

# Frequently asked questions during the 2<sup>nd</sup> round of municipal applications.

(Document updated on 12 February 2015)

**Question:** Does “BALADI” program cover and support a project below 200.000\$?

**Answer:** Yes, USAID BALADI program’s support may reach up to USD 200,000 per application and should not exceed this value; projects that need a fund less than USD 200,000 are acceptable and we encourage municipalities to limit their expenses and avoid any unnecessary costs on the project.

**Question:** What is the language that must be followed to write a project proposal?

**Answer:** The request may be submitted in Arabic or English.

**Question:** Can we provide two projects within the municipality so you can choose the most appropriate?

**Answer:** “BALADI” program receives one project per municipality, therefore each project should be well reviewed based on the needs of the area/region and should meet the evaluation criteria mentioned in the RFMA document available on the website.

**Question:** You mentioned that we need to secure a certain approval if the project is under the Ministry of environment or water, etc... how do we provide such approval?

**Answer:** During the drafting phase of the project, you can get a written preliminary approval from the concerned authority (water and / or the Ministry of Energy and Water Authority by project type) to complete the procedures for the project was in no later choose to support it by my program.

**Question:** Does the project finance the initial staff pensions at its early stages until the proposed project can fund itself and cover its costs?

**Answer:** No, “BALADI” program does not cover the operating costs of the project like the employees’ salaries, etc., because this does not contribute in promoting the project’s sustainability. Thus, the costs must be covered by the returns on the project’s activities if found or by building partnerships or private sector involvement.

**Question:** What are the projects that can be proposed?

**Answer:** There is no specific list with the recommended projects because the type of projects can differ from one area to another and depending on the needs of the region. The presented project should have a well prepared study to meet the town and the host community’s requirements. It should also provide a public service to the community and / or increase the work and income opportunities. As for the unaccepted projects that cannot be funded or accepted by “BALADI” program, you can find check in the document of the call for municipal projects in page 7.

**Question:** Does the project stop if there is a price difference between the municipality and the market price?

**Answer:** No, but this will give the impression that the municipality did not prepare well for the project and by this it will bear extra costs that are not covered by the program. It is worth mentioning that within the cost assessment phase of the project, a study will be made to compare the offered prices vis a vis the realistic market price and in case differences were found, the realistic prices will be considered.

**Question:** Where can we find the previous projects?

**Answer:** You can view them via “BALADI” website, under “Projects” section: [www.baladi-lebanon.org](http://www.baladi-lebanon.org)

**Question:** Why did you exclude artesian wells projects?

**Answer:** “BALADI” program has excluded artesian wells projects because it requires the extended environmental studies and procedures; however the fund can support/cover the equipment if the well/hole is already carved and licensed.

**Question:** You spoke during the session about profits, so can the indirect profits be in a form of profit moral, human?

**Answer:** For financial profits resulting from the project, there has to be a certain income to cover the operational costs on the long run or else the project won't be sustainable and it will cost the municipality financial burdens instead of finding solutions to their initial problems.

**Question:** Does the municipality's contribution cover the total value of the project or the works? And can it go beyond the 20%?

**Answer:** The 20% is the contribution of the local community from the project's value and it can be financial or in kind as part of the works, equipment, or land, etc..., and it can exceed 20%.

**Question:** Is it possible for a group of municipalities' to present a joint project?

**Answer:** Of course, and you should determine the municipality requesting the application and mention the municipalities included.

**Question:** If a small municipality is requesting to secure equipment and mechanics, does it have a chance?

**Answer:** There is no distinction between small or large municipalities but it is for the municipality to show its inability to implement its own projects and how the equipment and other required items are within a development project that meets the urgent needs of the Lebanese host community and that it serves a large number of beneficiaries.

**Question:** Is the electric generator considered projects eligible for funding?

**Answer:** an electric generator is not included in the “excluded” projects list, but it must be within a development project that meets the standard technical and environmental evaluation criteria of “BALADI” program.

**Question:** What is the deadline for the projects submission?

**Answer:** The deadline for submitting the projects is March 5, 2015 at 3pm.

**Question:** Is one of the basic conditions of the project to be productive?

**Answer:** It is not necessary to be productive, but it must be a sustainable project.

**Question:** Are the evaluation criteria the same in all of Lebanon?

**Answer:** Yes, the criteria are the same and they apply to all areas of Lebanon.

**Question:** Can the municipality’s contribution exceed the 20%?

**Answer:** The local community can contribute by not less than 20% (in cash or in kind) of the total cost of the project. However, that contribution can exceed 20%, and this will reflect positively on the municipality.

**Question:** Does one project only win in every region?

**Answer:** It is not necessary. It is possible to have more than one project per region, however the evaluation and final selection of projects depend on the evaluation criteria listed from page 10 to page 12 in the RFMA document.

**Question:** What are the criteria that determined the selection of the previous projects?

**Answer:** We have updated the criteria for this session and you can check them in the RFMA2 document; the presented application will be evaluated according to these new criteria.

**Question:** Can you finance greenhouses or plastic houses?

**Answer:** Agricultural projects are not excluded, however “BALADI” program cannot fund materials and chemical fertilizers or any activities or equipment that encourage their usage.

**Question:** You mentioned about the Syrian refugees during the session; does involving them in the proposal a key element for the project’s success?

**Answer:** It is not necessary to involve them as an essential element, but you need to take into consideration the needs and problems affecting the host community/Lebanese society.

**Question:** Can we submit the draft if the municipality’s work is pending?

**Answer:** Yes, this is possible through a neighboring municipality or through the Union of Municipalities.

**Question:** If a project is valued at \$200,000, should the total value be mentioned in the attached budget table?

**Answer:** It must reflect the total value of the project in the proposed budget table by “BALADI” Program available on the website (Appendix C). The applicant must mention the required value from “BALADI” program in addition to his contribution that should not be less than 20%.

**Question:** Can we submit a project that part of it was implemented in the past?

**Answer:** You can submit a project that is built on a previous experience or successful encounter but “BALADI” program does not support recurring projects or cover the costs incurred in the past.

**Question:** If the applicant is a Union of Municipalities and several municipalities will benefit from his project, does the fund value increase as per the number of municipalities involved?

**Answer:** No, the ceiling value of the fund is 200,000\$ per project, regardless of the number of municipalities allied. However, the municipalities that are members of the Union as possible to provide another project is sponsored by the Union if it wants to.

**Question:** Can a project proposal include the purchase of surveillance cameras for the area?

**Answer:** No, “BALADI” project cannot cover the purchase of this type of equipment.

**Question:** Does “BALADI” program support and finance the purchase of equipment?

**Answer:** It can support the purchase of equipment as long as they are part of a project needed by the community and meets the evaluation criteria.

**Question:** Is it possible to implement a project in a property leased to the municipality?

**Answer:** It is better that the property is owned by the municipality or the village; In case this is not applicable, the project can be implemented on a property leased to the Municipality with a long term investment contract (Eg: 15 years or more or depending on the nature of the project). This is required to ensure the sustainability of the project, as we strive to avoid turning it into a project that does not offer services to the community as a whole or into a building or facility that benefit only the property owner in person).

**Question:** How can we communicate by telephone with "BALADI" program in order to clarify some information?

**Answer:** The office addresses and phone numbers are listed on the web page of “BALADI” program – contact us section <http://www.baladi-lebanon.org/>  
For all your questions, please send them in writing by email to [baladi@caritas-baladi.org](mailto:baladi@caritas-baladi.org) and [baladi@rmf.org.lb](mailto:baladi@rmf.org.lb) – deadline for submitting the question is February 13, 2015)

**Question:** Does “BALADI” program fund a sewage project because our village desperately need it?

**Answer:** The sanitation projects are among excluded projects within “BALADI” program.

**Question:** Is establishing an olive press project under the municipal administration applicable among “BALADI” program?

**Answer:** This project does not fall within the framework of the excluded projects mentioned in Section IV (Arabic version) of the RFMA document. The project can be approved if it meets the technical criteria especially those related to the Lebanese environmental standards and the ones adopted by the US Agency for International Development.

**Question:** How long is the evaluation period of the projects submitted and when the results are out?

**Answer:** The evaluation period is about two months from the end date of submitting the applications; the results are expected to be out on June 2015.

**Question:** Will “BALADI” program finance agricultural projects or roads reclamation?

**Answer:** “BALADI” does not fund the development of new lands, but it is possible to suggest an agricultural project as long as it does not exceed the given fund of \$200,000 and it does not include the purchase or use of pesticides or chemicals or even organic fertilizers.

**Question:** Does “BALADI” program fund studies?

**Answer:** Both studies and researches are excluded from “BALADI” project.

**Question:** Is it possible for an agricultural cooperative in a village where there is no municipality to submit a project to “BALADI” program?

**Answer:** Of course as long as the cooperative is registered as per the Lebanese law and the presented project is signed by the Mayor and the “Mukhtar”.

**Question:** Due to the lack of associations in the village, is it possible for the municipality to partner on the project with an association from outside the town.

**Answer:** Yes it can and must specify the role of this association as a partner in the project.

**Question:** What is the scope of implementation for the project?

**Answer:** “BALADI” program covers all the Lebanese regions except the Beirut. The program is being implemented by Caritas Lebanon and Rene Moawad Foundation.

**Question:** Does "BALADI" program provide specialists to implement the project?

**Answer:** “BALADI” provides technical expertise, financial management, and control of the purchases during the implementation phase of the projects, but not during the design or operation phase.

**Question:** Does “BALADI” offer a one-time donation to the casa?

**Answer:** No, not necessarily, the final selection of projects (number and locations) usually results from:

- Projects selection as per the technical criteria published in page 10 to page 12 from the RFMA document 2015.
- The resources available at "BALADI" program from the 2<sup>nd</sup> round
- The right of the US Agency for International Development, to take into account the geographical criterion in the final stage (after listing the project on the list of potential projects for funding) in order to ensure the distribution of the projects across the Lebanon; and
- Final approval from the United States Agency for International Development (USAID).

**Question:** Can the municipality submit a project about HID lighting installation in the town streets working on solar energy? And can it buy a hauling or lifting device to enable the maintenance workers having periodical inspections on the network lighting to avoid high maintenance costs on the existing network? Or should it choose between one of two suggested cases?

**Answer:** The proposed project is not listed in the excluded projects and it could be proposed within “BALADI” program as long as it follows the technical criteria mentioned in the RFMA document (page 10 to page 12). Also the municipality must show its inability to implement their own projects and how the equipment required and the proposed project meets the priorities and needs of the Lebanese and host community and show the number of beneficiaries from this project.

With respect to the purchase of equipment and machinery, all actions relating to the procurement standards must follow the terms of the US Agency for International Development on civil equipment, source and place of manufacturing and the cars or vehicles must be American made and imported from America. For the vehicle or lifting device, the applicant should study the willingness to cover the cost of taxes, spare parts and maintenance of the vehicle in the future.

**Question:** Can the municipality submit a project that includes buying a pump water that works on diesel to serve 2 lakes and secure water from a larger lake to a smaller one? Knowing that the larger lake is only watered seasonally by rain and snow unlike the smaller lake which is fed by a spring water.

**Answer:** The proposed project is not listed in the excluded projects and could be proposed within “BALADI” program but a clear plan should be submitted on the management and operation of the project in addition to securing the needed licenses. It is also very important to ensure the sustainability of the project by following the evaluation criteria listed in the RFMA document. We encourage municipalities to consider the possibility of using solar energy to pump water if they are more useful than diesel fuel.