information technology to ease learning process of children with disabilities as per their need is yet to be managed.

4.7 There is lack of sufficient survey, research and practice on how to manage adaptive learning process fitting to the needs of different natured disability.

5. Need for the new Policy

Special Education Policy 1996 has been issued and under implementation, the concept of inclusion has been accepted while creating educational opportunity to all children in the in the process of Education for All campaign as per the Salamanca Declaration 1994 and the Article (24) of the UN Convention on the Rights of Person with Disabilities and its Optional Protocol 2006 has mentioned to adopt inclusive education to children with disabilities at all level. Alongside of above mentioned commitments, Nepal has internalized the 10 year Incheon Strategy and Plan of Action to 'Make the Rights Real' of people with disabilities in Asia-Pacific region during the period of 2013-2023. The provision made in the sub-article (3) and (4) of the Article (31) of Nepal's Constitution has directed to adopt compulsory inclusive education approach to the children with disabilities in the school. As a result of the political change, the inclusive democratic practices have been started in Nepal. It is required to have social inclusion of Children with disabilities in this process for which inclusive education is an appropriate mode, therefore, this policy has been prepared.

6. Vision

Each people with disability are empowered, independent and able to have dignified life through right based quality education.

7. Objectives

Main objective of the 'inclusive education policy for citizen with disability' is to prepare capable (able to provide leadership) and competitive citizen by ensuring quality education on right based approach through life-long education to the persons with all types of disabilities. To achieve this main objective, the following objectives have been formulated:

7.1 To ensure equitable access of children with disabilities in the quality educational opportunities.

7.2 To provide quality, life useful, skill oriented and employment oriented education as per the need of citizen with disabilities.

7.3 To provision lifelong continuous education for the citizen with disabilities.

8. Policies

8.1 Opportunities for free education shall be open to each child with disability at all levels based on the capacity and qualification. (Related to objective 7.1)

8.2 Provision of functional assessment based on the scientific system shall be provisioned while enrolling students with disabilities in the schools, universities and educational institutions (Related to objective 7.1)

8.3 Educational opportunities shall be ensured by making adaptations as per the nature of disability in the curriculum, textbooks, learning materials, reference materials and examination/evaluation system from early Child development to higher level education. (Related to objective 7.1)

8.4 All types of schools, universities and educational institutions shall be developed and transformed into disability friendly, girl student friendly, child friendly and as a non-violence learning centre for the overall development of student with disability (Related to objective 7.1)

8.5 Inclusive and equitable quality education shall be ensured by developing disability friendly and adaptive technology in curriculum, reading materials and educational materials to prepare the capable and competitive citizen as per the national and international context. (Related to objective 7.2).

8.6 Capable human resource shall be developed by ensuring equal and easy access of citizens with disabilities in technical education (Related to objective 7.2).

8.7 Green skills based life useful and skill oriented quality education shall be made available for the sustainable development. (Related to objective 7.2)

8.8 Innovative information technology based disability friendly teaching-learning actions shall be managed. (Related to objective 7.2)

8.9 Required provisions shall be made in all stages of disaster management in order to protect persons with disabilities. (Related to objective 7.2)

8.10 Disabilities adaptive continue education shall be ensured to 'make the right real' of citizens with disabilities. (Related to objective 7.3)

8.11 Need based quality and life long learning education to citizen with disability (multiple disabilities, down syndrome, cerebral palsy, autism, intellectual disability, hemophilia, deaf and hard of hearing, blind, deafblind, physical disability, disability related to speech and voice, learning disability) shall be ensured by creating a basis of

database information to carry out concurrent research, study, survey and planning in the area of inclusive education (Related to objective 7.3).

8.12 An Inclusive Education Council shall be in place in order to ensure rights of citizens with disabilities to get education and make concurrent improvements in inclusive education. (Related to objective 7.3)

8.13 Required human resources, structures and mechanism shall be developed and provisioned to ensure educational opportunities of child, citizen and person with disability. (Related to objective 7.1, 7.2 and 7.3)

9. Strategies

In order to prepare each citizen with disabilities to be capable and competitive citizen through quality education, following strategies shall be adopted to effectively implement the formulated inclusive education policies:

9.1 Provision formal, non-formal, open and distance education and continue learning in a manner that each child with disability develops competitive capacity (Related to policy 8.1).

9.2 Distribute scholarships received from different agencies to the children with disabilities by following a one door system. (Related to the policy 8.1).

9.3 Carry out physical, mental, sensory and intellectual capacity related functional assessment of students with disabilities while enrolling in different levels of schools, universities and educational institutions. (Related to the policy 8.2).

9.4 Ensure opportunity of choosing subjects from early child education to higher education by provisioning multiple reading materials in accessible format corresponding to the disability need. (Related to the policy 8.3)

9.5 Make adjustments in the examination and evaluation system from early child education to higher education by provisioning accessible format corresponding to the disability need. (Related to the policy 8.3)

9.6 Make public, community and institutional educational institutions as a nonviolence and adaptive to the values of inclusive culture. (Related to policy 8.4)

9.7 Ensure educational opportunities by providing appropriate assistive service and through minimizing barriers/creating accessible environment that limit person with disabilities participation due to the interaction between the disability and environment. (Related to policy 8.4)

9.8 Make the enrollment process easy in the technical education of the school and university as per the demand of labor market and specific disability. (Related to policy 8.5)

9.9 Ensure quality education by making the curriculum and educational materials based on the innovative technology. (Related to policy 8.6).

9.10 Review curriculum, teacher preparation and organisational structure in order to ensure green skills based life useful skill oriented education and training to make the citizen with disabilities self-dependent and for the sustainable development. (Related to Policy 8.7).

9.11 Develop competent human resource based on the innovative information technology aiming to implement disability friendly teaching-learning activities. (Related to policy 8.8).

9.12 Give priority to the persons with disabilities in disaster preparedness, rescue, relief, rehabilitation and re-construction. (Relating to policy 8.9)

9.13 Develop a model partnership system in the national volunteer mobilization program to ensure participation and life long continue education (Related to policy 8.10)

9.14 Develop integrated information management system to search, research, study and planning in inclusive education. (Related to policy 8.11).

9.15 Adopt single approach and process to the schools run through the grans support from Special Education council to manage them similar to community schools. (Related to policy 8.11)

9.16 Establish an Inclusive Education Council to make recommendations by preparing policies and program for the education of person and child with disability in relevant agency. (Related to policy 8.12)

9.17 As per the federal structure establish a Policy Coordination committee at the central level and appropriate structure at the local level to coordinate and facilitate program run by different government and non-governmental agencies in the area of disability. (Related to policy 8.13).

10. Working Policies

10.1 Existing structure shall be adjusted as per the principle of inclusion to provide formal education, open and distance education and life long continue education. (Related to strategy 9.1)

10.2 As per need, new structure with alternate mode shall be created in addition to the existing structure (Related to strategy 9.1)

10.3 Open level based school operation based on study year and learning shall be managed to the children with intellectual disability, autism, Down syndrome, deafblind including developmental disability and multiple disabilities. (Related to strategy 9.1).

10.4 Scholarships to the children with disabilities shall be distributed based on the situation of disability, geographical location and distance, poverty status and talency. (Related to strategy 9.2).

10.5 Scholarships and concessional programs shall be conducted with priority to the facility less, parentless, poor, disadvantaged and excluded children with disabilities who are double disadvantaged. (Related to strategy 9.2).

10.6 Scholarships shall be distributed to the children with disabilities through the local institutions for which provision of allocating a definite amount budget shall be provisioned. (Related to strategy 9.2)

10.7 Assessment of physical, mental, sensory and intellectual capacity of citizen with disabilities shall be done as per the Disability Identity Card issued by the District Women and Child Development Office through the recommendation of the committee formed as per Disability Identity Card Distribution Directive 2065 (2008). (Related to strategy 9.3).

10.8 The Assessment Centers in the districts shall be capacitated and re-structured to carry out tasks inclusive of cognitive assessment of citizens with disabilities. (Related to strategy 9.3).

10.9 Opportunity of choosing subjects and language shall be provided to the citizen with disabilities based on the level of impact of disability. (Related to strategy 9.4).

10.10 Reading materials in tactile communication mode to the deafblind, in sign language to the deaf, visual support and simple reading materials for children with intellectual disability, down syndrome and autism, books in braille script and audio format to the blind, note taker for hard of hearing and large print and digital materials for the low vision shall be developed. (Related to strategy 9.4).

10.11 Personal learning plan and teaching methods shall be adopted based on the specific needs of disability. (Related to strategy 9.4).

10.12 Several alternative evaluation methods adapting to disability shall be adopted. (Related to strategy 9.5).

10.13 Information technology shall be used to its maximum in examination and evaluation system. (Related to strategy 9.5).

10.14 Educational institutions shall be given orientation on the non-violence environment and values of inclusive culture. (Related to strategy 9.6).

10.15 Inclusive Education Minimum Enabling Conditions shall be defined. (Related to strategy 9.6).

10.16 Orientation shall be given as well as required directives shall be prepared to prepare students, family, teacher, school and overall education administration for inclusive education. (Related to strategy 9.6).

10.17 Physical structures within the education institution (building, class room, library, canteen, toilet, laboratory play ground) shall be made disability friendly and barrier free for citizen with disabilities. (Related to strategy 9.7).

10.18 Access to sports and entertainment activities run in the education institution shall be ensured as per the nature of disability. (Related to strategy 9.7).

10.19 To participate in the educational activities, visual guide, reader, sign language interpreter, note taker, captioner including personal assistant, assistant instructor, assistive device and equipments shall be made available to persons with disabilities in free of cost. (Related to strategy 9.7).

10.20 Capacity enhancement and market oriented skill development program for the schools, universities and educational institutions that are running technical subjects shall be developed to ensure easy access of citizens with disabilities in technical education. (Related to strategy 9.8)

10.21 Selection of learning materials shall be based on the innovative technology by making improvements in the quality standards and also creating minimum learning environment (Related to strategy 9.9)

10.22 Educational opportunities shall be diversified in order to ensure green skills and soft skills based quality education. (Related to strategy 9.10)

10.23 Disability adaptive effective teaching-learning activities shall be conducted by making information and communications technology as an integral part of inclusive education. (Related to strategy 9.11).

10.24 all types of teachers and instructors involved to educate citizen with disability shall be continuously provided standard trainings, and support staff shall be given orientation (Related to strategy 9.11)

10.25 Required human resource development shall be implemented in order to enhance learning capacity as per the nature of disability. (Related to strategy 9.11)

10.26 Sign language, tactile communication and other disability adaptive alternate communication means shall be developed and standardized. (Related to strategy 9.11).

10.27 Mobile education system shall be managed by reviewing the existing educational structure and developing a new structure in order to ensure life long continue education adapting to the nature of citizens with disabilities. (Related to strategy 9.11).

10.28 Schools run under the grant of Special Education Council shall be managed to that of community schools, and services, facilities and terms and conditions of teachers and staff working in such schools shall be improved to make concurrent. (Related to strategy 9.11)

10.29 Educational institutions and hostels shall be made earthquake resistance, and security preparedness skills shall be provided to the children and relevant educational institutions to mitigate the risk of earthquake and other disasters. (Related to strategy 9.12)

10.30 Capacity of relevant parents and volunteers shall be built with priority to follow needed steps in order to minimise the damage due to possible disaster and to have timely rescue and relief efforts. (Related to strategy 9.12).

10.31 Services inclusive of counseling, psychosocial advice shall be provided to the persons with disabilities to rehabilitate them in the normal social life in post disaster phase. (Related to strategy 9.12).

10.32 Temporary and permanent physical infrastructures to be build at the stage of rehabilitation and reconstruction shall be made disability friendly. (Related to strategy 9.12).

10.33 Opportunity for technical education and skill development shall be expanded in collaboration with public sector, private sector, employment providing organizations, non-governmental sector, local institutions and development partners. (Related to strategy 9.13)

10.34 Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) shall be institutionalized in order to develop concept of model partnership. (Related to strategy 9.13).

10.35 Opportunities for citizens with disabilities to participate in the national volunteer mobilization program shall be expanded based on their skills. (Related to strategy 9.13).

10.36 Teaching-learning educational framework and structure shall be created ensuring disability adaptive life long continue education to Make the Rights Real and Functional. (Related to strategy 9.13).

10.37 Inclusive Research Unite shall be established in the Ministry of Education, its Central Departments and in the District Education Office to carry out research and survey in the context of inclusive education. Such unites shall be made responsible to carry out research by suing data and information, and also carry out awareness raising and promotional works. (Related to strategy 9.14).

10.38 Teachers and staff working in the schools run under the grant support of Special Education Council shall be converted into regular positions. (Related to strategy 9.15).

10.39 Teachers, care takers and other support staff involved in teaching-learning work for the citizen with

disabilities shall be provided similar services and facilities to that of community teachers and staff. (Relate to strategy 9.15).

10.40 Inclusive Education Council under the Chairpersonship of the Minister for Education and with the representation of relevant ministries and other line agencies/institutions shall be established by restructuring the existing Special Education Council formed as per the Special Education Policy 2053 (1996). (Related to strategy 9.16).

10.41 The Inclusive Education Council shall manage educational programs implemented for citizen with disability by different agencies to run in coordinated manner and under the one door system. (Related to strategy 9.17).

10.42 Policy and Program Coordination Committee with the representation of relevant government agency, person with disability and organisations run by his/her parents, representatives of non-governmental organisations, persons related to disability education and training, experts and agencies shall be formed at the central level for the coordination, regulation, supervision, monitoring and evaluation of this policy, strategy and working policies. And Program Implementation Committee shall be formed at the local and district level for with the representation of above for the overall implementation of this policy and associated matters mentioned here off. (Related to strategy 9.17).

11. Organizational Structure

Inclusive Education Council under the Chairpersonship of the Minister for Education and with the representation of relevant ministries and other line agencies/institutions shall be established by restructuring the existing Special Education Council.

To coordinate, monitor and evaluate the implementation of this policy, strategy and working policies, a Policy Coordination Committee shall be formed under the Coordination of the Chief of Planning Division, Ministry of Education, and a Program Coordination Committee shall be formed under the Coordination of Director General, Department of Education. For the overall implementation of this policy, strategy and working policies institutional arrangement shall be made to establish Program Implementation Committee at the local and provincial level. In the afore mentioned committees, there will be representation of government agencies, non governmental organisations working in the area of education to children with disabilities and established by persons with disabilities and relevant experts and specialists. Units or Focal points shall be prescribed to oversee disability and inclusive education in the Ministry of Education and its departments, local level institutions and autonomous institutions. Provision of Institutional structure as per the Inclusive Education Policy 2073 (2016) shall be managed by making amendments in the relevant legislation. Implementation schedule of this policy has been shown in Appendix 1.

12. Financial Aspect

Government resource, local institutions' resource, foreign support and loan, and support and investment from National and International Non-Governmental Organisations and private sectors are financial resources for the implementation of this policy. No additional financial burden shall occur for the effective implement the existing programs however to implement the plan to be made as per this policy, efforts shall be in place on the part of development partners and local institutions to increase their investment in a coordinated and collaborative way.

13. Legislative provision

Relevant acts and regulations shall be reviewed and improved/amended for the implementation of this policy. As per the Constitution of Nepal, required Directives and Working Procedures shall be developed and issued to implement Inclusive Education Policy for the person with disability.

14. Monitoring and Evaluation

14.1 Result based Monitoring and Evaluation Framework shall be brought into implementation to regularly and effectively monitor and evaluate programs implemented as per this policy at all level. For this there shall be efficient and effective mechanism with the representation of relevant stakeholders.

14.2 Education Management and Information System shall be linked with the monitoring and evaluation work.

15. Possible Risks and ways to mitigate them

In order to mitigate the possible risks while implementing the Inclusive Education Policy for the Children with Disabilities 2073 (2016), following actions shall be in place:

S N	Risks	Ways to address the risk	Responsible Agency
1	Feeling responsibility by the provinces and local government	Coordinate by the Central government by priotizing the budget	Relevant Ministries and Agencies at Federal and Provincial level
2	Availability of comprehensive and disaggregate data as per the nature of disability, and educational status of children with disabilities	Develop Integrated Information System through Education Management and Information System	Central Bureau of Statistics, University Grant Commission or Higher Education Commission, Ministry of Education and Department of Education, relevant agencies at local level

16. Repealing

The Special Education Policy 2053 (1996) has been repealed.

Appendix 1
Policy Implementation Table

SN	Actions	Responsible Agency	Supporting Agency	Indicator
1	Provision fee education to each child with disability at all levels based on their capacity and eligibility	Ministry of Education	Line agencies at local level, line ministries, educational institutions	Number of students receiving free education
2	Provision functional assessment test based on the scientific system while enrolling students.	Provincial and Local level institutions	Ministry of Education and Ministry of Health	Number of students having functional assessment.
3	Make disability adaptive adjustments in the curriculum, text books, learning materials, reference materials and examination and evaluation system	National Education Board and Curriculum Development Centre	Provincial and Local Committees related to curriculum and evaluation	Adjusted curriculum and evaluation methods
4	Make the physical infrastructure and environment disability friendly, girl student friendly, child friendly and non-violence	Department of Education and Central Level Program Implementation Unit (CLPIU)	Line agencies at Provincial and local level and Program Implementation Units	Number of Educational Institutions
5	Develop disability friendly/adaptive curriculum and reading materials to prepare competent and competitive citizen as per the national and international context	Curriculum Development Centre	National Examination Board and Provincial and Local levels	Curriculum and Reading materials
6	Ensure access of citizen with disabilities in technical education	Ministry of Education	Council for Technical Education and Vocational Training, Training Providing Institutions and Private Sectors	Number of persons who received technical and vocational training
7	Make available disability adaptive green skills based life useful, life long and skill oriented education	Ministry of Education	Non-Formal Education Centre, Council for Technical Education and Vocational Training, Training Service Providers, Private Sectors	Beneficiary number
8	Provision information technology based disability friendly teaching-learning	Department of Education	Provincial and local levels, Educational and relevant line institutions	Number of Schools
9	Make required provision for the safety of persons with disability to the disaster risk	Provincial and local levels	Ministry of Home, Ministry of Education and line ministries, Educational institutions and other organisations	Number of safe educational institutions
10	Ensure disability adaptive education to make the rights real and functional	Ministry of Education	Line ministries, provincial and local levels, educational institutions and line organisations	Number of benefitted persons
11	Prepare disability related Information database	Department of Education	Line Ministries, Provincial and local levels, Educational institutions and line organisations	Information data base system
12	Make structural arrangement/management to coordinate and facilitate disability related program implementation	Ministry of Education	Line Ministries, Department of Education, Provincial and local levels	Established Council and Committees

Annex 3: School Sector Development Program Disbursement-Linked Indicator 6

Joint protocol template for SSDP Disbursement Linked Indicator 6	
Indicator	Reduction in disparities in access, participation and learning outcomes
Programme	School Sector Development Programme
Objective	1. To ensure universal access to quality basic education for all 4 to 12-year-old children 1.1. Improved equitable access to basic education 1.2. Improved equitable participation and learning outcomes in basic and secondary education
Action	Implementation of the Consolidated equity strategy for the school education sector • Identification and enrollment of out of school children • Selection of districts for targeted programmes to reduce disparities in school readiness, access, participation and learning outcomes • Ranking, unpacking and analysis of barriers and development of programmes to address this in districts with highest disparities in education outcomes through the implementation of the Equity Strategy Implementation Plan
Department Responsible	Department of Education, Ministry of Education
Supporting Agencies	European Union, Global Partnership for Education

Background and Rationale	Nepal has made remarkable progress in enhancing access to primary and basic education in recent decades. It has also made some good progress ensuring equitable access to education—gender parity has been achieved at all levels of school education, and most historically deprived caste/ethnic groups are now proportionally represented at the primary and basic levels. However, around 11 percent of the children in the 5-12-year age group remain out of school, and there are disparities in learning outcomes across geographical locations and between public and private schools as shown by the Government's National Assessments of Student Achievement (NASA). It is likely that the poor, children with disabilities, and children from deprived communities comprise the bulk of OOSC. Acknowledging the need to take a holistic approach to address the problem of equity in school education, the government has developed a Consolidated Equity Strategy that seeks to ensure equity in access, meaningful participation in the schooling process, and learning outcomes.
	In order to address this need for strengthening equity in education, the Government of Nepal has developed the Consolidated Equity Strategy for the School Education Sector, which was launched in December 2014. The main objectives of this strategy are to reduce the current disparities in (i) access & participation and (ii) learning outcomes for children in basic and secondary public education in Nepal. The strategy envisions to achieve this by (i) the development of an Equity in Education Index (Equity Index), at national and district level, using both school sector data and population data, and (ii), through a consolidation and further targeting of current strategies deployed by the Government and Development Partners (including I/NGOs and CSOs) to strengthen an equity/need based approach. The purpose of the Equity Index is to account for children's opportunity for school education as well as the equality of opportunity across children facing different circumstances/contexts. The equity index and the Equity Strategy Implementation Plan (ESIP) are intended to be core planning and monitoring tools for the full-fledged implementation of the Consolidated Equity Strategy, with the prior to be used to target the most disadvantaged districts for specific interventions and the latter to undertake the unpacking, analysis and planning to strengthen need based interventions and programs to achieve reduction of disparity in access, participation and learning outcomes through targeted interventions. The aim is to ensure the ESIP includes active engagement in the analysis and planning process at district, VDC and school level.
	The Equity Index uses the model of the Human Opportunity Index (HOI). In the Equity Index model, a composite index is computed, from an HOI that is computed for each of the dimensions (access, participation and learning outcomes) at national level, as well as at district level for the 10 districts with the lowest composite score and thus the highest disparity in education outcomes. Thus, three outcomes (and hence HOIs) are considered for computation of the composite index, which is the Equity Index. The Equity Index captures disparities in access, participation and learning outcomes in basic level education in Nepal (grade 1 to 8). For this, data was selected representing access (enrollment), participation (survival rate) and learning outcomes (SLC score). The learning outcome data however will need to be updated as the exam reform

that has been rolled out at the beginning of the 2015/16 academic year no longer awards scores and pass fail outcomes to students. As such, equity index based ranking will be undertaken using the other two dimensions (access and participation) and specific sub DLIs have been added in year 3 to incorporate the grade 8 examination results as a proxy for the learning outcome dimension once these examinations have been standardized. As such, the index will still be conducted based on both school based and population based census and as such will be able to be updated on an annual base to reflect the progress made. In addition, the full equity index will be computed and used to direct the updating of the district wise ESIP from year three onward. The data sets for participation and from year 3 onward for learning outcomes are drawn from the school based census that is undertaken twice a year and compiled within the Education Management Information System (EMIS) in the Department of Education (DoE), One of the data sets (access) is drawn from the household based census that is undertaken every 10 years (most recently at 2011) and compiled by the Central Bureau of Statistics (CBS). A summary of the outcome indicators, circumstances and data sources is presented in the following table.

	Access	Participation	Learning
Outcomes (Coverage)	Enrolment ratio (age 6-16)	Survival rate (grade 1- 8)	Grade 8 exam scores
Circumstances (Dimensions)	Gender, location, Ethnicity: dalit/non-dalit, disability Wealth, parent's education	Gender, location, dalit/non-dalit, disability	Gender
Source of data	Census	EMIS	EMIS

The Human Opportunity Index is defined as
Where,
 = average survival rate in a district
, $h = 2^k$
 average outcome (enrolment ratio, survival rate or SLC pass rate) in a group i.
 = number of demographic groups. (for SLC there are only two groups: male and female)
 = number of dimensions of inequity (e.g. gender, disability, location)
 = total number of students enrolled.
 total number of students in a group i.

Description of the Indicator

Description and Rationale of Indicator and Targets	The indicator has been developed based on the two-folded approach of the equity strategy, capturing both the institutionalization and use of the Equity index and the rationalization of strategies being applied to provide second chance education to out of school children (OOSC)[4], as well as reduction of disparities in participation and learning outcomes. Furthermore, it captures the implementation results of the OOSC intervention in the selected districts as measured by reduction of OOSC by an average of 20 percent on aggregate in the 5 most disadvantaged (according to equity index) districts in the first year (2016/17) up to 50 percent of OOSC in the 10 most disadvantaged districts in the fourth year (2019/20).
	Indicator 8.1a-b and 8.2a-b have been defined through LEG consultation as part of the disbursement linked indicators of the variable part of the GPE's Education Sector Program Implementation Grant (ESPIG). The main purpose of the indicators is to institutionalize the utilization of the equity index and the Equity Strategy Implementation Plan (ESIP) in the reduction of disparities in education outcomes through evidence based targeted strategies. Both the equity index and the ESIP are fully aligned with the Education Management Information System (EMIS).
	The ESIP defines the steps to be undertaken in the development of targeted strategies to be included in the Annual Strategic Implementation Plans and Annual Work Plans and Budgets (ASIP/AWPBs) in terms of unpacking the dominant drivers of the equity index score for the 10 districts ranked with the highest disparity in access, participation and learning outcomes. Furthermore, the ESIP will include the analysis of these dominant drivers against available data that is selected based on agreed inclusion/exclusion criteria as agreed in the ESIP. The targeted interventions will need to be based on the annual ESIP and as such reflected and costed in the ASIP/AWPB. The ESIP outline will be confirmed as a prior requirement and will include the development through district wise ESIPs for the 10 selected districts.
	Based on the available data for the computing of the three components of the equity index, it was agreed to use the two components on access and participation for the initial ranking that will identify the 10 districts with the highest disparities. The rationale for this is that (i) the data set for the learning outcome (pass rate grade 10 School Leaving Certification exam) is in need of being revised in terms of formulation as the exam reforms make that there is no longer a pass rate for this exam and envision this exam to be moved to grade 12, in line with the reformed school education structure (basic pre-primary to grade 8 and secondary grade 9 to 12), as well as that this indicator of a secondary level indicator and therefore might steer targeted resources for the reduction of out of school children away from those district where the disparities in access and participation are the most significant, which would need

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[4] Out of school children are defined as both never enrolled and as enrolled but dropped out before completing the basic education cycle (grade 8).

	to lead to an overall reduction of out of school children measured in year 5 of the SSDP implementation. In line with the equity strategy, the composite index will be computed at sub district level for the selected districts, using all three components of the index to ensure a holistic approach in measuring the disparities in education outcomes. In line with the strategies in the strengthening of assessment and examination, the grade 8 exam will be standardized nationwide, providing a strong data set that will be included in the index learning outcome index. The governance of the equity index has been included in the ToR of the SSDP EMIS strengthening committee. To establish a baseline for the access focused indicators and targets, an assessment will be undertaken of the capability for this information to be drawn for the EMIS and where needed additional measures will be undertaken to support any current shortcomings or gaps in the EMIS to provide a sound baseline for this for the 10 districts that rank lowest in the index and thus highest in terms of disparities in access and participation. The ASIP/AWPB will include costed strategies and programs in line with the targets stated in 8.1b, 8.2b, 8.3b, 8.4b, 8.5a and 8.5b.

Measurement Unit	All indicators except 8.3c and 8.5a: children aged 4-12 years 8.3c: SSDP Mid Term Review thematic study 8.5a: Children aged 4-16 years
Periodicity of Measurement	Annually, after consolidation of the Flash I and Flash II school based data collection

Last known Result	500,000 out of school children, aged between 5 and 12 years (about 12 percent in relevant age group) in 75 districts	Central Bureau of Statistics (CBS), Nepal National Household Survey (NNHS), 2011
	Survival rate grade 12 by cohort is 11.5 percent	Department of Education (DoE) Education Management Information System (EMIS), 2016
	Standardized grade 8 examination score	Office of the Controller of Examinations (OCE), Ministry of Education (MoE), available from 2018 onward

Development and quality of the indicator

Nature of basic data	• *8.1-4a: 25 of the 75 districts in Nepal with lowest Equity Index score* • *8.1b: out of school children within the age of 4 – 12 years old as percentage of the total number of children aged 4 – 12 within the 5 of the 75 districts in Nepal with lowest Equity Index score with regard to access* • *8.2-4b: number of out of school children within the age of 4 – 12 years old as percentage of the total number of children aged 4 – 12 within the 10 of the 75 districts in Nepal with lowest Equity Index score with regard to access* • *8.5b: number of out of school children within the age of 4 – 12 years old as percentage of the total number of children aged 4 – 12 within all 75 districts in Nepal* • *8.5a: value of the equity index component on participation and learning outcomes within the 25 of the 75 districts in Nepal with lowest Equity Index score with regard to participation and learning outcomes*
Method of Data Collection	*Extraction from Education Management Information System biannual school level census, third party sample based surveys and stakeholder interviews.*
Departments and Bodies Responsible for Data Collection	*Department of Education, third party*
Method of Calculation	• *8.1b: % of the number of out of school children within the age of 4 – 12 years old as percentage of the total number of children aged 4 – 12 within the 5 of the 75 districts in Nepal with lowest Equity Index score with regard to access* • *8.2-4b: % of the number of out of school children within the age of 4 – 12 years old as percentage of the total number of children aged 4 – 12 within the 10 of the 75 districts in Nepal with lowest Equity Index score with regard to access* • *8.5b: % of the number of out of school children within the age of 4 – 12 years old as percentage of the total number of children aged 4 – 12 within all 75 districts in Nepal* • *8.5a: value of the equity index component on participation and learning outcomes within the 25 of the 75 districts in Nepal with lowest Equity Index score with regard to participation and learning outcomes*
Means of Interpretation	
Known limits and Bias	The achievements against the targets will be reported through the Education Management Information System, through which schools report status and results. With regard to the access related data, the 2011 census data is used to compute the initial equity index scores related to access. The bias of self-reporting is decreased through cross verification and automation of the EMIS and through systemic verification by District Education Officers and through independent verification during the baseline and end-line with regard to the number of out of school children.
Mean of	An increase in the composite value of the Equity Index indicates a reduction of

Interpretation	disparities across the three dimensions of access, participation and learning outcomes.					
Direction of Interpretation	*Increase*					
Documentation Schedule						
Delivery Date	*Annually, prior to November*					
Improvement in Progress	As stated in the context of this indicator, it is understood that the implementation of the equity strategy and the utilization of the Equity Index for this purpose go beyond access to education but are comprised of reducing disparities in access, participation and learning outcomes. However, in order to allow for full institutionalization of the Index and for prerequisites in terms of standardization of learning outcome measurements (examination) to be in place, the indicator has been defined in terms of access, and is envisioned to be expanded to cover the other two dimensions during the review of the SSDP Program Result Framework at the Mid term review of the SSDP in 2018.					
Targets and Disbursement Timeline						
Baseline	• 500,000 OOSCs of 5-12 age (about 12 percent in relevant age group) in 75 districts (disaggregation by district and VDC available). • Equity Index approved and 25 most disadvantaged districts selected for equity interventions					
Timeline	Period 0 Results prior to November 2016	Period 1 (July 15, 2016 – July 14, 2017)	Period 2 (July 15, 2017 – July 14, 2018)	Period 3 (July 15, 2018 – July 14, 2019)	Period 4 (July 15, 2019 – July 14, 2020)	Period 5 (July 15, 2020 – July 14, 2021)
Achievement Date		6.1a: 6.1b:	6.2a: 6.2b:	6.3:	6.4: June 2020	6.5:
Verification/ Reporting Date		6.1a: 6.1b:	6.2a: 6.2b:	6.3:	6.4:	6.5:
Disbursement Date		6.1a: 6.1b:	6.2a: 6.2b:	6.3:	6.4:	6.5:

Target		6.1a 20 percent reduction in the aggregate number of OOSC in these 5 district (GPE DLI 3(ii)/EU US$ 2.2/ Euro … million) 6.1b Targeted interventions implemented in 5 most disadvantaged Districts (GPE DLI 3(i) US$ 0.7 million)	6.2a 20 percent reduction in the aggregate number of OOSC in these 15 districts (GPE DLI 3(ii)/EU/F US$ 2.2/ Euro …/0.23 million) 6.2b Targeted interventions implemented in 10 most disadvantaged districts (GPE DLI 3(i) US$ 0.7 million)	6.3 30 percent reduction in the aggregate number of OOSC in these 15 districts (EU/F Euro …/0.67 million).	6.4 250,000 cumulative number of OOSC brought to schools or Learning Centers (LCs) (EU/WB DLI 2.4/F Euro / US$ 6/ Euro …/0.80 million).	6.5 OOSC in basic education age reduced to 5 percent in the relevant age group (EU/F Euro …/0.83 million).
Allocated Amount (in million US$)	Total US$ 17.49/ Euro 16.42 million	US$ 2.90 million Euro 2.72 million	US$ 3.15 million Euro 2.96 million	US$ 0.71 million Euro 0.67 million	US$ 9.85 million Euro 9.25 million	US$ 0.88 million Euro 0.83 million

Disbursement rule	6.1a, 6.2a: (i) percent of achievement of target (i.e. 20 percent reduction = 100 percent of target) on or before the last day of the period equal to the percent of total allocated amount to be disbursed; and (ii) minimum of 51 percent of the target achieved to be eligible for disbursement. 6.3: (i) percent of achievement of target (i.e. 30 percent reduction = 100 percent of target) on or before the last day of the period equal to the percent of total allocated amount to be disbursed; and (ii) minimum of 51 percent of the target achieved to be eligible for disbursement. 6.4: (i) Minimum DLR value to be achieved to trigger disbursements; 150,000 OOSC brought to schools or LCs , (ii) Maximum DLR value to be achieved to trigger disbursements; 250,000 OOSC brought to schools or LCs, (iii) Determination of Financing Amount to be disbursed against achieved and verified DLR value; US$3 million for 150,000 OOSC brought to schools or LC; and thereafter US$1 million per 50,000 additional OOSC brought to schools or LC, with a maximum of US$ 6 million 6.5: (i) percent of achievement of target (i.e. reduction equal to or below 5 percent of total = 100 percent of target) on or before the last day of the period equal to the percent of total allocated amount to be disbursed; and (ii) minimum of 51 percent of the target achieved to be eligible for disbursement.
DLI verification process	- Government approved report(s) detailing the equity index and revised intervention plans for OOSC; official document showing that the equity index has been approved by GoN (Year 1); dataset listing the names and profiles of the out of school children brought into basic schooling (Years 2 and 3) 6.1a, 6.1a, 6.3, 6.5: DOE will hire a third party (DLI verification agent) to review the achievement report and verify the reported results through a sample survey. The verification report will be shared with the DLI 1 partners (EU and GPE SE). DLI Verification Agent reviews DOE's report on achievement of DLIs and dataset listing OOSC brought into basic education; (ii) DLI Verification Agent conducts a sample survey of OOSC (brought into basic education in intervention districts) that includes interviews with students, parents and teachers, and review of school/learning center records. 6.4: (i) Data source/agency MOE/DOE, (ii) verification entity IVA commissioned by NPC, (iii) World Bank/DPs review IVA's report and supporting documents which includes interview with parties, visit to schools on random sample basis as necessary 6.1b, 2.2b: LEG reviews DOE's report(s) on achievement of DLI detailing the Equity Index and revised intervention plans for OOSC and reflection in ASIP/AWPBs 2016/17, 2017/18, 2018/19 2019/20 and 2020/21 - Review of verification report by on behalf of LEG. The SE team will review the verification report, and request revisions if necessary, after which the joint DLI verification report produced during JRM and BRM will certify the extent to which the DLI targets have been achieved.

Definition and Description of Achievement	• 6.1: Targeted interventions developed through ESIP and reflected in ASIP/AWPB 2016/17 for 5 most disadvantaged districts (as in the districts have the lowest composite index score according to the composite access and participation HOI indexes) and implementation reflected in 2016/17 annual status report.
	• 6.2: Targeted interventions developed through ESIP and reflected in ASIP/AWPB 2017/18 for 10 most disadvantaged districts (as in the districts have the lowest composite index score according to the composite access and participation HOI indexes) and implementation reflected in 2017/18 annual status report.
	• 6.3: Targeted interventions developed through ESIP and reflected in ASIP/AWPB 2018/19 for 15 most disadvantaged districts (as in the districts have the lowest composite index score according to the composite access, participation and learning outcomes, the latter being the standardized grade 8 exams, HOI indexes) and implementation reflected in 2018/19 annual status report.
	• 6.4: OOSC are defined as 7 – 12 years old children who are out of school for at least 6 months. This program covers OOSC brought to schools or LCs on or after the 2017 academic session with detail information by each school and LCs. Bringing all children aged 5–6 to schools and retaining them in schools is critical to reducing out of school in the medium/long term, however this enrolment cannot be counted toward providing second-chance education. This DLI is achieved when implementation progress report includes (a) list of schools and LCs by district covered under the program, (b) list of OOSC enrolled by school/LC, and (c) disbursement of grants to eligible schools/LCs and scholarship to enrolled students.
	• 6.5: Percentage of the number of out of school children within the age of 4-12 years old equals or is less than 5 percent of the total number of children aged 4-14 within all 75 districts in Nepal