

Questions and answers

1. **We meet the evaluation criteria and have the necessary capacity; however, we are currently providing consulting services to UNESCO in the capacity of a vendor. Before developing the proposal, we need you to confirm that this doesn't create any conflict-of-interest issues and that we can apply.**

It is essential to note that as per the qualification requirements, firms and team members must have no previous involvement in any BESAF program activities under review.

2. **Who is implementing BESAF currently? (UNESCO directly or through sub-contractors or the Ministry of Education and Higher Education)?**

The BESAF activities are presently implemented through implementing partners, primarily local NGOs and in the cases of international firms/organizations in collaboration with local partners. UNESCO does not directly implement the program, nor is it implemented through the Ministry of Education and Higher Education.

3. **Did UNESCO conduct a baseline assessment OR mid-term evaluation of the BESAF program?**

No baseline or midline surveys have been conducted under the BESAF program.

4. **As part of the evaluation methodology, we are required to conduct online surveys. Would you please let us know who should be our target respondents?**

The preferred target respondents for the online surveys should include a representative sample of key stakeholders involved in or affected by the BESAF program, such as education authorities, teachers/facilitators, students/learners, and community members.

5. **Do we need to conduct FGDs only with parents, or UNESCO would like to get the insights of students (girls and boys) and teachers (women and men) through the FGDs?**

UNESCO is interested in obtaining insights from a diverse set of stakeholders, including students/learners (both girls and boys), teachers/facilitators (both women and men), and communities. FGDs should be conducted with representatives from these groups to gather comprehensive perspectives.

6. **Does the final evaluation require any household or individual survey?**

The final evaluation primarily focuses on institutional and programmatic aspects. While there may be a need for interviews or discussions with individuals as described above, there is no specific requirement for a comprehensive household or individual survey.

7. **Could you please let us know the final evaluation will take place in all the 11 provinces?**

The final evaluation is expected to cover all 11 provinces initially outlined in the BESAF program.

8. Is it possible to provide us with the list of districts and villages where the project was implemented?

The list of districts and villages where the BESAF program has been implemented will be provided separately.

9. Since our organization has no office in Afghanistan, we would like to form a joint venture with our partner based in Afghanistan. Will UNESCO accept a joint-venture approach? If so, could you please let us know how UNESCO will consider the scoring criteria for joint-venture proposals?

UNESCO accepts the joint-venture approach. Joint-venture proposals will be assessed based on the same scoring criteria as individual proposals. The evaluation will consider the combined expertise and capabilities of the joint venture in addressing the objectives outlined in the TOR. Furthermore, In light of the Ministry of Education's localization initiative, we encourage international firms to establish collaboration with local partners, particularly for the data collection process.

10. We intend to electronically submit our proposal, could you please confirm if the Technical Proposal and Financial Proposal should be protected by password?

For electronic submission, the Technical and Financial Proposals should be password-protected. Please ensure that you share the password separately after the closing date of the RFP or on the date of the bid opening meeting. Please also note to submit your technical and financial proposals via separate emails.

11. ANNEX I – Instruction to Offer – C. Preparation of Proposals – Clause 14. Format and Signing of Proposals, it is stated that “two copies of the Proposal, clearly marking each “Original” and “Copy” as appropriate”. Would you please let us know if this applies to the electronic submission?

For electronic submissions, the "two copies" requirement does not apply. Please submit a single copy of the proposal, protecting the Technical and Financial Proposals with a unique password. Please note to submit your technical and financial proposals via separate emails.

12. Would it be possible to request an extension to the deadline, given our organization has relevant and similar subject-matter knowledge, experiences, and expertise globally and our partner has extensive relevant experience in the country so that we could have enough time to develop and submit a high-quality proposal?

While there is currently no intention to extend the deadline given the program's time constraints, however, UNESCO can review the deadline extension request based on specific circumstances.

13. Budget Allocation or Level of Effort (LoE): Can we have more information on the allocated budget or the expected Level of Effort for this evaluation?

Acknowledging the importance of specifying the anticipated level of effort in man-days, we regret that, in adherence to procurement rules and regulations, we are unable to disclose details regarding the allocated budget. This aspect is kept open, allowing bidders to propose realistic man-days based on the on-the-ground realities as part of their submissions.

14. Field Deployment and Interview Logistics: Given the unique circumstances surrounding the current political situation in Afghanistan since August 2021, we are keen on understanding the logistics related to fieldwork:

- a. Regarding fieldwork, is in person fieldwork expected in each province?**
- b. Considering the political situation and associated risks, could you provide guidance on the expectation and feasibility of interviewing women/girls regarding the project?**

UNESCO expresses a preference for fieldwork in all BESAF-supported provinces, and this decision is open for potential bidders to propose in their submissions based on the contextual realities.

While acknowledging that the situation varies across provinces and districts, UNESCO underscores the significant inclusion of interviewing women/girls due to the project's focus on over 60% female beneficiaries. Bidders are strongly encouraged to incorporate this consideration into their methodology proposals, aligning with Section 4.3 and Section 13 of the Terms of Reference (ToR).