

## Department of State – Embassy Kabul

**Program Office:** Public Affairs Section (PAS), U.S. Embassy, Kabul, Afghanistan  
**Funding Opportunity Title:** Kabul Journalism Conference  
**Announcement Type:** Cooperative Agreement  
**Funding Opportunity Number:** SCAKAB-13-CA-001-SCA-10182012  
**Deadline for Applications:** November 1, 2012  
**CFDA** 19.501- Public Diplomacy Programs for Afghanistan and Pakistan

### CONTACT INFORMATION

- A) For questions relating to Grants.gov, please call the Grants.gov Contact Center at 1-800-518-4726.
- B) For assistance with the requirements of this solicitation, contact **Pedro Palugyai**, Grants Manager, Public Affairs Section (PAS), U.S. Embassy, Kabul, Afghanistan, at:  
Email: KabulPDProposals@state.gov (*Preferred method of communication*)

## **CONTENTS**

I. Executive Summary.....	3
II. Background.....	3
III. Eligibility Requirements.....	4
IV. Applicant Vetting as a Condition of Award.....	4
V. Application and Submission Information.....	5
VI. Award Selection Criteria.....	9
VII. Award Administration.....	10
VIII. Disclaimer.....	11

## **I. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

The Public Affairs Section (PAS) of the U.S. embassy in Kabul, Afghanistan is pleased to announce an open competition for assistance awards through this Request for Proposals (RFP). PAS Kabul invites all eligible organizations to submit a proposal for a Kabul Journalism Conference to bring together the key stakeholders in the Afghan media industry to: a.) discuss in coordination with the Ministry of Higher Education a working group and framework for a national curriculum in journalism; b.) provide journalism training; and c.) provide a networking and information sharing opportunity. This process is to be Afghan-led and to include the input of key Afghan stakeholders with the facilitation and guidance of American advisors where and when requested.

A successful proposal will demonstrate the capacity to organize a three (3) to five (5) day conference in Kabul, Afghanistan for approximately 50 stakeholders to include: up to 25 journalism professors currently participating in the USG-sponsored journalism partnerships<sup>1</sup>; up to 2-5 American journalism professors to serve as advisors/instructors; up to 20 Afghan journalism professionals (print, radio, TV, or social media); and up to 5 international press corps members; in addition to representatives from the US Embassy and from the Government of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan. The conference should include preliminary discussions with stakeholders to develop the conference agenda, large discussions with conference participants on issues of importance to include in a journalism curriculum, and smaller meetings with a journalism working group to develop a national curriculum framework. Not all conference participants should participate in all conference events.

Applicants should also show their knowledge of journalism and media in Afghanistan and provide examples of how the grantee will ensure stakeholder participation. The successful applicant will coordinate with PAS on this cooperative agreement.

## **II. BACKGROUND**

### **Objectives**

The purpose of this conference is to:

- Support the MoHE in developing a framework for a national curriculum for higher education in journalism;
- Enhance connections between and amongst journalism faculties, journalists, media outlets and the MoHE; and
- Provide an opportunity for journalism training in an area of interest to the participants.

### **Grant Activities**

Grant activities should include, but not be limited to:

- Logistics: identify an event space to be cleared by PAS; arrange conference rooms, chairs, tables, microphones, projectors, handouts, etc; provide snacks, tea, and lunch for participants; provide a conference packet to include the agenda and speaker/participant bios; arrange transportation and/or lodging for participants as necessary.

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<sup>1</sup> PAS currently supports journalism partnerships at Kabul University, Herat University, Shaikh Zayed University, Balkh University, and Nangarhar University.

- Programmatic: in coordination with Afghan participants, conduct preliminary discussions to complete a stakeholder’s needs assessment to identify issues to be discussed at the conference and to set specific objectives for the conference; set an agenda for the conference; arrange for speakers, presentations and roundtable discussions; provide networking opportunities; coordinate with the Afghan Ministry of Higher Education on its priorities for a Journalism working group and the development of a national curriculum; arrange for skills training in an area of relevance and interest to participants (ethics in journalism, reporting in conflict zones, blogging, social media, etc.)
- Coordination: coordinate the development of a national journalism curriculum framework to include input from the MoHE, Afghan journalism professors, American advisors (if requested), and professional Afghan journalists/media outlets.

### **Deliverables**

- A three-day conference with key journalism stakeholders
- A national journalism working group to partner with the MoHE to finalize a national curriculum
- Skills training delivered to participants based on participants needs and interests
- Final report to PAS detailing the outcome and accomplishments of the conference as well as feedback from participants and the MoHE.

### **III. ELIGIBILITY REQUIREMENTS**

Eligibility is open to all U.S., Afghan, Non-Government Organizations(NGOs) or Private Voluntary Organizations (PVOs) with offices in Kabul, and with direct experience in organizing conferences, training workshops, or similar events, and a proven track record of success implementing projects in Afghanistan (see “Eligibility” on page 1). U.S. organizations or companies will be required to have a Kabul-based office with the capacity to complete all grant activities.

Applicants are not required to include funding from other donors. However, applications that include additional in-kind and/or cash contributions from non-U.S. Government sources will be more competitive, since cost-sharing demonstrates a strong commitment to the planned activities and will be considered to show greater cost effectiveness.

### **IV. APPLICANT VETTING AS A CONDITION OF AWARD**

Applicants are advised that successful passing of vetting to evaluate the risk that funds may benefit terrorists or their supporters is a condition of award. Applicants may be asked to submit information required by DS Form 4184, *Risk Analysis Information* (attached to this solicitation) about their company and its principal personnel. Vetting information is also required for all sub-award performance on assistance awards identified by DOS as presenting a risk of terrorist financing. When vetting information is requested by the Grants Officer, information may be submitted on the secure web portal at <https://ramportal.state.gov>, via Email to [RAM@state.gov](mailto:RAM@state.gov), or hardcopy to the Grants Officer. Questions about the form may be emailed to [RAM@state.gov](mailto:RAM@state.gov). Failure to submit information when requested, or failure to pass vetting, may be grounds for rejecting your proposal.

## V. SUBMISSION INFORMATION AND APPLICATION CONTENT

**Award Period:** 8 months

**Number of Awards Anticipated:** 1

**Award Amount:** The award ceiling is set at \$200,000.

**Application Deadline:** All applications must be received on or before **November 1, 2012, 11:59 p.m.**, Kabul time. Applications received after 11:59 p.m. will be ineligible for consideration.

**Application Submission Process:** There are two submissions methods available to applicants. Applicants may submit their application using Submission Method A or Submission Method B outlined below.

**Submission Method A:** Submitting all application materials directly to the following email address: [KabulPDProposals@state.gov](mailto:KabulPDProposals@state.gov). Applicants opting to submit applications via email to [KabulPDProposals@state.gov](mailto:KabulPDProposals@state.gov) **must** include the Funding Opportunity Title and Funding Opportunity Number in the subject line of the email.

**Submission Method B:** Submitting all application materials through [grants.gov](http://www.grants.gov). For those opting to apply through [Grants.gov](http://www.grants.gov), thorough instructions on the application process are available at <http://www.grants.gov>. For questions relating to [Grants.gov](http://www.grants.gov), **please** call the [Grants.gov](http://www.grants.gov) Contact Center at 1-800-518-4726. Please note, [KabulPDProposals@state.gov](mailto:KabulPDProposals@state.gov) is unable to assist with technical questions or problems applicants experience with [grants.gov](http://www.grants.gov).

Applicants utilizing [Grants.gov](http://www.grants.gov) must register with [Grants.gov](http://www.grants.gov) prior to submitting an application. **Registering with [Grants.gov](http://www.grants.gov) is a one-time process; however, it could take as long as two weeks to have the registration validated and confirmed. Please begin the registration process immediately to ensure that the process is completed well in advance of the deadline for applications.** Until that process is complete, you will not be issued a user password for [Grants.gov](http://www.grants.gov), which is required for application submission. There are four steps that you must complete before you are able to register: (1) Obtain a Data Universal Numbering System (DUNS) number from Dun & Bradstreet (if your organization does not have one already) by calling 1-866-705-5711; (2) Register with System for Award Management (SAM); (3) Register yourself as an Authorized Organization Representative (AOR); and (4) Be authorized as an AOR by your organization. For more information, go to [www.grants.gov](http://www.grants.gov). Please note that your CCR registration must be annually renewed. Failure to renew your CCR registration may prohibit submission of a grant application through [Grants.gov](http://www.grants.gov).

Questions: For questions about this solicitation, contact Pedro Palugyai, Grants Manager, Public Affairs Section, U.S. Embassy, Kabul, Afghanistan, at: [KabulPDProposals@state.gov](mailto:KabulPDProposals@state.gov) (Preferred method of communication).

**Application Content:** Applicants must follow the RFP instructions and conditions contained herein and supply all information required. **Failure to furnish all information or comply with stated requirements will result in disqualification from the competition.** Applicants must set

forth full, accurate, and complete information as required by this RFP. The penalty for making false statements in proposals to the USG is prescribed on 18 U.S.C.1001.

Proposals may not exceed 10 double-spaced pages in 12-point, Times New Roman font with 1-inch margins. This requirement excludes the allowable appendices, which are identified in Section 6 below. The proposal must consist of the following:

**Section 1 - Application for Federal Assistance (SF-424):**

This form can be found on-line at:

[http://fa.statebuy.state.gov/content.asp?content\\_id=20&menu\\_id=68](http://fa.statebuy.state.gov/content.asp?content_id=20&menu_id=68)

**Section 2 - Abstract:**

The abstract is limited to 300 words in length. It must provide a summary of the project to be undertaken, expected timeline, and cost.

**Section 3 – Implementation Plan:**

The applicant must specify the goals and objectives of the project. The goals should generally state the intent of the program; the objectives should define a specific problem or task to be accomplished. The objective should be specific, measurable, attainable, realistic, and time-framed. The applicant should describe in detail the steps which will be taken to achieve these goals. This description should include all components of the proposed project including, as needed, design, procurement, construction, installation, and training. The proposal should clearly demonstrate how each of these project components directly relates to the project's stated goals. This section should also describe how success will be measured, and should propose specific performance indicators which can be used to track progress and determine the project's success. This section must include a time-task plan that clearly identifies the timeline for carrying out the project's major activities.

Applicants are recommended to present the following for each project component:

- An overview of the proposed project component and its respective activities.
- A description of how the project component supports the overall goal of the program.
- A detailed outline of the methodology that will be used to implement the proposed component.
- An analysis of anticipated implementation risks and challenges.
- A summary of expected outputs with their expected outcomes and impact, using performance indicators to track progress towards the anticipated results.

The proposal should also describe the applicant's sustainability plan and what measures will be taken to ensure that the benefits of the proposed project will continue to be realized after the completion of grant performance.

**Section 4 - Organizational Capability:**

Applications must include a clear description of the applicant's management structure, previous experience with film production in Afghanistan, experience working with Afghan government institutions, previous experience with U.S. Government grants, and the organizational experience

and background in Afghanistan related to the proposed activities. Besides information about the organization as a whole, this section must also identify the proposed management structure and staffing plan for the proposed project. The applicant should describe how its previous experience relates to the proposed project.

### **Section 5 – Monitoring and Evaluation Plan:**

Applications must include a monitoring and evaluation plan (M&E plan), sometimes also referred to as a performance monitoring or performance management plan. The M&E plan is a systematic and objective approach or process for monitoring project performance toward its objectives over time. The plan consists of indicators with baselines and targets; means for tracking critical assumptions; plans for managing the data collection process; and regular collection of data. Evaluations should be scheduled and carried out throughout the course of the program. More information on M&E plans is located [here](#).

### **Section 6 - Appendices:**

The concept paper submission must include three appendices. Only the appendices listed below may be included as part of the application:

- (a) **Budget (Required)** – A budget spreadsheet must identify the total amount of funding requested, with a breakdown of amounts to be spent in the following budget categories: personnel; fringe benefits; travel; equipment; supplies; consultants/contracts; other direct costs; and indirect costs. The budget may not exceed 1 page in length.
- (b) **Budget Narrative (Required)** - The purpose of the budget narrative is to supplement the information provided in the budget spreadsheet by justifying how the budget cost elements are necessary to implement project objectives and accomplish the project goals. The budget narrative is a tool to help the Embassy staff fully understand the budgetary needs of the applicant and is an opportunity to provide descriptive information about the costs beyond the constraints of the budget template. Together, the budget narrative and budget spreadsheets should provide a complete financial and qualitative description that supports the proposed project plan and should be directly relatable to the specific project components described in the applicant's Implementation Plan. The description provided on the budget spreadsheets should be very brief.
- (c) **Resume (Required)** – a resume, not to exceed 1 page in length, must be included for the proposed key staff person, such as the Project Director. If an individual for this type of position has not been identified, the applicant may submit a 1-page position description, identifying the qualifications and skills required for that position, in lieu of a resume.

### **BUDGET GUIDELINES**

Applications will not be considered complete unless they include budgets that respond to the solicitation guidelines. Complete budgets will provide a detailed line-item budget outlining specific cost requirements for proposed activities. Complete applications will include a budget narrative to clarify and justify individual line-items (i.e. calculations of how the costs were derived per month or

year, their necessity, and overall contribution to the program's cost-effectiveness). Applicants must adhere to the appropriate regulations found in 2 CFR 220 (previously OMB circulars A-21, cost principles for education institutions) and 2 CFR 230 (previously OMB circular A-122, cost principles for non-profits).

### **1. SUMMARY BUDGET:**

Please include the applicant organization name, title and duration of the project, and the following:

- A. Personnel
- B. Fringe Benefits
- C. Travel
- D. Equipment
- E. Supplies
- F. Contractual
- G. Construction
- H. Other Direct Costs
- I. Total direct costs (sum a – h)
- J. Indirect Costs
- K. Total

### **2. LINE-ITEM BUDGET:**

**A. Personnel** – Identify staffing requirements by each position title and brief description of duties. For clarity, please list the annual salary of each position, percentage of time and number of months devoted to the project. (e.g., Administrative Director: \$30,000/year x 25% x 8.5 months; calculation:  $\$30,000/12 = \$2,500 \times 25\% \times 8.5 \text{ months} = \$5,312.$ ).

**B. Fringe Benefits** - State benefit costs separately from salary costs and explain how benefits are computed for each category of employee - specify type and rate.

**C. Travel** - Staff and any participant travel

- a) International Airfare
- b) In-country Travel
- c) Domestic Travel in the U.S., if any
- d) 4) Per diem/maintenance: Includes lodging, meals and incidentals for both participant and staff travel. Rates of maximum allowances for U.S. and foreign travel are available from the following website: <http://www.policyworks.gov/>. Per diem rates may not exceed the published U.S. government allowance rates; however, institutions may use per diem rates lower than official government rates. Please explain differences in fares among travelers on the same routes. Please note that all travel, where applicable, must be in compliance with the Fly America Act.

**D. Equipment** – Please provide justification for any equipment purchase/rental, defined as tangible personal property having a useful life of more than one year and an acquisition cost of \$5,000 or more.

**E. Supplies** - List items separately using unit costs (and the percentage of each unit cost being charged to the grant) for photocopying, postage, telephone/fax, printing, and office supplies (e.g., Telephone: \$50/month x 50% = \$25/month x 12 months).

**F. Contractual**

- a) **Sub-grants and sub-contracts.** For each sub-grant/contract please provide a detailed line item breakdown explaining specific services. In the sub-grant budgets, provide the same level of detail for personnel, travel, supplies, equipment, direct costs, and fringe benefits required of the direct applicant.
- b) **Consultant Fees.** For example lecture fees, honoraria, travel, and per diem for outside speakers or independent evaluators: list number of people and rates per day (e.g., 2 x \$150/day x 2 days).

**G. Construction** – For this solicitation, construction costs are not applicable.

**H. Other Direct Costs** – These will vary depending on the nature of the project. The inclusion of each should be justified in the budget narrative.

**J. Indirect Costs** - See OMB Circular A-122, "Cost Principles for Non-profit Organizations"

- a) If your organization has a negotiated indirect cost-rate agreement (NICRA) with the U.S. Government, please include a copy of this agreement. This does not count against submission page limitations.
- b) If your organization is charging an indirect cost rate, please indicate how the rate is applied to direct administrative expenses, to all direct costs, to wages and salaries only, etc.

**Cost-Effectiveness/In-Kind Contributions** – There is no minimum or maximum percentage of cost sharing required for this competition. However, the Embassy encourages applicants to provide the highest possible levels of cost sharing in support of its projects. Cost sharing demonstrates the applicant's commitment to the project, belief in the achievability of its goals, and prospects for long-term sustainability. When cost sharing is offered, it is understood and agreed that the applicant must provide the amount of cost sharing as stipulated in its application and later included in an approved grant agreement. Cost sharing may be in the form of allowable direct or indirect costs. For accountability, written records must be maintained to support all costs which are claimed as contributions, as well as costs to be paid by the Federal government. Such records are subject to audit. The basis for determining the value of cash and in-kind contributions must be in accordance with OMB Circular A-110, (Revised), Subpart C.23—Cost Sharing and Matching.

**VI. AWARD SELECTION CRITERIA**

U.S. Embassy Kabul Public Affairs will review all proposals for eligibility. Eligible proposals will be subject to compliance of Federal regulations and guidelines and may also be reviewed by the Office of the Legal Adviser or by other Department elements. The U.S. Embassy reserves the right to request any additional programmatic and/or financial information regarding the proposal.

**Evaluation Criteria:** Applicants should note that the following criteria (1) serve as a standard against which all proposals will be evaluated, and (2) serve to identify the significant matters that should be addressed in all proposals. The USG will award grants to the applicants whose offers represent the best value to the USG on the basis of technical merit and cost.

Each application will be evaluated by a peer review committee of Department of State and other experts, as deemed appropriate. The evaluation criteria have been tailored to the requirements of this RFP.

- **Project Goals/Implementation Plan (20 points):** Applicants should describe what they propose to do and how they will do it. The proposed activities must directly relate to meeting the goals and objectives, and applicants should include information on how they will measure activities' effectiveness. The review panel will be viewing the implementation plan in terms of how well it addresses the stated need for monitoring and evaluation, relevance of the goals and objectives, and feasibility of the proposed activities and their timeline for completion.
- **Organizational Capability (60 points):** Proposals should demonstrate the ability to develop and produce content and programming, and the ability to coordinate participation of specialists from multiple locations within Afghanistan and the United States. Applicants must demonstrate how their resources, capabilities, and experience will enable them to achieve the stated goals and objectives. In addition, applicants should describe how and with whom they will collaborate to meet project goals.
- **Appendices (20 points):**
  - **Budget:** Costs shall be evaluated for realism, control practices, and efficiency. The Department of State must determine that the costs paid for this award are reasonable, allowable, and allocable to the proposed project activities. This will consist of a review of the Budget to determine if the overall costs are realistic for the work to be performed, if the costs reflect the applicant's understanding of the allowable cost principles established by OMB Circular A-122, and if the costs are consistent with the program narrative.
  - **Resume:** The review panel will consider the appropriateness of the selected project director, in view of the role and responsibility that person will play in guiding the project through implementation to completion. Position descriptions submitted in lieu of the resume will be reviewed for the appropriateness of the qualifications and skills identified.

## VII. AWARD ADMINISTRATION INFORMATION

**Award Notices:** The grant shall be written, signed, awarded, and administered by the Grants Officer. The Grants Officer is the Government official delegated the authority by the U.S. Department of State Procurement Executive to write, award, and administer grants and cooperative agreements. The assistance award agreement is the authorizing document and it will

be provided to the Recipient through either mail or facsimile transmission. Organizations whose applications will not be funded will also be notified in writing.

**Anticipated Time to Award:** Applicants should expect to be notified if their proposal has been selected for award within 90 days after the submission deadline. PAS Kabul will provide information at the point of notification about any modification to the proposal or plan of work that will be required to finalize the cooperative agreement.

Issuance of this RFP does not constitute an award commitment on the part of the U.S. government, nor does it commit the U.S. government to pay for costs incurred in the preparation and submission of proposals. Further, the U.S. government reserves the right to reject any or all proposals received. The U.S. government also reserves the right to make an award in excess of the award ceiling.

- **Reporting Requirements:** Grantees are required to submit quarterly program progress and financial reports throughout the project period. Progress and financial reports are due 30 days after the reporting period. Final programmatic and financial reports are due 90 days after the close of the project period.

## **VII. DISCLAIMER**

If a proposal is selected for funding, the Department of State has no obligation to provide any additional future funding in connection with the award. Renewal of an award to increase funding or extend the period of performance is at the total discretion of the Department of State.