

Department of State- U.S. Embassy Kabul

Program Office: Public Affairs Section, U.S. Embassy Kabul, Afghanistan
Funding Opportunity Title: Establishment of a University Partnership in Journalism with Kandahar University, Afghanistan
Announcement Type: Cooperative Agreement
Funding Opportunity Number: SCAKAB-12-AW-016-SCA-061812
Deadline for Applications: August 15, 2012
CFDA 19.501

FUNDING OPPORTUNITY DESCRIPTION

The Public Affairs Section of the U.S. Embassy in Kabul announces an open competition for a cooperative agreement to establish a University Partnership between a U.S. four-year college or university and Kandahar University in the primary field of journalism with supporting activity in English for Specific Purposes. Overall authority for this cooperative program is contained in the Mutual Educational and Cultural Exchange Act of 1961, Public Law 87-256, as amended, also known as the Fulbright-Hays Act. The purpose of the Act is “to enable the Government of the United States to increase mutual understanding between the people of the United States and the people of other countries...; to strengthen the ties which unite us with other nations by demonstrating the educational and cultural interests, developments, and achievements of the people of the United States and other nations... and thus to assist in the development of friendly, sympathetic and peaceful relations between the United States and other countries of the world.” The funding authority for the program above is provided through legislation.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

For additional information on Kandahar University and other topics related to this proposal, please see the Q&A sheets and additional background documents posted at grants.gov and at http://kabul.usembassy.gov/call_for_proposals.html. Click “Full Application” to access these documents.

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 Ellen Delage, Office of Press and Public Diplomacy, Bureau of South and Central Asian Affairs (SCA/PPD), U.S. Department of State, 2201 C Street, NW, Washington, DC 20520, telephone: 202-647-9503, email: DelageEM@state.gov

CONTENTS

Executive Summary.....	4
Background.....	5
Eligibility Requirements.....	11
Application and Submission Information.....	11
Award Selection Criteria.....	13
Award Administration.....	15
Disclaimer.....	15

I. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Public Affairs Section of the U.S. Embassy in Kabul announces an open competition for a cooperative agreement to establish a University Partnership between a U.S. four-year college or university and Kandahar University in the primary field of journalism with supporting activity in English for Specific Purposes. The strengthening of higher education in Afghanistan is a compelling and critical need. There is a shortage of professionals and leaders to meet the needs of reconstruction, growth and poverty reduction. It is essential to establish high academic standards at the university level to improve the quality of the education sector, and crucial to support developments in the field of journalism. Accredited U.S. four-year colleges and universities meeting the provisions described in Internal Revenue Code section 26 USC 501(c)(3) may submit proposals to pursue institutional or departmental objectives in partnership with Afghan universities. The means of achieving these objectives may include faculty exchange, curriculum development, and outreach to or collaboration with professionals and other members of the communities served by the participating institutions. The timeframe for achieving the objectives must be clearly outlined in the proposal.

Administration and National Policy Perspective

The U.S. Government (USG) is providing resources to promote diplomatic outreach through language training, critical skills development and other public diplomacy programs. These resources support the people, platform, and programs necessary to meet the international challenges to American security and welfare.

Individual discussions between potential applicants and U.S. government officials are not permitted under the regulations governing RFPs once the RFP has been published. Answers to questions received via email from potential applicants will be published on the same grants.gov page as this RFP as well as being posted at http://kabul.usembassy.gov/call_for_proposals.html. Therefore, it is essential that applicants submit written questions about the RFP before the proposal deadline of August 15, 2012. Send questions to Ellen Delage (DelageEM@state.gov) at the State Department in Washington, DC. In addition, two conference calls to answer questions have also been scheduled. These conference calls will be held at 10:30 am Eastern time, Thursday, 28 June 2012, and at 9:30 am Eastern time, Thursday, 26 July 2012. Questions and answers from the conference calls will be posted on grants.gov and http://kabul.usembassy.gov/call_for_proposals.html.

It is also incumbent upon the applicant to discuss their project ideas with Kandahar University before submitting a proposal. The designated point of contact for project inquiries at Kandahar University is Engineer Abdul Tawab Balakarzai, Vice Chancellor, tawab.kdr@gmail.com. Such discussions should take place before the submission of the applicant's proposal and a summary of the discussions should be submitted with the proposal. If applicants have any difficulties in communicating with Kandahar University, they should not hesitate to contact Richard Boyum (BoyumRA@state.gov) so that he can assist.

II. BACKGROUND

Kandahar University is eager to receive assistance, training and advising from U.S. counterparts. The Partnership might include, but is not limited to: curriculum development, book or materials translation, visiting professors, professor exchanges, faculty training, partner teaching, student internships, and media or instructional equipment.

Project Objectives

The purpose of this program is to assist Kandahar University to establish high academic standards and increase its standing as a center of learning in the southern region of Afghanistan. This will enable the students at Kandahar University to become nationally and globally competitive. While there is currently no journalism department at Kandahar University, the Ministry of Higher Education has approved the creation of a Faculty of Journalism starting in September, 2012.

The proposed program can support objectives such as development of new curricula; training for faculty members, staff, and students; collaboration with other Afghan universities who have established journalism departments and faculties; outreach programs; and programs of study at participating institutions to assist Kandahar University in establishing the new Faculty and developing a reputation for specialized studies. Applicants are strongly encouraged to address how they might support the early stages of Faculty development successfully given the current lack of dedicated journalism lecturers at Kandahar University. Strategies could include collaboration with other Afghan universities or support for identifying dedicated staff. The Ministry of Higher Education has approved the appointment of four to six new salaried positions in the Kandahar University Faculty of Journalism starting September 2012, though none of those positions has currently been filled. Applicants should be aware of the formal, centralized process for adding new faculty members that may limit further hiring over the next several years. The program will also assist in strengthening mutual understanding between the people of the United States and Afghanistan.

Applicants are invited to propose institutional objectives that support these purposes. Proposals should explain in detail how project activities will enable participants to achieve specific changes at the cooperating departments or institutions, *particularly given the limitations imposed by limited English language fluency at the Afghan institution*. Proposals should outline well-reasoned strategies designed to meet specific objectives at each participating U.S. and foreign department or institution as a whole. In most cases, a proposal to pursue a limited number of related thematic objectives at each institution will be stronger and more coherent than a proposal addressing a large number of unrelated objectives. For example, proposals may outline the parameters and possible content of new courses; new teaching specializations or methodologies; new or revised curricula; and new programs for outreach to educators, professional groups (including internships for upper level students in various media outlets here in Afghanistan), or the general public. Proposals should explain in substantial detail strategies to promote curriculum, faculty and staff development and administrative reform at Kandahar University, again taking language differences into account, as Kandahar University's primary language is

Pashto. Projects may result in the development of a new academic program or the restructuring of an existing program in alignment with the university's objectives.

Projects focusing on curriculum reform at Kandahar University should describe the topics and content of any new courses or educational materials that will be developed and introduced and the role of the department's faculty leadership and university's Academic Senate in approval.

Please note: The proposal should not include master's degree study programs for faculty members. This cooperative agreement will not include master's degree study.

The proposal should also describe the target faculty and student audience that will be served by the creation of this program and the potential market for the program. Please note that current English language ability is quite low at Kandahar University. The university is in the process of enhancing its small English Department. Language ability varies widely and depends on the students' interests and personal educational goals. While some of the students are conversational, most lack academic English language skills. Proposals should include strategies for raising English language capacity of faculty who will engage in professional development or exchange opportunities with the U.S. university. The strategies may be differentiated for groupings of faculty based on their ability level and the type of engagement they will have with non-Pashto speakers. Furthermore, the grant may propose that U.S. and/or Afghan faculty travel within Afghanistan or to third countries for training if the security environment or available resources justify the travel.

In addition to demonstrating how the applicant institution can assist Kandahar University to meet institutional goals, proposals should also explain how this cooperation will enable the U.S. institution to benefit and to address its own needs. Accordingly, applicants are encouraged to describe the needs and deficiencies as well as the capabilities and strengths of the U.S. department and institution, and how each institution will contribute to, and benefit from, the achievement of project objectives. Proposals must realistically assess institutional capacities and contain compelling objectives that address institutional needs and justify a request for support. To be competitive, proposals should demonstrate that the participating institutions are committed to mutual support and cooperation in project implementation.

Projects may include soundly planned distance learning activities. These activities should be directly linked to stated project goals and outcomes. Proposals with distance learning components should describe pertinent course delivery methods, audiences, language capabilities and technical requirements in detail. Proposals should discuss not only the infrastructure at the partner institution, but also the level of access among the target population, taking into account the limited electricity and bandwidth availability at Kandahar University. Proposals that discuss distance-learning elements must address the technological access and capacity of Kandahar University. While there is currently a satellite internet connection at Kandahar University and a project underway to connect the university to fiber, the reliability and bandwidth available are not comparable to American standards. Electricity fluctuations, lack of consistent supply of generator fuel, and technical capacity to address connectivity problems at the university site all interfere with strength and consistency of the connection. Therefore, currently, asynchronous

distance learning methods or audio only conferences may be more reliable until bandwidth is established that can consistently support video-based communication.

If the proposed partnership would occur within the context of a previous or ongoing project, the proposal should outline distinct project objectives and outcomes for the new project and explain how the request for Embassy funding would build upon the pre-existing relationship. Previous projects should be described with details about the amounts and sources of support and the results of previous cooperative efforts.

Monitoring & Evaluation

Institutions receiving partnership funding awards will be expected to submit periodic reports on the results of program activities. Proposals should describe and budget for a methodology for project monitoring and evaluation. The monitoring and evaluation plan should include: an assessment of the current status of the participating department's and institution's needs at the time of program inception (with specific reference to project objectives); formative evaluation to allow for mid-course revisions in the implementation strategy; and, at the conclusion of the project, summative evaluation of the degree to which the project's objectives have been achieved. The final evaluation should include indicators of the project's influence on the participating institutions and their surrounding communities or societies. The final evaluation should also include recommendations about how to build upon project achievements. Evaluative observations by external consultants with appropriate subject and regional expertise are especially encouraged.

This monitoring and evaluation plan must include:

- 1) how baseline data from either primary or secondary sources will be collected;
- 2) clear, defined, objectively verifiable performance indicators to be used to track and predict progress towards achievement of project objectives and results;
- 3) the sources, methods (quantitative and qualitative), and timeline for data collection;
- 4) the team or individuals responsible for ensuring data are available on schedule;
- 5) how the performance data will be analyzed;
- 6) how the performance data will be reported, reviewed, and used to inform decisions;
and
- 7) a monitoring and evaluation budget aligned to support the previous requirements.

Knowledge of working conditions in Afghanistan can be important for a successful proposal and a successful project. U.S. universities that do not have experience in Afghanistan are encouraged to discuss or partner with universities that have such experience.

Developing a strong partnership with Kandahar University will be essential to the success of the project. Therefore, proposals that begin with a partnership developing phase (such as U.S. professors spending dedicated time with Kandahar staff teaching a course or working on an

element of the project, while developing and revising details of proposed future project plans in partnership with the Kandahar University faculty) may lead to a stronger and more effective program.

Institutional Commitment

An accredited four-year U.S. college or university must submit the proposal and must be prepared to serve as the funding recipient with responsibility for project coordination. **Proposals must include letters of commitment from all institutional partners, including the institution submitting the proposal, but not from Kandahar University.** Each letter must be signed by an official who is authorized to commit institutional resources to the project. Letters of commitment should be included for those organizations that will play an active role in the project, including those that receive financial support through the project budget, and should define the roles and responsibilities of each partner in relation to the proposed project activities, and the expected result of the partnership.

Costs

The commitment of all partner institutions to the proposed project should be reflected through cost-sharing, which they offer in the context of their respective institutional capacities. Although the contributions offered by institutions with relatively few resources may be less than those offered by applicants with greater resources, all participating institutions should identify appropriate contributions. Kandahar University's contributions may be done in kind. U.S. institutions are strongly encouraged to contribute to the international travel expenses for U.S. participants as part of their institutional cost-share. Proposed cost-sharing will be considered an important indicator of the applicant institution's interest in the project and potential to benefit from it.

Funds awarded may be used to assist with the costs of the exchange visits as well as the costs of the administration of the project by the U.S. grantee institution. U.S. administrative costs that may be covered from the funds awarded include administrative salaries, faculty replacement costs, other direct administrative costs as well as limited indirect costs. Although the award will be given to a single U.S. institutional partner, adequate provision in the proposal for the administrative costs of the project at Kandahar University must be included.

The proposal may include a request for funding to reinforce the activities of exchange participants through interactive technology or non-technology based distance learning programs. Projects focusing primarily on technology or physical infrastructure development are not eligible for consideration under this competition.

Proposals should discuss how the foreign partner institution will cover its costs of new equipment maintenance or other additional costs after the project ends if they are key to departmental operations and quality.

Applicants may propose other project activities not specifically mentioned in this solicitation if the activities reinforce the impact of the project.

In planning exchanges for Afghan participants, U.S. institutions must allow four months from the date of the visa interview at the U.S. Embassy in Kabul to the date of travel. U.S. visas are not guaranteed for the purposes of this program.

Scope of Award

The Public Affairs Section of the U.S. Embassy in Kabul and the award recipient will participate jointly in the establishment of the University Partnership. Each party will have specific obligations and responsibilities under the terms of the Cooperative Agreement. These obligations and responsibilities are outlined below:

The recipient shall bear the following responsibilities:

- Design and implement the University Partnership Program.
- Provide all work plans and schedules to U.S. Embassy Kabul for approval.
- Provide copies of curricula outlines and teaching materials developed to U.S. Embassy Kabul.
- Provide names and resumes of all Afghan travelers to the U.S. Embassy in Kabul for the Embassy's approval more than four months in advance of expected travel.
- Manage all funds granted including those used by Kandahar University.
- Provide programmatic and administrative oversight of the overall program and participants including activities and participants initiated by Kandahar University.
- Coordinate logistical arrangements for all program travelers such as obtaining necessary visas, pre-departure information, airport pick-up and drop-off, lodging and meals, health insurance and medical treatment and the disbursement of program funds.
- Provide health insurance for all Afghans visiting the U.S. under this program. Provide certification of health insurance for each Afghan traveler 4 ½ months before travel date so that the certification is available for the pre-visa interview documentation process.
- Ensure that all documentation is prepared and that appointments are made so that the visa interview at U.S. Embassy Kabul for all Afghan travelers takes place at least four months before expected travel date.
- Assemble both quarterly and final, programmatic and financial reports from both the U.S. institution and Kandahar University so that one single report is sent to the U.S. Embassy, Kabul.
- Maintain regular contact with U.S. Embassy Kabul and the Office of Press and Public Diplomacy of the Bureau of South and Central Asian Affairs (SCA/PPD) at the State Dept. in Washington, D.C. about overall program administration. Keep both the Embassy and SCA/PPD fully and currently informed about how the program and operations are administered, any problems or deficiencies, and the necessity for, and progress of, corrective action.

- Monitor activities taking place at Kandahar University and resolve problems in carrying out administrative and program responsibilities, in coordination with the Embassy and SCA/PPD.
- Collaborate with other U.S. and Afghan universities active in journalism partnerships in Afghanistan including sharing of materials and lessons learned for a nationwide journalism resource bank.

The U.S. Embassy Public Affairs Section shall provide the following support:

- Inform the Afghan Ministry of Higher Education of the establishment of the University Partnership.
- Approve **all work plans and schedules.**
- Approve all Afghan travelers to the U.S.
- Coordinate issuance of DS -2019 forms for J-1 visas with the U.S. university.
- Provide Diplomatic Notes to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs for all Afghan government employees traveling to the U.S. or third countries, and assist with visa appointment coordination for all exchange participants.
- Monitor and evaluate the program, including site visits.
- Suggest program changes when necessary.

III. ELIGIBILITY REQUIREMENTS

- Eligibility for U.S. institutions is limited to not-for-profit organizations subject to 501 (c) (3) of the tax code.
- The lead institution and funding recipient in the project must be an accredited four-year U.S. college or university.
- Preference will be given to institutions demonstrating experience in Afghanistan, in the region, or in a similar developing country and/or conflict zone.
- Applicants must have a demonstrated expertise in journalism, media studies or communications, especially the utilization of print, radio, and television production facilities for training. Applicants must also have a demonstrated expertise in journalism, media studies or communications programs, as well as the ability to develop and implement a program.
- The applicant must have the ability to operate independently of the U.S. Government and provide its own security and secure housing and transport for U.S. exchange participants in Afghanistan. Security needs may be included in the proposal budget. Applicants must also independently obtain the required visas from the Embassy of Afghanistan without assistance from the USG.
- The primary participant in Afghanistan will be Kandahar University.

- Secondary partners may include independent research institutes, relevant governmental organizations, and private non-profit organizations with project-related educational objectives.

Cost Sharing or Matching

This program requires cost sharing. The U.S. and/or Afghan institution may make in-kind contributions towards cost-sharing.

U.S. INSTITUTION AND PARTICIPANT ELIGIBILITY:

The lead institution and funding recipient in the project must be an accredited four-year U.S. college or university. Expertise in working in the Afghan environment and established relationships with Afghan universities and/or local officials in Afghanistan will be considered favorably but is not required. The lead U.S. organization in a consortium or other combination of cooperating institutions is responsible for submitting the application. Each application must document the lead organization's authority to represent all U.S. cooperating partners. With the exception of translators and outside evaluators, participation is limited to instructors, advanced graduate students and administrators from the participating U.S. institution. Advanced graduate students at the U.S. institution are eligible for support from the project as visiting instructors at the foreign partner institution.

FOREIGN INSTITUTION AND PARTICIPANT ELIGIBILITY:

Kandahar University will be the primary foreign partner. Secondary partners may include independent research institutes, relevant governmental organizations, and private non-profit organizations with project-related educational objectives. Except for translators and outside consultants reporting on the status of project objectives, participation is limited to instructors, administrators, or researchers from the participating foreign institution. Foreign participants must be both qualified to receive U.S. J-1 visas and willing to travel to the U.S. under the provisions of a J-1 visa during the exchange visits funded by this program. Foreign participants may not be U.S. citizens.

INELIGIBILITY:

A proposal will be deemed technically ineligible for consideration if:

- 1) It does not fully adhere to the guidelines established in this document and in the Solicitation Package;
- 2) It is not received by the deadline;
- 3) It is not submitted by the U.S. partner;
- 4) One of the partner institutions is ineligible;
- 5) The primary foreign partner is not Kandahar University.

Other Special Eligibility Criteria

Not Applicable.

IV. AWARD INFORMATION

Type of Award: Cooperative Agreement

Fiscal Year Funds: 2012

Approximate Total Funding: \$1,000,000 pending availability of funds. The Federal share of requests may not exceed \$1,000,000.

Approximate Number of Awards: 1 @ \$1,000,000

Anticipated Award Date: Pending availability of funds, 20 September, 2012

Project performance period should be proposed for 3 years.

Additional Information:

Pending successful implementation of this program and the availability of funds in subsequent fiscal years, it is the intent to award a cooperative agreement under this announcement for a period of 3 years and the Government reserves the right to extend for up to 4 additional years before openly competing it again.

APPLICATION AND SUBMISSION INFORMATION

Application Submission Process:

Pre-application teleconferences will be held at 10:30 am Eastern time on Thursday, 28 June 2012, and on at 9:30 am Eastern time on Thursday, 26 July 2012, prior to the closing date for this announcement. The purpose of the pre-application teleconference is to review the program announcement and discuss the project with the U.S. Embassy Kabul before submitting a proposal. Please submit all questions for the first call by Monday, 25 June 2012, and by Monday, 23 July, for the second call, to Ellen Delage (DelageEM@state.gov). They will provide you with any materials needed for the meeting. Any meeting materials, as well as the dial-in telephone number, will also be posted on www.grants.gov and http://kabul.usembassy.gov/call_for_proposals.html.

Applications must be submitted electronically using Grants.gov or to the KabulPDProposals@state.gov email. Proposals submitted to the KabulPDProposals@state.gov email must include the Funding Opportunity Number and Title in the subject line. Thorough instructions on the Grants.gov application process are available at <http://www.grants.gov>. For questions relating to Grants.gov, please call the Grants.gov Contact Center at 1-800-518-4726.

For assistance with the requirements of this solicitation, contact Cynthia Rafferty, Grants Manager, Public Affairs Section, U.S. Embassy, Kabul, Afghanistan, at:

Email: KabulPDProposals@state.gov

Please refer to the Funding Opportunity Number SCAKAB-12-AW-016-SCA-061812 located at the top of this announcement when making your request.

Application Deadline: All applications must be submitted on or before August 15, 2012, 11:59 p.m. Eastern time. Applications submitted after 11:59 p.m. will be ineligible for consideration. **Begin the application process early**, as this will allow time to address any technical difficulties

that may arise in advance of the deadline. There will be no exceptions to this application deadline.

All applicants must register with Grants.gov prior to submitting an application. **Registering with 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, 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 Central Contractor Registry (CCR); (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. Please note that your CCR registration must be annually renewed. Failure to renew your CCR registration may prohibit submission of an application through Grants.gov.

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.

The proposal package must consist of the following:

1 – Application for Federal Assistance (SF-424):

This form can be found on-line at: <http://www.whitehouse.gov/omb/grants/forms.html>.

2 – Proposal Narrative

The proposal 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 3 below.

a) 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.

b) Problem Statement:

The problem statement must describe the need for the project, with regards to: location, local resources, and regional educational challenges.

c) Project Goals/Implementation Plan:

The applicant must specify the goals and objectives of the project, relative to the problem statement. The proposed activities should be described in sufficient detail to show how objectives and goals will be met. This section should also describe how success will be

measured via performance indicators. Finally, this section must include a time-task plan that clearly identifies the objectives and major activities.

d) Organizational Capability:

Applications must include a clear description of the applicant's management structure, and organizational experience and background in Afghanistan, the region, or a similar country context as these relate to the proposed activities. The description should include information on the logistical strengths of the organization in Afghanistan, i.e. offices, vehicles, infrastructure, security, etc. 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 proposal should include a statement on how security would be provided for recipient personnel. While the award recipient is responsible for providing their own security, related expenses may be included in the proposal budget. All personnel involved in the program will be required to register in the Synchronized Pre-deployment and Operational Tracker (SPOT) system which is maintained by the Department of Defense.

3 – Appendices:

The application submission must include the following five appendices. Only the appendices listed below may be included as part of the application:

- (a) **Budget** – the budget must identify the total amount of funding requested, with a breakdown of amounts to be spent in the following budget categories: personnel; travel; equipment; supplies; consultants/contracts; other direct costs; and indirect costs. The budget must also include a narrative justification for each budget category listed above that details the cost breakdown in written form.
- (b) **Project Timeframe** – the project timeframe must include a start date, end date and a breakdown of various stages of the project. The better detailed the milestones and target dates, the better the review committee can visualize the project.
- (c) **Resume** – a resume, not to exceed one (1) page in length, must be included for the proposed key staff persons, such as the Project Director and any other staff in decision-making positions.
- (d) **Letters of Commitment** – Proposals must include letters of commitment from all institutional partners except Kandahar University. Please note that a letter of commitment is required from the institution submitting the proposal, which will serve as the funding recipient with responsibility for project coordination. Each letter must be signed by an official who is authorized to commit institutional resources to the project. Letters of commitment should be included for those organizations that will play an active role in the project, including those that receive financial support through the project budget, and should define the roles and responsibilities of each partner in relation to the proposed project activities, and the expected result of the partnership. The individual letters cannot exceed one (1) page in length, and applicants are limited to submitting up to five (5) letters per application.
- (e) **Monitoring & Evaluation Plan** – The monitoring and evaluation plan should meet all the criteria detailed on pp. 6-7.

V. AWARD SELECTION 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 funding to the applicant whose offer represents 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 (40 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 the relevance of the goals and objectives, feasibility of the proposed activities and their timeline for completion, and the extent to which the impact of the project will continue beyond the conclusion of the funding period.
- **Organizational Capability (40 points):** 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. The application must distinguish all key partners and organizations that will be involved in the project. The application should also thoroughly outline any Afghan experience on the part of the U.S. institution; such experience will greatly strengthen an application.
- **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.
 - **Letters of Commitment:** The review panel will consider the types and depth of relationships that the applicant has with all partner organizations. The panel will also review the letters to determine the willingness of local organizations to participate in the effort, and that all parties have an understanding of their unique roles and responsibilities in terms of the proposed project.

- **Monitoring & Evaluation Plan:** The review panel will consider all the elements of the plan (the data collection, the performance indicators, the timeline, the implementers, the analysis, the application and use of the evaluation results) to determine if the plan appears to be fully integrated into the project and likely to produce accurate and useful results.

VI. AWARD ADMINISTRATION INFORMATION

Award Notices: The cooperative agreement 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 U.S. mail, e-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 45 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.

- **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.