



USAID Lebanon Civic Action Accelerator Program (LEB-CAAP)

Catalyst Fund for Relief and Response

Annual Program Statement (APS)

Round 1 Questions and Answers – April 15, 2022

This document provides information on a variety of topics which potential grant applicants should be aware of. These Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ) arose during the April 8, 2022 solicitation workshop and written requests for clarification which were submitted via email by the April 12, 2022 deadline. These consolidated questions and answers will be posted on the Catalyst Fund page on Daleel Madani <https://daleel-madani.org/civil-society-directory/fhi-360/calls/annual-program-statement-catalyst-fund-relief-and-response-cfr>. Phone calls to LEB-CAAP staff and visits to the LEB-CAAP office are not permitted and may be regarded as grounds for disqualification.

Answers to frequently asked questions are organized by major topic as follows:

- A. **Marginalized Groups**
- B. **Eligibility - budget ceiling**
- C. **Eligibility – registration**
- D. **Eligible items/scope**
- E. **General - Process/Application**

A. Marginalized Groups

1) Can we install lifts for people with disabilities to access our digital lab and therefore acquire a potential of income generation working remotely as they will be trained on updated digital courses that are highly needed in the market?

Construction works are not allowed, however general physical adaptations to improve accessibility for people with disabilities (PWD), can be covered by this fund.

2) Could we apply to support a relief program our residents with special needs work on?

Yes. This fund covers relief and response activities and encourages supporting and serving people with disabilities and special needs.

3) Can we consider elderly people with disabilities...are eligible?

The fund does not target a specific age range of beneficiaries.

4) If we work with children between 5 and 15 does that mean we are NOT eligible?

The fund does not target a specific age range of beneficiaries.

B. Eligibility - budget ceiling

5) If the org's annual budget is more than \$750,000 USD does that mean we're not eligible?

The Catalyst Fund only supports organizations that operate with an annual budget of less than USD 750,000. Submission of the organization's 2021 annual report to the Ministry of Finance is part of the application package and will be used to determine eligibility.

6) Annual budget \$1M, as we have several national programs, can we apply (region 6 would be the focus)

The Catalyst Fund only supports organizations that operate with an annual budget of less than USD 750,000. Submission of the organization's 2021 annual report to the Ministry of Finance is part of the application package and will be used to determine eligibility. 7) Are there restrictions for Annual budget for organizations to apply?

The Catalyst Fund only supports organizations that operate with an annual budget of less than USD 750,000. Submission of the organization's 2021 annual report to the Ministry of Finance is part of the application package and will be used to determine eligibility.

8) Org's budget is more than \$750K but would like to support smaller collectives and groups, but they can't apply without the support of a formal org. Can they apply?

The Catalyst Fund encourages lead applicants to partner with others, however, the lead organization must still meet the eligibility criteria of operating with an annual budget of less than USD 750,000.9) Org's budget was over \$2M due to Blast (from donations) but our organization registered in May 2020 and budget this year is much less. Still eligible?

The Catalyst Fund only supports organizations that operate with an annual budget of less than USD 750,000. Submission of the organization's 2021 annual report to the Ministry of Finance is part of the application package and will be used to determine eligibility. Organizations must have at least 2 years of operation at the time of application (see APS for rolling application deadline dates through January 2023).

C. Eligibility – registration

10) Is a newly registered NGO with no yearly financial report yet eligible?

To be eligible to apply for the CFRR grant, an organization must be registered and working in relief and response for at least 2 years of operation. New registered and/or informal groups are encouraged to apply with a lead applicant who meets the eligibility criteria.

11) Can you give example of informal not registered group?

Informal groups refer to the community initiatives and groups that were launched in the past few years and that had a considerable impact at the community level during the compounded crises in terms of relief and response, but have not registered as formal entities either due to lack of funds, capacity and/or structure.

12) We are a social enterprise reg. as a SARL, we work with informal production units. Can we help them benefit from solar power systems, please?

If the organization conducts relief and response activities for more than 2 years and complies with all the remaining eligibility criteria, it can apply to the Catalyst Fund. A reminder that the relief and response sector does not cover livelihood activities as per the definition in this annual program statement. Regarding procurement of solar equipment, please also see Compliance with Prohibition on the Use of Forced Labor in the Performance of USAID Awards [Xinjiang Supply Chain Business Advisory - United States Department of State](#) for additional requirements and restrictions.

13) If we have our 2 years of registration in June 2022, can we apply?

Organizations must have at least 2 years of operation at the time of application (see APS for rolling application deadline dates through January 2023).

14) Do the beneficiaries of our organization have to be just Lebanese?

The CFRR does not distinguish between Lebanese and non-Lebanese beneficiaries.

15) Is there a specific age group to our beneficiaries?

No.

16) Do our staff and volunteers have to be Lebanese only? Or can there be different nationalities of staff included in the budget?

Staff must have the legal right to work in Lebanon.

17) Are there consolation awards to the applicants after the project ends?

No.

18) Is having a bank account for the applying NGO mandatory?

As outlined in the APS, applicants must have the financial and administrative systems in place to adequately account for grant funds. If selected, LEB-CAAP will work with its grantees to facilitate the opening of a fresh dollar account for the LEB-CAAP grant at Blom Bank.

D. Eligible items/scope

19) What exchange rate USD-LBP is considered?

The grant agreement will be in USD, and payments to grantees will be in USD. LEB-CAAP strongly prefers that payments to vendors are made in USD, whenever possible. For any payments made to vendors in LBP, the grantee must withdraw funds from its bank account at the Sayrafa rate at that time (www.sayrafa.org). Quotes from vendors should be in USD. Any quotes in LBP should include the exchange rate used by the vendor and must be signed and stamped by the vendor.

20) Our project is about contributing to food security through bread production. Would the grant cover raw materials like wheat for example to make the bread?

The CFRR does not cover the cost of raw materials.

21) The project aims to provide for free the bread for needy households facing severe economic conditions. Would it be possible for us to sell the bread at 50% less than the market price (not for profit purpose) for sustainability issues of the project to cover staff and wheat expenses after the grant is over?

The CFRR does not cover the cost of raw material like wheat. Salaries are allowable up to 25% of the total project budget but only for those staff directly contributing to specific relief and response activities covered under this grant.

22) Eligibility page 5: Please provide more explanation about: " The fund will not cover new services/programs/solutions for which resources are needed to launch."

The CFRR covers the cost of equipment, capacity building, operating expenses, etc. in order to sustain and improve existing services that are ongoing. It does not cover the cost related to new services that are not taking place at the time of the application and that the organization is planning to launch in the future.

23) Would a project aiming to ensure food security and creating sustained jobs for local people, including women and youth, be eligible?

'Ensuring food security' falls under the sector of relief and response based on the definition provided in the annual program statement. However, the Catalyst Fund does not cover employment generation and livelihoods activities.

24) if implementing a fast project of a private kitchen which has necessary equipment, can we benefit from raw material such as Gas for the oven, preservatives, greens ...etc?

The fund can cover costs needed to support relief and response operations like gas, fuel, etc. However, it does not cover the cost of raw material like food items that would be distributed directly to beneficiaries.

25) Does the grant cover office server systems & software programs to carry out work efficiently? Our database relies on excel, and we are in need of technological awareness among team members, as well as the introduction of a more efficient system for data collection and monitoring.

Yes, the activities mentioned in the question above fall under 'Capacity Building' and can be included in the budget.

26) Does the grant support humanitarian aid missions? Our organization has been distributing food parcels almost since its inception in 2014 through the NGOs humanitarian department. We have been targeting refugees, Lebanese citizens within and outside Beirut, marginalized communities and minorities. Our annual budget for food parcels is up to \$60,000, yielding to 2,400 families fed.

Yes. CFRR supports relief and response activities including humanitarian aid, provided your organization meets the eligibility criteria stated in the APS (page 5).

27) Would this program guide our organization through the policies and procedures of procurement, salary logistics & project management?

The LEB-CAAP program will support and guide shortlisted organizations through the procurement procedures related to their project supported by the CFRR. However, if the organization needs support at the level of project management, procurement, and logistics in general, to sustain and improve its relief and response activities, the costs related to this technical assistance (either consultancy services, software programs, training of staff) can be included in the budget as they fall under capacity building and institutional strengthening.

28) We work in the field of relief and providing subsistence to the families in need. Our electrical contributions and fuel consumption require a large amount of money from our income. We also need bags and cardboard because we work in the field of food packaging for families in need during the current crisis in Lebanon and the requirements of the Minya region in northern Lebanon, and its suburbs since it is also an area where displaced Syrians live. We also have established recreational activities for the disabled and autistic children to integrate them into society. And we conduct training courses for volunteers on advocacy. Can we apply if we need solar energy for the organization's center?

If the organization complies with all the eligibility criteria stated in the APS (page 5) the cost related to the installation of renewable energy sources may be covered by this fund. Regarding procurement of solar equipment, please also see Compliance with Prohibition on the Use of Forced Labor in the Performance of USAID Awards [Xinjiang Supply Chain Business Advisory - United States Department of State](#) for additional requirements and restrictions.

29) Can an old org (long inactive due to lack of funds) apply for restructuring purposes?

As stated in the APS, the Catalyst Fund grants aim to improve the ability of civil society actors to continue and/or improve their existing services related to relief and response that respond to the increased needs and challenges facing communities.

30) Can we apply solely to improve our internal structure and strategy consolidating the M&E software? And what is expected impact?

Institutional strengthening can be covered by the fund as long as the organization meets all the eligibility criteria on page 5 of the APS, and the proposed grant activity meets the aims explained in the APS Section II: Overview of the Catalyst Fund for Relief and Response.

31) Can we file a restructuring of our org and have a proper policies and procedures for the core of the NGO?

Institutional strengthening and technical assistance can be covered by the fund as long as the organization meets all the eligibility criteria on page 5 of the APS, and the proposed grant activity meets the aims explained in the APS Section II: Overview of the Catalyst Fund for Relief and Response.

32) Could we apply for different things? Like solar + capacity building + case management system?

Yes, you can apply and include different line items in the budget. It is important to know that the line item of Capacity Building must make up at least 10% of the total budget.

33) Can you please repeat which salaries are covered and which are not?

Only salaries of staff needed to deliver services or programming directly related to the relief and response operations in the CFRR proposed project are allowed. The grantee should demonstrate how the proposed salary directly contributes to maintaining or expanding current service delivery and should demonstrate the sustainability plans of the supported activity. For example, if your organization is providing psycho-social support services under the CFRR grant, then up to 25% of the budget can be allocated to the social workers providing this service.

34) Does the project cover salaries of teachers?

Access to education during or post crisis/disasters is considered relief and response. If the activity in your proposed project is about access to education in this specific context, the project is eligible. Please note that the fund is supporting only organizations registered as nonprofit institutions.

35) Does the program cover alternative energy of institutions?

Yes, the fund can cover renewable energy sources if they contribute to maintaining and improving the delivery of relief and response services. Regarding procurement of solar equipment, please also see Compliance with Prohibition on the Use of Forced Labor in the Performance of USAID Awards [Xinjiang Supply Chain Business Advisory - United States Department of State](#) for additional requirements and restrictions.

36) Does the fund include training and consultations to support women working in the commercial, industrial, and agricultural fields?

The fund does not cover livelihood activities.

37) Does the fund cover the salaries of employees (doctors) for a mobile clinic that serves people with special needs and people with bad economic abilities?

Only salaries of staff needed to deliver services or programming directly related to the relief and response operations in the CFRR proposed project are allowed. The grantee should demonstrate how the proposed salary directly contributes to maintaining or expanding current service delivery and should demonstrate the sustainability plans of the supported activity. For example, if your organization is providing psycho-social

support services under the CFRR grant, then up to 25% of the budget can be allocated to the social workers providing this service.

38) Please provide more information about the staff employment contracts, how old must be the contracts? will you be asking for employees' contracts from 3 months, 6 months 1 year or more?

Payslips and employee contracts (and details) will be requested and discussed during the due diligence stage if shortlisted.

39) Does the Fund cover training courses and economic empowerment for women working in the commercial, industrial and agricultural fields?

The fund does not cover livelihood activities.

40) Does the CFRR cover anti-corruption issues?

The CFRR supports relief and response activities.

41) Can I apply this project to a school, high school, or municipal center such to equip them with solar power?

The CFRR only supports relief and response activities. Applicant organizations must meet the eligibility criteria stated on page 5 of the APS.

42) Can the organization obtain equipment and staff salaries from the grant?

Equipment and relevant salaries (not to exceed 25% of total budget) needed to facilitate the organization's work directly related to relief and response delivered under this project can be added. Please refer to the annual program statement to know what items are allowable vs. unallowable.

43) What percentage of salaries can be included in the budget?

Salaries cannot exceed 25% of the total budget submitted to the CFRR.

44) If the project budget exceeds \$24,000, can the Catalyst fund cover the \$24,000 and the organization covers the rest?

Yes, LEB-CAAP will cover up to USD 24,000 of eligible costs.

45) What is the maximum cost ceiling for equipment that we can put in budget?

There is no maximum amount for equipment as long as the total budget does not exceed USD 24,000 and dedicates 10% of total budget to institutional strengthening. Equipment (in excess of USD 5,000/unit) must be pre-approved by USAID.

46) How much support does LEB-CAAP give local scouting associations? As activities or support for the poorest people?

Please refer to page 5 of the APS for Eligibility Criteria.

47) What type of equipment can be covered?

Please refer to page 3 in the APS under 'illustrative Interventions' for examples of allowable and unallowable costs. The organization may suggest other equipment they might need to facilitate their work in relief and response intervention to be covered through the Catalyst Fund grant.

48) Are the salaries of educational service providers eligible?

Access to education during or post crisis/disasters is considered relief and response. If the activity in your proposed project is about access to education in this specific context, the project is eligible. Please note that the fund is supporting only organizations registered as nonprofit institutions.

49) Can we apply to support an operating program in which the organization distributes grain rations and sweaters made by the organization's beneficiaries with disabilities?

Relief and response services includes access to basic needs such as food and clothing.

50) In the absence of staff in the organization, is it considered a reason why the application might not been approved?

The fund can support registered organizations even if they are volunteer-based.

E. General - Process/Application

51) When applicants will be notified as shortlisted?

Applicants will be notified approximately 15 business days after the round's deadline, i.e. June 15 for the round 1 deadline of May 31st.

52) Selected projects in round 1 will immediately start to be implemented after completing requirements and agreement on budget with LEB-CAAP?

Round 1 grants will begin upon USAID approval and FHI 360 grant signature, including grantee orientation. The timeline for processing a grant is dependent on the responsiveness of shortlisted organizations in finalizing technical proposals and budgets and in submitting supporting documentation as required.

53) What is the minimum period of the project's implementation?

There is no minimum period for implementation as long as the activities and the suggested timeframe for completing them are reasonable. The anticipated grant period of performance is 12 months.

54) What is the timeline for future rounds - after May?

Please refer to the 'Application submission deadlines' section on the cover page and page 4 of the APS.

55) Can an NGO registered in 2017 with few previous activities still apply? No previous activities in direct relief?

As stated in the APS, the Catalyst Fund grants aim to improve the ability of civil society actors to continue and/or improve their existing services related to relief and response that respond to the increased needs and challenges facing communities.

56) If an org is awarded a grant in May does this mean it cannot apply again in July?

Successful grant recipients are not eligible to apply for multiple grants under the CFRR APS. However, they can apply to other award opportunities under the LEB-CAAP program.

57) If we have more than one project, can we apply for all of them, each in a separate application?

Only one application per organization is allowed. Unsuccessful applicants may reapply in subsequent rounds. Successful grant recipients are not eligible to apply for multiple grants under the CFRR APS. However, they can apply to other award opportunities under the LEB-CAAP program.⁵⁸⁾ About condition applying to organizations eligible to apply are either/or (i.e., does the organization have to respond to all condition at once, or is it that responding at least to one of the conditions enough)?

Organizations must respond to all the eligibility criteria included in the APS

59) What if we don't have all the docs needed for Excel related to purchases.

As outlined in Attachment II. Catalyst Fund APS Budget Template and Attachment III. Sample Vendor Selection Matrix, applicants must provide the following: "Three quotes and a selection matrix (Attachment III) must be submitted for each cost that exceeds 1,000 USD/unit. Applications that do not include the required quotes and selection matrix will not be considered."

60) Do we have to present the 3 offers for purchases over \$1000 with the app or at a later stage?

As outlined in Attachment II. Catalyst Fund APS Budget Template and Attachment III. Sample Vendor Selection Matrix, applicants must provide the following: "Three quotes and a selection matrix (Attachment III) must be submitted for each cost that exceeds 1,000 USD/unit. Applications that do not include the required quotes and selection matrix will not be considered."

61) We decide what grant we are seeking or your committee will select as per what they see applicable for our proposal?

LEB-CAAP will decide on the type of grant to be used during the pre-award phase, after consultations with the applicant and based on the administrative and financial capacity of the applicant as well as the type of budget items in their proposal.62) Should the submitted project be an existing one or a new project?

The CFRR is meant to support the ability of CSOs working in relief and response to maintain, improve and/or expand their solutions to new target groups or communities. It will support existing solutions that are already underway or for which resources have been secured. The fund is not meant to cover the direct cost of items needed for service delivery (such as food items) but cost of equipment and technical assistance needed to maintain and expand ongoing relief operations. The fund will not cover new services/programs/solutions for which resources are needed to launch.

63) If the Association received a donation in 2021, can it submit a new proposal this year?

Yes, the CFRR grant is awarded if the proposed project complies with the fund criteria and regardless of other donations received by other donors.

64) If the organization in the area of origin is inactive, can the branch work on the program at the time that the branch is inactive?

Branches are not eligible to apply and organizations should be headquartered in the geographic zone from which they apply and will implement their project.

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