

Annex 1 – Terms of Reference

Implementation of School Improvement Plans in 10 earthquake-affected schools in Aleppo, Syria

1. Background

A devastating magnitude 7.8 earthquake hit Syria and Türkiye on 6 February 2023. Syria has been heavily impacted: as regards the education sector, damages were reported in more than 2,000 public schools, technical and vocational centres and non-formal education centres. Educational disruptions affected over 2 million learners, according to the Syria Earthquake Recovery Needs Assessment (SERNA).

In the aftermath of the earthquake, a UNESCO technical team immediately conducted a mission to Aleppo, visiting schools and meeting with the affected communities. UNESCO was among the first UN agencies to announce the light rehabilitation and development of School Improvement Plans in 50 schools affected by the earthquake in the governorates of Aleppo and Hama.

Following these activities, UNESCO mobilized additional funds to support additional 10 schools affected by the earthquake in the governorate of Aleppo.

The UNESCO School Improvement Plan aims at supporting earthquake-affected schools by:

- i. Conducting light rehabilitation with the aim of making schools safe spaces for learning;
- ii. Training teachers and school personnel in developing and implementing School Improvement Plans (SIP), with particular attention to topics related to facility management and Disaster Risk Reduction, in order to address issues related to poor planning and prioritization in school management. These activities will also be aimed at increasing learners' and families' engagement in school life and facilities management. Furthermore, some awareness activities will be undertaken on the prevention and mitigation measures related to disasters in general, and earthquakes in specific.

For this reason, UNESCO is issuing a Call for Partnerships to identify a partner (hereinafter also referred to as "Organization") for the Implementation of School Improvement Plans in 10 earthquake-affected schools in the governorate of Aleppo, Syria.

2. Main features of the School Improvement Plan

Beneficiaries

Ten public schools to be selected among the list of schools affected by the February 2023 earthquake.

The Aleppo governorate was selected due to the high number of schools needing rehabilitation, as well as due to presence of a UNESCO on site to facilitate coordination and monitoring.

The programme will also benefit a minimum of 5 teachers / school personnel per selected school.

Actions envisaged for each school

1. Support teachers and school personnel in getting the needed skills to develop and implement the School Improvement Plans and to benefit from awareness sessions on Disaster Risk Reduction, notably in relation to earthquakes.
2. Assist schools to develop and implement a School Improvement Plan adapted to their specific situations and challenges.
3. Manage and monitor the use of a lump sum of USD 10,000 to USD 12,000 in average per school (subject to change based on budget availability) to make schools safe spaces for learning, by conducting minor post-

earthquake rehabilitation. After the rehabilitation be completed, should part of the lump sum still be available, it can be used to implement the activities foreseen as part of the School Improvement Plan.

Key principles of the School Improvement Plan

1. Ensuring learning continuity in an emergency context;
2. Building trust and ownership (through work with Parents-Teachers Associations, learners, and other community initiatives);
3. Equity and inclusiveness (by adopting solutions in support for the most vulnerable, in the spirit of the criteria used for the selection of schools).

Process to be followed by the partner

- i. Work in close coordination with UNESCO and the Directorate of Education of Aleppo to identify 10 schools among those affected by the February 2023 earthquake, visit the schools to verify their conditions, and report on relevance and feasibility of the intervention based on the available funds;
- ii. Submit a detailed costed report with the immediate rehabilitation needs of the schools, up to the available amount of the lump sum allocated for SIP implementation / minor rehabilitation (which may include the purchase of equipment and furniture);
- iii. Involve UNESCO in the procurement process for the identification of suppliers for rehabilitation works and equipment/furniture provision, as needed, and, upon completion, submit to UNESCO the list of proposed contractors for review and approval prior to contract award;
- iv. Use the lump sum according to the plan validated by UNESCO and carry out the needed minor rehabilitation works, and purchase of equipment and furniture.
- v. Identify, in cooperation with head teachers and the Ministry of Education, the teachers and school staff to be trained, with due consideration of fairness, transparency and gender equity (**minimum 5 per school**);
- vi. Develop teacher training modules on SIP;
- vii. Organize meetings with school representatives, Parents-Teachers Associations (PTAs), local authorities and communities to introduce the project and the expected milestones and results, gather their ideas and take them into account for the development of the SIP;
- viii. Provide training to the beneficiaries (teachers and school personnel) and provide them with cash compensations according the rules applicable to compensations for training activities in Syria;
- ix. Visit schools and support them in the development of the School Improvement Plans;
- x. Collect the School Improvement Plans and submit them to UNESCO together with a procurement plan for the activities to be funded with the remainder of the lump sum allocated to each school, should any balance be available;
- xi. Use the lump sum fully according to the plan validated by UNESCO and involve UNESCO in any procurement activity as needed.

Content of the SIP training programme

The content of the SIP training programme shall be developed by the partner in close cooperation with UNESCO. It should include at least the following modules:

- Improving collaboration between teachers, students, family and other members of the educational community (whole school approach) to improve school management and learning outcomes;
- Facility management;
- Disaster risk reduction / awareness about earthquakes and other disasters.

The training shall not include reinforcement of capacities in pedagogy (e.g. on delivering the curriculum or other non-formal education programmes) as this does not fall within the scope of the project.

Timeline

Activities are planned to start in October 2023 and shall be completed by early February 2024 (date of submission of all financial and narrative reports and supporting documents). Should a **justified proposal** of an extended timeline of implementation beyond the end date be proposed, UNESCO reserves the right to consider an extension of the implementation duration.

Deliverables and reporting under contract

- i. Inception report: schools assessment and costed plan for immediate rehabilitation for school reopening;
- ii. List of contractors for the immediate rehabilitation for school reopening and explanation of the selection modalities;
- iii. Proofs of payment of expenses (such as invoices) covered by the lump sum for the immediate rehabilitation for school reopening, a certified interim financial report on this specific activity and confirmations of delivery from the schools;
- iv. Teacher training plan and training content proposal;
- v. Proof of disbursement of compensations to the beneficiaries of the training;
- vi. Training activity report;
- vii. School Improvement Plans developed by each school and proposed procurement plan;
- viii. List of contractors for the School Improvement Plans implementation and explanation of the selection modalities;
- ix. Proofs of payment of expenses (such as invoices) covered by the lump sum for the School Improvement Plans implementation, a certified interim financial report on this specific activity and confirmations of delivery from the schools;
- x. Quality pictures showing the implementation of activities;
- xi. Certificates of completion of mandatory UN PSEA online training for all project staff within 7 days after contract signature (the link to an online training free of charge is available in Partner Identification Form 7-9A);
- xii. Final narrative and a certified final financial report for the entire project.

3. Geographical scope, budget and disbursement modalities of lump sum and compensations

Interested organizations shall be able to cover the entirety of the 10 schools to be selected in the governorate of Aleppo.

Interested organizations are invited to provide a budget using the template provided in Annex 3, which **shall not include** the lump sum amount per school. For information, the lump sum is estimated to be between USD 10,000 and USD 12,000 per school in average, to be confirmed based on budget availability. It will be added to the budget by UNESCO upon finalisation of the Implementing Partner Agreement (IPA) with the selected partner.

The budget template is provided to allow UNESCO to compare offers based on a set of criteria. Partners can change budget lines content, while keeping the budget presentation by main categories by activity as presented in Annex 3. Additional columns can be provided if they contribute to adding clarity as to how the budget will be used. However, the budget table shall not be modified in a way that it would make it impossible for UNESCO to compare the financial proposals received.

Organizations submitting their proposals need to provide a contribution either monetary or in-kind as mentioned in Form AM 7-20 under Section II. In case of in-kind contribution, the amount should be quantified in the budget annex to estimate this contribution.

Only direct budgeting based on activities is accepted, no overheads in terms of administrative or service fees. Please see the CFP document, under *Chapter V - Budget size and duration* for more details.

The Partner shall provide compensations to teachers and school personnel participating in the trainings according to the applicable rules in Syria, notably in terms of the amounts due. Compensations shall be transferred directly to the beneficiaries through means allowing to track the effective distribution (i.e. money transfer companies). The estimated amount of the compensations **shall be calculated by the organization based on the relevant harmonised tables of compensations applicable as part of the Syria Education Sector, and included in the budget (Annex 3). They are not included in the lump sum.**

The technical proposal (see sample template in Annex 5) shall clarify how the organization is planning to administer both the lump sum and the compensations administratively and methodologically. This explanation should allow UNESCO to understand (i) in what way the Organisation is planning to use the lump sum (e.g. direct implementation, procurement, transfer to a third party etc.); (ii) how UNESCO can verify the lump sum is fully used for the purpose of the implementation of the School Improvement Plan agreed by UNESCO; (iii) as well as what modalities will be used to provide cash compensations to the beneficiaries of the trainings.

4. Eligibility

In addition to the criteria set forth in the Call for Partnerships (Form AM 7-20), under Section II, and in Annex 2 (Partner Identification Form), the following mandatory criteria shall be met for eligibility:

- To be an International NGO (INGO) registered in Syria, with active license.
- Proven record of experience in implementing programmes in formal education in Syria for at least 2 years.
- Previous experience in working with the UN with a minimum portfolio of USD 50,000.
- Qualified personnel able to communicate and operate effectively in both Arabic and English.
- To have a sound financial system (limited debts, positive annual results, clean audit opinions on partner's corporate annual accounts etc.) and appropriate internal control procedures. Partners shall have a sound financial/programmatic structure to ensure a successful undertaking of the work assignment, proven by experience and good reputation (including their key personnel), well established financial and administration system, human resources policy, anti-fraud and anti-corruption mechanisms in place, policy on protection from sexual exploitation and financial abuse.
- To have performed satisfactorily in the last three years, based on the financial statements provided and satisfactory assessment (based on recommendation letters from UN or EU; and/or a capacity assessment report done by UN agencies with low or medium risk results).
- To have an office and/or field staff in the selected governorate or in proximity of Aleppo, allowing for easy monitoring and daily field presence.

Failure to comply with any of such mandatory criteria will determine the disqualification of the non-compliant organization.

IMPORTANT: INGOs submitting their proposal in partnership with other INGOs or NGOs (sub-contractor or co-implementer) shall detail each organization's role, identify the leading partner that will sign the Implementation Agreement and provide separate UNESCO Partner Identification Forms, one for each organization.

5. Desirable profile for key personnel

Project Manager

- University Degree in Education, Education Management, or a related field
- Preferably five (5) years of proven work experience as a project manager for projects of similar intervention/scopes in education in Syria
- Demonstrated experience in working with public institutions at national and sub-national levels, UN organizations, or any international development or aid agencies.
- Proficiency in English (written and spoken)
- Good IT skills

Finance Officer

- Bachelor's degree in accounting or finance.
- Preferably three (5) years of 'hands-on' professional experience in finance; and experience working with a UN organization.
- Good IT skills.
- Proficiency in English (written and spoken)

Field Coordinator

- Bachelor's degree in education, social science, or a related field of study.
- Preferably three (3) years of experience in education-related field work.
- Good command in English (written and spoken)

Trainer

- Bachelor's degree and Training of trainers (ToT) certificates
- Preferably five (5) years of experience as a trainer in education related topics, and notably School Improvement Plans
- Excellent communication skills
- Experience in training parents, teachers, and schools' administrators

Monitoring and evaluation officer

- University Degree preferably in Business Administration, project management, or related field.
- Preferably (3) years of work experience in the design and implementation of M&E in development projects or relevant projects.
- Proven experience of M&E in projects implemented by international NGOs and UN entities.
- Proven experience in designing tools for data collection, data entry, analysis and production of reports.
- Demonstrated good IT skills
- Proficiency in English (written and spoken)

6. Technical Evaluation Criteria

The technical and financial proposals shall include all required information and relevant supporting documentation (e.g., copies of registration forms and licenses, CVs of key personnel involved, risk management plan etc.) to allow for their evaluation based on the following Technical Evaluation Criteria:

Technical criteria	Possible score
Mandatory (No = excluded):	
1. Expertise of organization	100
Organization is an INGO registered and implementing in Syria for at least two years (NGOs with more than 2 years will get up to additional 20 points)	Yes/No 20
Organization has a proven record of experience in implementing programmes in formal education in Syria for at least two years (NGOs with more than 2 years will get up to additional 20 points)	Yes/No 20
Organization has a sound financial system and appropriate internal control procedures in the last 3 years	Yes/No
Review of budget annex as part of partner's financial reporting capacity: clear budget breakdown by main cost elements. Costs are direct costs, reasonable, in line with national standards and market prices. Partner's contribution is mandatory (no minimum amount is set).	Yes/No
Previous experience in working with the United Nations with a minimum portfolio of USD 50,000 received from the UN or the European Union and satisfactory assessment (low or medium risk)	Yes/No 20

(NGOs with more than USD 50,000 received from UN or EU will get up to additional 20 points, as compared to other partners)	
Minimum project portfolio of USD 300,000 in the past 3 years (all funding sources) (project portfolio above \$300,000 gets up to additional 20 points, as compared to other partners)	Yes/No 20
Organization has proven capacity to operate in Arabic and English	Yes/No
Organization has an office and/or field staff in the selected governorate or its proximity (formal presence with a field office gets up to additional 20 points)	Yes/No 20
The proposal covers all the 10 schools in the governorate of Aleppo	Yes/No
Non-mandatory:	
2. Proposed methodology, approach, and implementation plan	400
Organization presented a clear strategy and technical approach for the SIP implementation, including the content of the training, allowing a successful implementation of the project in line with the aim and objectives of the call for partnership.	100
Organization presented a risk analysis and mitigation plan, addressing potential risks such as (but not limited to): ghost beneficiaries, fraud/corruption, inability of schools to complete their plans, delivery of permissions from national/local authorities, etc., allowing the successful implementation of the project	60
The proposal meets the timeline/Organization proposed a clear workplan, which is relevant to the work assignment and timelines that carefully considers timelines required to obtain permissions from national/local authorities, prepare, and implement activities in harmony with the academic year	60
Organization provided a sound plan for engagement of all project stakeholders	60
Organization provided a sound plan for the traceable disbursement and use of the lump sum and compensations for teacher training activities	60
Organisation proposed a suitable strategy for sustainability, notably about the schools' capacity to implement the SIP independently and with limited financial support after the end of the project. Capacity development, gender equality, environmental sustainability, human rights-based approaches, financial/economic sustainability, technological sustainability shall be taken into account as relevant.	60
3. Personnel capacity	200
General composition of the team dedicated to the project (provide organigram for the organization/project with location)	50
Project manager/officer	30
Finance Officer/ assistant	30
Field coordination officer	30
Trainer (external or internal)	30
Monitoring and Evaluation officer	30
Total	700
Minimum score required 70%	490

To pass the technical evaluation, partners shall comply with all mandatory and minimum criteria outlined in these Terms of Reference and obtain at least 490 points.

7. Compliance with UNESCO General Terms and Conditions

Partners shall review and confirm their full acceptance of UNESCO's Standard General and Conditions attached to the Implementation Partner Agreement (IPA) (Annex 4 to the Call for Partnerships).