

Ministry of Education & Higher Education
Education to Work Transition Project – E2WTP
Quality Improvement Fund-QIF

Concept Note about QIF 3rd Cycle

JANUARY 1, 2017
PCU OFFICE

Objectives

In 2005 The Palestinian National Authority through its Ministry of Education and Higher Education (MOEHE) implemented a Tertiary Education Project with the support of the World Bank and participation of the European Union (EU) between 2005 - 2009. On July 2nd, 2012, the MOEHE received new financing from the World Bank in the amount of USD 6.5 million, under the project named “Education to Work Transition Project – E2WTP”. A major component of this Project was The Quality Improvement Funds (QIF). QIF is being administered by Projects Coordination Unit “PCU”, branched out of the MOEHE. PCU includes small technical staff (QIF Team) that is accountable to a centralized Board Representative from Eleven qualified stakeholders representing the academia and the private sector as well. The project mainly aims at enhancing Palestinian youth’s transition from education to work through fostering the linkage between Tertiary Education Institutions “TEIs” and private sector employers.

A new allocation of USD 5 million grant was approved on December 2, 2016 by the World Bank’s Board of Executive to support ongoing efforts to increase job opportunities for Palestinian graduates. The additional financing for the Education to Work Transition Project -E2WTP will focus on improving the employability of Palestinian students graduating from tertiary education institutions, thus improving their job prospects as well.

QIF will continue to manage the grants in a similar transparent and competitive manner to provide incentives to TEIs to develop and implement employment-oriented education programs in partnership with the private sector. TEIs have fostered their partnership with private sector employers through collaboratively designing curricula, updating teaching practices and providing practical training to students. It is expected that QIF will (i) increase the productive linkages between TEIs and businesses; (ii) promote social responsibility among the business community; and (iii) better prepare graduates to find and keep gainful employment.

The QIF Board now through 3rd Cycle invites eligible Tertiary Education Institutions to submit preliminary proposals targeting the following category:

“Development of Programs of Relevance to Facilitate Transition from Education to the Labor Market”

Mechanism

Quality Improvement Fund Grant consists of a competitive Education to Work Transition Innovation Grant Facility, aimed at enhancing education to work transition of graduates

from TEIs. The MOEHE will support through a competitive grant system the implementation of education improvement initiatives prepared and implemented by TEIs in partnership with private sector employers. To be eligible, proposals submitted by TEIs must focus on the development and implementation of employment-oriented education new or current programs, and demonstrate a partnership commitment with one or more private sector employer.

The E2WT Innovation Grant Facility will be managed through PCU/QIF following its established model with a slight modification, which will take place in three phases.

- In **Phase One (Preliminary Phase)**, TEIs will prepare, together with the private sector and optionally with other TEIs, an online preliminary proposal Application, stating the main goal of the project, its rationale, justification and target group, the way in which it relates to the “education-to-work transition” objectives, commitment of the respective TEI and private sector employer to partner in order to achieve the objectives of the education to work transition project, and any other necessary information the QIF Board would consider necessary as per the content enclosed in the QIF Operational Manual. Evaluation would focus on the validity of the idea for the project, and only those ideas that are consistent with the objectives would be approved for further development. During this stage QIF will carry out an intensive awareness and information campaign and will support interested parties to prepare and present very simple proposals where both parties identify the areas of collaboration and commit to enter into a partnership. By the third week of month two, QIF Board, through the QIF Unit, will notify applicants with the decisions of the board regarding the Preliminary Proposals, which are deemed as complete and eligible by the QIF Board to start preparing the Full Proposal.
- In **Phase Two (Full Proposals)**, TEIs which received a positive evaluation in phase one will further develop their full proposal and formally establish the partnership. The proposals should be then sent to selected peer reviewers to evaluate them using the score sheet designed for this purpose. After which, PCU will meet to review the full proposals and the evaluation reports received from the reviewers for that period. They will make preliminary ranking recommendations to be reviewed by QIF Board. In general, no later than three months after the proposal application deadline, a letter of notification is sent to the prospective institutions, expressing QIF Board’s decision in regard to the rejection or approval of an award.
- During the **Phase Three (Implementation Phase)** Projects’ implementation will commence upon signing of the GIAs. Grantees are responsible for managing the day-

to-day operations of their grants. The PCU office will monitor grants to identify potential problems and areas where technical assistance might be necessary.

Who can apply?

To be eligible to apply, each applicant institution must be licensed and accredited by the Accreditation and Quality Assurance Commission “AQAC” and have an active Quality Assurance Unit.

Characteristics of the 3rd Cycle

1. This is an open call for proposals where all accredited programs or / in the pipeline of accreditation at accredited Higher Education Institution in West Bank and Gaza Strip can submit proposals.
2. While equal opportunities are given to universities, Technical Colleges, and university colleges, the QIF Board highly encourages applications from technical and vocational programs.
3. Programs for both graduates and post graduates (Master Programs and Ph.D. programs) are eligible to apply.
4. Partnership with the private sector is mandatory; TEIs must enter into partnership with compatible private sector associations or individual private sector firms or a consortium of private sector firms.
5. TEIs are encouraged to partner with other local, regional, or tertiary education institutes or authority, in this case, the ceiling of fund will increase. In particular, partnerships between stronger and weaker TEIs are promoted in this cycle.
6. TEIs are encouraged to introduce Research and development component in their proposals, in addition to develop income generating programs. They are also encouraged to link with international institutions and collaborate in research.
7. Proposals should include empowering activities to develop capacities of supervisors and mentors in companies that provide internship for students and/or participate in graduation projects.
8. TEIs should refer to the QIF Operational Manual (revised version 7 – June 2016) to learn more about the requirements of contents priorities, process priorities as well as the component priorities. The QIF board while processing applications will only consider applications that meet all the priorities as specified in the operational manual.
9. Fund ceiling varies according to grant window, type of TEI; university or college and number of partnering TEIs as follows:

Grant Window	Single TEI Fund Ceiling	TEIs Partnership Fund Ceiling	Maximum Percentage of Equipment	Maximum Fund Duration
		Maximum number of partnering TEIs is 4 (1 leader and 3 partner TEIs either		

			universities or colleges)			
	Universities	Technical and University Colleges	Leader Universities	Leader Colleges		
Window 1: Technical- production Professional Areas	200,000 USD	150,000 USD	50,000 for each additional TEI and a ceiling grant of 350,000USD	30,000 for each additional TEI and a ceiling grant of 240,000USD	40%	36 months
Window 2: Business and Humanities Professional Areas	200,000 USD	150,000 USD	50,000 for each additional TEI and a ceiling grant of 350,000USD	30,000 for each additional TEI and a ceiling grant of 240,000USD	30%	36 months

10. TEIs are expected to give a reasonable estimation of a project Budget with +/-10% margin. Any proposal with exaggerated amount might be rejected by The QIF Board.
11. Evaluation of the preliminary proposals and full proposals shall be in accordance with appendices 2 & 3 of the QIF Operational Manual.
12. Projects Implementation period under this cycle shall be not more than 36 months and shall be well detailed in implementation plans in the submitted Full Proposals Phase and as approved by the QIF Board.
13. It is expected that TEIs and their private sector partner and other partners should have a valid administrative and organizational registration and licenses from the related Authorities.
14. Proposals can be submitted in Arabic or English Language. Once the TEI decides to submit the full proposal in Arabic, The **executive summary** should be submitted in English in addition to Arabic.
15. Proposals should be prepared according to this concept note, the requirements of the call for proposals, and the QIF Operational Manual, (revised version 7-June 2016) available on the project website (www.palpcu.ps) and the MoEHE website www.mohe.pna.ps.
16. Allocation for this cycle is +/- 2,000,000 USD

17. Online submission of both the preliminary proposal and full proposals can be reached at www.palpcu.ps. **Applicants shall also ensure submitting a CD copy by hand to the PCU offices in Ramallah and Gaza.**

Additional Recommendations:

18. Proposals should emphasize to prepare graduates for self-employment. Graduates do not only require better entrepreneurship and business management skills, but also more fundamental mindset changes towards innovation and risk taking that require innovative teaching methodologies alongside further business incubator initiatives.
19. The importance of enabling and encouraging TEIs to become more flexible in their program designs to align education with employment requirements; TEIs are encouraged to keep continuous dialogue with AQAC to ensure proper review and re accreditation of programs during and after QIF interventions
20. The great potential of technology-enabled teaching and learning material to improve learning outcomes. This potential is still vastly underused in Palestine.
21. Previous QIF grantees who plan to further develop and consolidate sustainable international partnerships with foreign partners, both from the tertiary education and the private sector are encouraged to apply. This could also include joint research ventures and involve additional partnerships with other TEIs in Palestine. Flexible, smaller grant packages may be set up to support such initiatives;
22. Having partnerships between clusters of TEIs and one private sector entity implies the need to prepare a more comprehensive internship plan that includes all partners from tertiary education institutes. This will help identify and increase the absorption capacity of private sector entity to receive internship programs.
23. Emergence of interdisciplinary approaches to increase employment orientation.
24. It is understood that the signed MoU between TEIs and Private sector is the main reference for organizing their relationship within the frame of the project, and that both parties are obliged to commit to the terms and clauses identified in the agreement.

Orientation workshop:

In order to explain the main concept of this cycle, a series of workshop and online tutorials will be released following the call for proposals with representatives of TEIs which can be reached at www.palpcu.ps

Timeline for main activities

Call for preliminary proposals:

Sunday, January 15, 2017

Orientation workshop to explain concept note:

Tuesday, January 24, 2017

Deadline for receiving Preliminary Proposals:

Wednesday, February 15, 2017 at 11:00
A.M

Review by the PCU team and distribute
proposals to QIF Board members

Sunday, February 19, 2017

QIF Board decisions on Preliminary Proposals

Thursday, March 9, 2017

Notifying institutions about the status of
preliminary proposals.

Thursday, March 16, 2017