Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)

1. Costs:

1.1 Budget Movement

Q: Will QNRF consider allowing the movement of the travel budget to either equipment or miscellaneous budget due to the current situation?

A: As per the MRFA, budget changes are allowed only within a given current Project Year. The RO may request Budget Changes to transfer a cumulative budget amount not exceeding 10% of a Project Year budget, from any Budget Category to any other Budget Category, except for the travel Budget Category, within the Annual Direct Cost portion of the budget.

Q: Can the travel budget for the current year be automatically moved to the next year?

A: As per the MRFA, Budget Changes are allowed only within a given current Project Year. The RO may request Budget Changes to transfer a cumulative budget amount not exceeding 10% of a Project Year budget, from any Budget Category to any other Budget Category, except for the travel Budget Category, within the Annual Direct Cost portion of the budget. At the end of each Project Year, the unused budget in any Budget Category can be transferred from one Project Year to the same Budget Category of the consecutive Project Year.

1.2 Prior Commitments

Q: If a Research Assistant (RA) is hired and recruited and the project is suspended, the RA may be at risk and he/she may not be able to be relocated back to their home outside of Qatar.

A: Suspension of the project will depend on the classification provided by the LPI and vetted by the RO. Once the project is suspended, the suspension terms applies, and any prior commitment shall be proved to QNRF via supporting documents. As for the RA, please refer to the institutional policy in this regard.

Q: Salary is considered as committed cost and as per MRFA, if the project is suspended, shall the institution still pay their salary till end of their contract but without renewing the contract?

A: As per MRFA, the commitments made prior to the effective date of suspension can be honored by the Awardee and reimbursed by QNRF insofar as they cannot be cancelled without prejudice. Such commitment shall require evidence and supporting documents from the institution to prove its validity. QNRF will request institutional policies for such commitment and may request the relevant agreements, as deemed necessary, prior to responding on case by case.

2. Delays in Research Progress

Q: What is QNRF’s mechanism to address the impact of COVID-19 on the research progress for the active projects?
A: An excel sheet with a list of Active projects per institution will be shared with the ROs. Each awarded LPI needs to mark his/her project as one of the below categories:

- **Not Affected**: be carried out as usual
- **Partially Affected**: submission of project management and mitigation plan through CR for QNRF assessment
- **Detrimentally Affected**: to be suspended

The collective sheet will be endorsed via email by the RO and submitted for QNRF assessment and final decision. QNRF is requesting the above to be completed by April 20 2020.

Based on the above the status of the projects will be modified accordingly.

**Q:** When should the LPI provide the mitigation plan for the COVID-19 impact on his/her project?

**A:** The mitigation plan should be submitted to the RO who will incorporate that in the excel sheet and submitted to QNRF after been vetted by the RO by April 19th, 2020.

**Q:** If the COVID-19 situation extended longer that few weeks, the teams who are doing wet-bench research may not be able to deliver fully as originally planned.

**A:** Institutions should come up with a mitigation plan supported with necessary documents based on its policies and procedures

**Q:** If the RO send already a list of the effected active projects, what is required from the LPI?

**A:** Each LPI should classify their projects as per the status listed in the guidelines and shall be vetted by the RO. Only those projects with “Partially affected” status will need to submit CRs to be in accordance with their mitigation plan.

**Q:** For NPRP-12S projects - can a start date of July-August be requested and possible?

**A:** Please refer to the Change of Start Date clause in the “Grant Management” section of the MRFA. As per MRFA: The RO may request to change the Project Start Date within the first three (3) months of the Project Lifetime by providing reasonable justification for the change, subject to QNRF’s approval. Any requested new Project Start Date shall not be more than three (3) months after the original Project Start Date.

**Q:** Can the RO request to change the start date of the project considering an RA is already hired?

**A:** Please refer to the Change of Start Date clause in the “Grant Management” section of MRFA. As per MRFA, The RO may request to change the Project Start Date within the first three (3) months of the Project Lifetime by providing reasonable justification for the change, subject to QNRF’s approval. Any requested new Project Start Date shall not be more than three (3) months after the original Project Start Date. As for hiring the RA, please refer to the institutional policy in this regards.

**Q:** Will QNRF consider a NCTE for a grant that already had a NCTE due to COVID-19?
A: As per the “Grant Management” section of the MRFA, QNRF allows a one No Cost Time Extension (NCTE) per project. If a second (2nd) NCTE is requested due to COVID-19 impact, please submit an official request thought the supporting ticket system giving rationale to be endorsed by the RO for QNRF assessment.

3. Reporting:

Q: If final reports are due soon, shall the LPI submit it even if it is not 100% completed due to the situation? or send a ticket to request more time?

A: If the LPI needs more time to complete the project, please refer to the section of “Grant Management” in the MRFA for NCTE through QGrants (CR) with valid justification. In addition, QNRF will show flexibility in the late submission of progress, final and financial reports, and QNRF will stop adding demerit points for delays extending up to two weeks.

Q: After the completion date of a project, how long do we have to submit the final financial report?

A: The RO has up to ninety (90) days after the end date of the project to submit the final financial reports.

Q: how long after the completion date of a project is the final report due?

A: The LPI & RO have up to ninety (90) days after the end date of the project to submit the final reports.

4. New Calls:

Q: Will there be any extensions of submission deadlines for upcoming calls?

A: QNRF will consider extension requests supported by valid justifications.

5. General:

Q: Explain what suspension means? Does this extend the end date of the project?

A: Suspension Status during which QNRF temporarily withholds funds for the Project and all efforts and expenditures should be withheld.

Yes, suspension extends the project end date up to cover the suspension duration.

Q: what is the maximum duration of the suspension as it might exceed the 3 months (normal suspension)? will the project be terminated after 3 months? what do you mean with suspension exactly? what will be the impact on the project suspended?

A: QNRF will apply 3 months suspension for now. If the COVID-19 situation continues, QNRF will consider extending the suspension as it deems fit.
Q: Please explain about if one of the project’s external PIs retired from the institution, can be replaced or work with him as personally? or we can transfer his budget to our institution inside Qatar. If he sent an official letter of apology?

A: Please refer to your RO to make the necessary change requests (CRs) on QGrants and provide the necessary documents to reflect the above situation so that QNRF responds accordingly.

Q: What is the (adverse) effect on the institution or LPI from these suspensions, considering that this is a pandemic and beyond the awardee's control?

A: Suspension terms will apply for the time being/per the MRFA. ROs and LPI are requested to submit corrective action or mitigation plans and explore all possible ways to overcome the impact of COVID-19 on their projects.

QNRF will assess such plans and determine the possibility of project's continuation as per the existing grant management policies and procedures as well as the terms of the MRFA.

Q: How long does QNRF expect to have the COVID-19 impact on QNRF grants as the duration is unknown?

A: QNRF expects the LPI to assess the impact of COVID-19 on their projects within the upcoming 3 months starting March 18 2020 when QNRF communicated with the ROs about the same.; and select the most appropriate category, see section 2 above “Delay in Research Progress”