

**Ministry of Education & Higher Education**

**The Additional Financing of**

**Education to Work Transition Project**

**E2WTP-AF**

**Quality Improvement Fund-QIF**

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Concept Note - QIF 4th Cycle

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JANUARY 1, 2018  
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 decentralized practical training to students based on self-learning experience and on the enrichment of skills and competences. 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 4<sup>th</sup> 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 the QIF team will also 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. It is also possible that the QIF Board invites the applicant TEIs along with their partners to present their preliminary proposals; this will allow the board representatives to have better understanding of submitted proposals. 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 accepted 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 submitted full 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 grant agreements. 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 accredited by the Accreditation and Quality Assurance Commission "AQAC", the quality assurance units at the institutions must have an active role in the proposed projects.

## **Characteristics of the 4<sup>th</sup> Cycle**

1. This is an open call for proposals where all accredited TEIs in West Bank and Gaza are eligible to submit proposals targeting existing or new innovative<sup>1</sup> programs.
2. Each TEI – as a leading applicant - is eligible to submit up to two applications - from two different faculties - for this cycle.
3. Universities and Colleges will be given priority for their applications when targeting technical and vocational programs.
4. Partnership with the private sector is mandatory; TEIs must enter into clear, well-structured 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, tertiary education institutes, in this case, the grant ceiling might increase.
6. Partnerships with regional and international tertiary education institutes are encouraged.
7. TEIs are encouraged to introduce Research and Development or an / Audit component in their proposals, in addition to develop income generating programs.
8. Proposals must include empowering activities to develop capacities of supervisors and mentors in companies that provide internship for students and/or participate in graduation projects.
9. Proposals must include a concept for employment/self-employment promotion of graduates.
10. 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. Only applications that meet all the priorities as specified in the operational manual will be considered for evaluation.
11. Allocation for this cycle is +/-1,650,000 USD
12. The grant ceiling is as follows:

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<sup>1</sup> New program delivered in a new innovative teaching and learning approach with evidence to a labour market need.

- i. 200,000 USD for improving existing programs. Consideration of increasing the ceiling shall be made when partnering with other TEIs provided that this does not exceed 15% of the grant value.
  - ii. 25,000 USD for establishing new innovative programs, the total ceiling of this category shall not exceed 5% of the allocated grant for this cycle.
13. TEIs are expected to give a reasonable estimation of a project Budget with +/-10% margin. At the full proposal phase, proposals with exaggerated amount shall be rejected.
14. Evaluation of the preliminary proposals and full proposals shall be in accordance with appendices 2 & 3 of the QIF Operational Manual.
15. Projects Implementation period under this cycle shall be no 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.
16. 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.
17. Proposals can be submitted in Arabic or English Language. Once the TEI decides to submit their proposal in Arabic, the **executive summary** should be written in English in addition to Arabic.
18. 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](http://www.palpcu.ps)) and the MoEHE website [www.mohe.pna.ps](http://www.mohe.pna.ps).
19. Online submission of both the preliminary proposal and full proposals can be reached at [www.palpcu.ps](http://www.palpcu.ps). Applicants shall also ensure submitting a CD copy by hand to the PCU offices in Ramallah and Gaza.

### Additional Recommendations:

20. 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.
21. TEIs are encouraged to maintain continuous dialogue with AQAC to ensure proper review and re-accreditation of programs during and after QIF interventions.
22. Previous performance with QIF grants will have weight in the evaluation and awarding processes. The quality assurance unit shall submit a summary file documenting all previous experience with QIF stating the accumulated practices and lessons learned.
23. TEIs wishing to further improve previously supported programs and to develop and consolidate 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;

24. 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 the private sector entity to receive internship programs.
25. Emergence of interdisciplinary approaches to increase employment orientation are explicitly encouraged
26. It is understood that the signed MoU between TEIs and private sector partners 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:**

For further support and orientation, a series of workshops and online tutorials will be offered to representatives of TEIs following the call for proposals, accessible at [www.palpcu.ps](http://www.palpcu.ps)

### **Timeline for main activities**

<b>Call for preliminary proposals:</b>	Thursday, January 25, 2018
<b>Orientation workshop to explain concept note:</b>	Sunday & Monday, Feb 4 - 5, 2018
<b>Deadline for receiving Preliminary Proposals:</b>	Monday, February 26, 2018
<b>Review by the PCU team and distribute proposals to QIF Board members</b>	Thursday, March 1, 2018
<b>QIF Board decisions on Preliminary Proposals</b>	Monday, March 26, 2018
<b>Notifying institutions about the status of preliminary proposals and inviting the successful ones to proceed in submitting the full proposals.</b>	Thursday, March 29, 2018
<b>Deadline for receiving full proposals</b>	Tuesday, May 29, 2018
<b>QIF Board decision on full proposals</b>	Sunday, July 22, 2018

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**Notifying TEIs with the results and start  
the negotiations with the successful ones**

Wednesday, July 25, 2018

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**Signing Agreements**

Tuesday, September 25, 2018

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