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EDU-SYRIA Bottleneck Alleviation Programme – Nuffic Call for Proposals

Context

As a result of the prolonged Syrian war, more than half a million people fled to Jordan, with an estimated 67 per cent residing outside refugee camps. According to UNHCR, a total of 669,497 Syrian refugees are currently (July 2021) registered in Jordan, with the highest percentage of people - around 29 per cent - living in the capital Amman. These registered numbers are far below the Jordanian 2015 Census estimate of a total of 1.27 million Syrian refugees.

The Government of Jordan, in partnership with the international community, committed to improving the living conditions, livelihoods, prospects and resilience of both Syrian refugees and Jordanian host communities after the Syrian crises through the Jordan Compact (2016).

While considerable progress has been made since the Jordan Compact, accessing higher education and the labour market for Syrian refugees and underprivileged Jordanians continue to be a challenge. Financial barriers, English language, labour market needed skills, entrepreneurship and home-based business creation, are among the most prominent obstacles, especially with the current COVID-19 pandemic.

The European Union's Agenda sets to tackle many of today's challenges and proposes real solutions that pave the way for an inclusive, green and digital transition to cater for COVID-19 recovery.

In that response, the EDU-SYRIA programme call for proposal funded by the European Union is designed to alleviate "bottlenecks" in accessing and completing higher education as well as accessing the labour market for the most vulnerable, underprivileged Jordanians and Syrian refugees in Jordan.

EDU-SYRIA Project

The EDU-SYRIA project is a series of EU-funded programmes via the EU Regional Trust Fund (EUTF) in response to the Syrian crisis, directed and managed by the German Jordanian University in Jordan. The project provides higher education and training scholarships to Syrian refugees and underprivileged Jordanian youth to improve their livelihood by being self-sufficient.

The current EDU-SYRIA III phase has been awarding 2,245 scholarships among other capacity building opportunities through eight Actions/Components that are implemented by a consortium of 9 national and international, academic and NGO partners.



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Among the consortium partners is NUFFIC, a Dutch organisation for the internationalisation of education. NUFFIC's global development policy is based on strengthening competencies and skills of both individuals and organisations through education across sectors. Nuffic is managing the Bottleneck Alleviation Programme (BAP) and thus the current call for proposals.

Bottleneck Alleviation Programme-BAP

The Bottleneck Alleviation Programme (BAP) is one of eight Actions of EDU-SYRIA III. The main objective of BAP is to alleviate three critical transition points (i) transition from high school to higher education degree programmes, (ii) successfully completing and graduating from higher education degree programmes, and finally (iii) transition from higher education to the labour market.

The current **Call for Proposal (CFP)** is a component of BAP, and therefore aims at:

1. Increasing access to higher education degree programmes
2. Completion of higher education degree programmes, and
3. Increasing access to the local labour market

The primary (direct) beneficiaries are Syrian refugees and underprivileged Jordanian youth.

* Underprivileged Jordanians are defined as those who are beneficiaries of one of the following organisation s: (i)National Aid Fund, (ii)Zakat Fund, (iii)Al-Aman Fund, & (vi)Takiyit Aum Ali.

* Youth indicate that the beneficiary age must be between 18 and 28 years.

Thematic Areas of the proposal

Following extensive research review, stakeholder meetings and roundtable sessions, NUFFIC was able to identify major barriers/challenges in accessing higher education and/or completion - successfully with a degree from an accredited study programme - and accessing the local labour market for both Syrian refugees and underprivileged Jordanians (taking into account the current COVID-19 pandemic related economic situation). The following table summarises some of the barriers and possible interventions.



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Bottleneck	Challenge/Barrier	Mitigating & Intervention Opportunity
Higher Education & Completion	<p>Language Skills: Some students graduate from secondary schools lacking the needed basic English skills to apply for and complete higher education degree and TVET (Training, Vocational Education, & Training).</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Distance-based career guidance, pre-academic language programmes, soft and technical skill gap training programmes, mentorship programmes. As for lowering dropout rates, psychosocial support and social cohesion supports for students and their families.
	<p>Career & Educational Counselling: Students have little information on current market needs (specifically on choices they need to make regarding higher education).</p>	
	<p>Financial Issues: Financial burdens in applying for and completing TVET & higher education degree programmes. Other costs like laptops and transportation are also a burden.</p>	
Labour Market	<p>Language, Soft, Interpersonal & Communication Skills: Employers have noticed that graduates and/or Syrian refugees looking for employment lack English language, soft, interpersonal, and communication skills needed to secure a job.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Short courses, trainings, entrepreneurship incubating and coaching programmes, internships and mentorship programmes, accredited TVET with internship opportunities, recent market research and policy dialogue revolved around post COVID 19 market opportunities. Tap into; green growth job market, ICT, health, art, textile, amongst other sectors, wherever Syrian refugees can legally be employed.
	<p>Recent Data, Market Research, & Policy Dialogue: There is a serious gap between higher education programmes and the labour market, where there is little policy dialogue and thin data about current market needs, if any, especially under the current COVID-19 circumstance</p>	
	<p>Employment Regulation & Policy for Syrian Refugees: Employment regulations for Syrian refugees in Jordan are stringent. Syrian refugees are banned from working in many sectors.</p>	
	<p>Home-Based Business Regulations & Fees: Home-based businesses in Jordan also lack access to finance and loans, and still feel that registration and licensing fees are high even after the 2017 regulation amendment.</p>	
	<p>Internship Opportunities: Practical experience is missing in making a successful transition from graduation to entering the labour market.</p>	
	<p>TVET not Enough for Employment: Many employers still only accept a minimum of bachelor's degree for employment.</p>	
	<p>Low Women Participation: Low participation of women in the labour market for several reasons, that include childcare and transportation.</p>	



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This CFP therefore solicits proposals that target the following:

1) Capacity development projects in the fast growing sectors found below.

- a. ***Green Growth:*** Green Growth contributes to creating job opportunities that preserve or restore the environment, be they in traditional sectors such as manufacturing and construction, or in new, emerging green sectors such as renewable energy and energy efficiency. They also include water, sanitation, waste management, supporting climate change mitigation and adaptation, and agriculture.

Short courses and skill development programmes aiming at supporting beneficiaries gain new skills to increase access to employment opportunities in this sector are highly encouraged. **Training projects focusing on new tools and skills gained in smart agriculture, energy efficiency, renewable energy (maintenance, operation and storage), and electrical vehicle maintenance are an example.**

- b. ***Information and Communication Technologies:*** Digital economy (other terms are internet economy, new economy, or web economy) is integrated in a wide array of people's lives such as the healthcare, education, banking, entertainment and knowledge processing sector. Such e-economy is growing exponentially under the COVID-19 pandemic. Therefore, it is a job-creating machine integrated in new sectors, industries, and markets. Cybersecurity, information security, data storage, and big data analyses are some of the highly demanded occupations, locally and internationally.

Short courses and skill development programmes aiming at supporting beneficiaries gain new skills to increase access to employment opportunities in this sector are highly encouraged. **Training projects focusing on new tools and skills gained in frontend and backend development, programming languages (that include Python, react and flutter), digital marketing, and software testing life-cycles are an example.**

- c. ***Other fast-growing occupations:*** Any other sector that improves the likelihood to enter the job market, especially under COVID-19 pandemic economic challenging situations. Health, textile, and art are just examples on possible targeted sectors.

2) Capacity development projects targeting English language, communication and soft skills.

English language courses, communication, and soft skill performance development is an example. Focus should be placed on any skill development needed to access higher education or the labour market in Jordan.



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Submitting a project which includes the following cross-cutting topics are highly recommended and encouraged:

- Providing internship opportunities which develop professional aptitude, strengthen personal character, and provide a greater door to employment opportunities.
- Training beneficiaries on entrepreneurial skills and practical mentorship which can encourage potential home-based businesses and/or start-ups
- Career and educational counselling that provides scholarship or employment options and how to pursue them.
- Providing psycho-social support and enhancing social cohesion and harmony

General Information about the Call

- **This Cfp opens on September 15th, 2021 and closes on November 15th, 2021.**
- All application annexes must be uploaded into the **NUFFIC Delta Registration System** no later than **23:00 hours (Jordan time-GMT+2) on November 15th, 2021.** The registration system will not allow to submit any application passing the former time, 23:00. You can apply through the found below.
- Final selection of awardee proposals is decided and announced no later than **February 2022.**
- Projects should aim to **start in April/May 2022.**
- A combined total of max. **€420,000** will be **granted to** approximately **7 proposed projects.**
- A requesting organisation may request funds for their proposed project ranging between **€10,000 to €60,000.**
- The complete duration of the project should not be shorter **than 9 months and no longer than 12 months.**
- Applying organisations must upload **4 mandatory annexes** in Adobe Acrobat format (.pdf) into the Delta Registration System:
 - **Annex-1** (The Application Form),
 - **Annex-2** (Budget),
 - **Annex-3** (Organisational Capacity Assessment-OCA), and
 - **Annex-4** (Jordanian registration certificate)
- Annex-5 can be used for any supplemental document the requesting organisation might entail to strengthen its application (not mandatory).



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- An **information (Q&A) virtual session** will be organised on **Monday, October 11th, 2021**, dedicated to answer any inquiries about the CfP from proposed organisations. If you wish to join this session, please use the [registration form](#). An email will be sent to those who registered with all needed link(s) to access the virtual meeting. The meeting will be recorded and uploaded on the EDU-SYRIA website for reference.
- Questions can be sent by email to Nuffic.info@edu-syria.eu but no later than **November 1st, 2021**. All questions and answers not covered in the Q&A session will be posted online for reference.
- Applying organisations may submit several proposals. It is not allowed to submit proposals from the same organisation with similar content.
- Applying organisations who have been granted an EDU-SYRIA grant previously are not eligible to apply.
- **EDU-SYRIA consortium partners are not eligible to apply** as EU regulations prohibit them to do so who are: QRTA, DAAD, Mutah University, JUST, Zarqa University, LTUC, GJU and Yarmouk University .
- Awarded projects will receive the first instalment during 2022, upon which projects shall be launched as soon as a contract is signed with the awardee organisation.
- Awardee organisation will receive 40% of the grant at the launching time of the project and 40% halfway. The second payment amount will be set as the amount calculated on the basis 40% of the project budget amount subtracted the unused balance of the 1st payment). The final payment of 20% of the awardee grant will be granted after the submission – and approval - of the final report. If the budget is not 100% depleted at project end, the final payment will logically not amount to payment of 100% of the originally proposed budget.

General Eligibility Criteria

- Proposals must be submitted by any organisation/institution registered and operating in Jordan for over 2 years.
- Likewise, any government entity that proves its complete “financial” independency as well as full authority over the proposed project is eligible to apply for this grant.
- Proposed project should be implemented within the borders of Jordan. Those implemented outside the skirt of the capital Amman, especially with a large Syrian refugee minority are highly encouraged to apply.
- Any proposed project must target Syrian Refugees (70% of the total beneficiaries) underprivileged Jordanians (30% of the total beneficiaries).



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Target Beneficiaries of the Proposed Projects

Two types of beneficiaries are only eligible to be targeted by the proposed projects

- 1) Underprivileged Jordanians: defined as those who are beneficiaries of one of the following organisations: (i) National Aid Fund (صندوق المعونة الوطنية), (ii) Al Aman funds (صندوق الامان), (iii) Takiyat Um Ali Funds (تكية أم علي), & (vi) al Zakat Fund (صندوق الزكاة), of 28 years old and younger.
- 2) Syrian refugees: have to hold a valid UNHCR Asylum Seeker Certificate (حاملًا لبطاقة اللجوء من) (المفوضية السامية للأمم المتحدة ممغطة- Security Card for Syrian-MOI (Ministry of Interior card (بطاقة امنية), of 28 years old and younger.

Consortia

Applying organisations may apply solely or in collaboration with other organisations, by forming a consortium. However, only the lead organisation shall submit the application along with the rest required annexes and documents.

The following rules are applicable for consortia:

- The leading organisation bears full responsibility for the grant, its obligations, and all carried out project activities. NUFFIC will sign an agreement only with the lead organisation.
- The lead organisation shall ensure that all the rules and regulations as stated in this document and contract will also be binding for the sub-contractors and consortium partners.

Selection criteria

The projects must be demand-driven, tailored to the needs of the target groups and reach as many Syrian refugees and underprivileged Jordanian youth as possible, be it face-to-face or through blended activities. Consequently, proposed projects can be considered for selection if it meets the following general criteria:

- Reach/benefit as many people from the target groups as possible.
- Demonstrate a clear and local demand by referring to national development strategies and local initiatives plans.
- Actively promote the achievement of gender equality in project implementation as well as in the contents and delivery of project activities.
- Has a clear and concrete effect also after project completion (sustainability).
- Most importantly addresses the goals of the call found above.
- Face-to-face training courses will need to follow Jordanian Covid-19 safety regulations



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However, proposed projects will be assessed on a set of criteria set out in the knockout and evaluation forms.

Cost Eligibility Criteria

Eligible costs are actual costs incurred by the requesting organisation(s), which meet all the following criteria:

- a) They are incurred during the implementation of the project as specified in project proposal.
In particular:
 - (i) Costs relating to services and works shall relate to activities performed during the implementation period. Costs relating to supplies shall relate to delivery and installation of items during the implementation period. Signature of a contract, placing of an order, or entering into any commitment for expenditure within the implementation period for future delivery of services, works or supplies after expiry of the implementation period do not meet this requirement. Cash transfers between the coordinator or other beneficiaries may not be considered as costs incurred.
 - (ii) Costs incurred should be paid before the submission of the final reports. They may be paid afterwards, provided they are listed in the final report together with the estimated date of payment.
 - (iii) An exception is made for costs relating to final reports, including expenditure verification, audit and final evaluation of the project, which may be incurred after the implementation period of the project.
- b) They are indicated in the estimated overall budget for the proposal.
- c) They are identifiable and verifiable; being recorded in the accounting records of the Requesting organisation (s) and determined according to the accounting standards cost accounting practices applicable to the Requesting organisation (s).
- d) They comply with the requirements of applicable tax and social legislation.
- e) They are reasonable, justifiable, and comply with the requirements of sound financial management, especially in terms of effectiveness (meeting the objectives of the proposed project) and efficiency (no wasted resources).
- f) They are tax exempt. EDUSYRIA has documentation stating that any eligible cost or invoice produced for the project is eligible for sales tax exemption.



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Eligible Direct Costs

The following direct costs of the Requesting Organisation(s) shall be eligible:

- a) The cost of staff assigned to the project, corresponding to actual gross salaries including social security charges and other remuneration-related costs (excluding performance based bonuses); salaries and costs shall not exceed those normally borne by the Requesting Organisation(s), unless it is justified by showing that it is essential to carry out the project.
- b) Travel and subsistence costs for staff and other persons taking part in the project, provided they do not exceed those normally borne by the Requesting Organisation(s) according to its rules and regulations. In addition, the rates published by the European Commission at the time of contract signature may never be exceeded – most recent one here https://ec.europa.eu/international-partnerships/system/files/per-diem-rates-20200201_en.pdf
- c) Purchase costs for equipment (new or used) and supplies specifically for the purposes of the project, provided that ownership is transferred at the end of the project to the final beneficiaries of the Project, at the latest when submitting the final report. If there are no final beneficiaries of the project to whom the equipment, and supplies can be transferred, the Requesting Organisation(s) may transfer these items to:
 1. local authorities
 2. local beneficiary(-ies)
 3. local affiliated entity(-ies)
 4. another project funded by the European Union
 5. or, exceptionally, retain ownership of these items. In such cases, the Requesting Organisation(s) shall submit a justified written request for authorisation to the Contracting Authority, with an inventory listing the items concerned and a proposal concerning their use, in due time and at the latest with the submission of the final report.

In no event may the end use of this equipment jeopardise the sustainability of the Project or result in a profit for the Requesting Organisation(s).

- d) Depreciation, rental or leasing costs of equipment (new or used) and supplies specially needed for the actions of the project,
- e) Rental costs related to project office, when the project office is foreseen, duly justified, and described in the description of the action and in the special conditions,
- f) Costs of consumables,
- g) Costs deriving directly from the requirements of the Contract (dissemination of information, evaluation specific to the project, audits, translation, reproduction, insurance, etc.) including financial service costs (in particular the cost of transfers and financial guarantees where required according to the Contract)



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