

Department of State - Global Affairs

Program Office: Public Affairs Section, U.S. Embassy, Kabul, Afghanistan
Funding Opportunity Title: National Level Curriculum Development and Educational Policy Support for English Teaching in Afghanistan Higher Education
Announcement Type: Cooperative Agreement
Funding Opportunity Number: SCAKAB-12-AW-005-SCA-04062012
Deadline for Applications: June 6, 2012
CFDA 19.501- Public Diplomacy Programs for Afghanistan and Pakistan

ELIGIBILITY

Eligibility is open to all U.S., Afghan, and international non-profit organizations with direct experience in Afghanistan's higher education environment and a proven track record of success implementing projects in Afghanistan.

Cost Sharing or Matching

This program does not require cost sharing.

Other Special Eligibility Criteria

Not Applicable.

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 **Cynthia Rafferty**, Grants Manager, Public Affairs Section, U.S. Embassy, Kabul, Afghanistan, at:
Email: KabulPDProposals@state.gov (*Preferred method of communication*)

CONTENTS

Executive Summary.....	3
Background.....	3
Eligibility Requirements.....	5
Application and Submission Information.....	6
Award Selection Criteria.....	8
Award Administration.....	9
Disclaimer.....	10

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) for a cooperative agreement to manage a national level curriculum development and educational policy support project for the Ministry of Higher Education from July 1, 2012 to June 30, 2014. English Departments exist in as many as fourteen public universities in Afghanistan, the oldest of which is Kabul University, the flagship national institution of higher learning, but no national, ministry-level coordination of English language curriculum development or educational policy exists. The budget available for this program will include personnel costs (including a project director, 2-3 senior U.S. consultants) and logistical costs, to include international travel, U.S. consultant fees, honoraria for senior Afghan curriculum development specialists, resource materials, laptop computers, software, on-line research costs including appropriate database access, books, local and home institution administrative support for operating expenses. *Note: U.S. applicants should budget for any office location and office costs needed in Kabul.*

A successful proposal will include a project solution that provides technical support to the Ministry of Higher Education to implement an English language unit within the Ministry to design national standards for English teaching in higher education including but not limited to in-service training for Ministry officials, establishing benchmarks of English proficiency to measure progress, establishing a coordinating body in English teaching for students and staff and establishing policies and procedures for the publicizing of, recruitment and selection of candidates for international donor-provided scholarships for graduate and undergraduate study. It will also include curriculum support for the drafting of Student Objectives and Performance Indicators for Integrated English Language Skills classes for all four years of university study (1-4) that will facilitate students meeting the proficiency expected of each level. It will also provide for the alignment of the English Language Skills required upon completion of each level with the English Language Proficiency expected for each level of certification. (Additional information in Annex A).

II. BACKGROUND

Under a previous project, the Public Affairs Section of the U.S. Embassy in Kabul sponsored the development of two curricula frameworks:

- COMMON ENGLISH CURRICULUM FRAMEWORK FOR DEPARTMENTS OF ENGLISH IN PUBLIC HIGHER EDUCATION INSTITUTIONS (though the Afghan e-Learning English Support Project (AeLESP), implemented by Washington State University's College of Education during calendar year 2011).
- COMMON ENGLISH FOR SPECIFIC PURPOSES FRAMEWORK (CESPF)

Both are contained in the Annex A to this RFP.

Through the work of those projects, and with the cooperation of the Ministry of Higher Education and the following Afghan universities and higher education institutes, final drafts of the CECF and the CESPf were approved and accepted by the Ministry's Curriculum Committee on Dec. 10, 2011:

- Kabul University, Department of English
- Kabul Education University
- Balkh University, Department of English
- Herat University Department of English
- Kandahar University, Department of English
- Nangarhar University, Department of English
- Alberoni University, Kapisa
- Badakshan University
- Baghlan University
- Bamiyan University
- Faryab University
- Jawzjan University

PROPOSALS BEING REQUESTED

The projects described above are only frameworks. This current RFP is seeking proposals to develop a full curriculum based on these frameworks.

The award Recipient shall provide the following overall support:

Engage senior U.S. academic specialists in English teaching curriculum development for higher education and educational policy studies, with a specific emphasis on language policy and planning, to train and mentor a group of senior Afghan academics to enable them to complete a common curriculum for Departments of English at cooperating Afghan universities. U.S. consultants who are experts in English language curriculum development will employ a mix of distance learning tools and will visit Afghanistan quarterly to conduct one-week to ten-day working seminars for the curriculum development team, and provide regular guidance and feedback from the U.S. throughout the year.

Another U.S. specialist in English language policy and planning will provide support to the Ministry of Higher Education to develop and implement a national-level policy on English teaching in higher education including policies for English language proficiency, qualifications for scholarship awards, and professional advancement for university and ministry officials.

Specific activities should include:

- Student Objectives and Performance Indicators for Integrated English Language Skills classes for all four years of study (1-4) that will facilitate students meeting the proficiency expected of each level.
- Alignment of the English Language Skills required upon completion of each level with the English Language Proficiency expected for each level of certification.

- Technical support to the Ministry of Higher Education to implement an English language unit within the Ministry to design national standards for English teaching in higher education including but not limited to in-service training for Ministry officials, establishing benchmarks of English proficiency to measure progress, and establishing policies and procedures for the publicizing of, recruitment and selection of candidates for international donor-provided scholarships for graduate and undergraduate study.
- The establishment of a coordinating body for English teaching in public Higher Education institutions for students and faculty members to cover
 - Curriculum
 - Management of Human Resources
 - Teaching Capacity

To carry out these activities, proposals should address how the applicant will:

- Provide regular oversight of the Ministry’s national level curriculum development “cluster” committee, including quarterly professional development visits to provide face-to-face mentoring, guidance and oversight.
- Purchase computer equipment and pay for continuous Internet connection if not available from the NATO Silk Afghanistan project or the Ministry of Higher Education.
- Fund travel, per diem, and honoraria associated expenses for US expert consultants.
- Provide access to appropriate home institution research databases as needed
- Build the capacity of Afghan universities further develop needed curricula and syllabi for teaching English to non-English majors in fields that are identified as priorities for the Ministry of Higher Education and university chancellors, and that are consistent with the National Higher Education Strategic Plan 2010-2014.
- Submit itemized quarterly reports to the U.S. Embassy on program activities and budgets for each ELC.
- Submit itemized quarterly financial reports and an end-of-year full report.

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

- Identify and select, in cooperation with the Ministry of Higher Education, Afghan academic participants for the national curriculum development project.
- Develop and obtain signed MOUs outlining responsibilities of Afghan government and host institution partners in consultation with the Recipient.

- Review quarterly budget expenditures and narrative progress reports.

III. ELIGIBILITY REQUIREMENTS

Eligibility is open to all U.S., Afghan, and international non-profit organizations or companies with direct experience in English teaching and educational policy work, and a proven track record of success implementing projects in Afghanistan (see “Eligibility” on page 1). U.S. organizations will be required to partner with an Afghan organization or company.

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. APPLICATION AND SUBMISSION INFORMATION

Award Period: 2 years

Award Amount: The award ceiling is set at \$1,000,000.

Application Submission Process: Applicants must submit proposals electronically using Grants.gov or they may submit proposals to PAS Kabul directly at: KabulPDProposals@state.gov. If proposals are submitted directly to KabulPDProposals@state.gov, please include the Funding Opportunity Title and Funding Opportunity Number in the email 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 questions about this solicitation, contact Cynthia Rafferty, Grants Manager, Public Affairs Section, U.S. Embassy, Kabul, Afghanistan, at:

Email: KabulPDProposals@state.gov (*Preferred method of communication*)

Application Deadline: All applications must be submitted on or before June 6, 2012, 11:59 p.m. Eastern (U.S.) 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 utilizing Grants.gov 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 a grant 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 complete proposal package must include 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

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 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) Implementation Plan:

The applicant must specify the goals and objectives of the project. The steps involved -- from design to procurement to construction and installation to training -- 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. This section must include a time-task plan that clearly identifies the objectives and major activities.

c) 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, 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.

3 - Appendices:

The proposal submission must include the following three appendices. Only these appendices, described below in “Award Selection Criteria,” may be included as part of the application:

- 1) Budget: Spreadsheet and budget narrative
- 2) Resumes
- 3) Letters of Intent

V. AWARD SELECTION CRITERIA

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 (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 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 (40 points):** Proposals should demonstrate the ability to develop and produce English language curricula and to provide national level educational policy support. Applicants must demonstrate how their resources, capabilities, and experience will enable them to achieve the stated goals and objectives and be able to provide independent evaluation on past performance in Afghanistan. In addition, applicants should describe how and with whom they will collaborate to meet project goals.
- **Appendices (20 points):**
 1. **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; fringe benefits; travel; equipment; supplies; consultants/contracts; other direct costs; and indirect costs. The budget submission must include a detailed 1-page spreadsheet, as well as a budget narrative to provide any useful clarification of budget items. 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. Applicants are also advised that as per OMB Circular A 133 that a financial audit is required for any award over \$500,000 awarded in one year.

2. **Resume:** A resume, not to exceed 1 page in length, must be included for the proposed key staff persons, 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. 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.
3. **Letters of Intent:** For this project, local partnerships, including with the Afghan government, are critical. Letters of intent should be included with the proposal. The letters must identify the type of relationship to be entered into (formal or informal), the roles and responsibilities of each partner in relation to the proposed project activities, and the expected result of the partnership. Please note that these are not letters of support, and should only be included for those organizations that will play an active role in the project, including those that receive financial support through the project budget. The individual letters cannot exceed 1 page in length, and applicants are limited to submitting up to five letters per proposal.

VI. 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 30 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.

Annex A: Additional Background

Common English Curriculum Framework (CECF)

The intent of the Common English Curriculum Framework (CECF) is to provide guidance for programs of English Departments and English Language and Literature Departments throughout Afghanistan. The CECF provides general guidelines for elements that the Ministry of Higher Education (MoHE) suggests for inclusion in curricula of university English Departments and Department of Language and Literature in higher education institutions. The CECF also includes standards for high quality programs that meet the needs of higher education stakeholders and the greater Afghan community. The framework supports both a common focus for public higher education institutions that are supported by MoHE and encourages the integration of local needs in the curricula developed by individual universities and other institutions of higher education.

The overall goal of the CECF is to encourage public higher education institutions to develop similar English Department curricula within this CECF in order to:

- Facilitate the alignment of English Department curricula across institutions,
- Provide support for implementing effective instructional programs in university English Departments across the country, and

Assist English Departments and English Language and Literature Departments of MOHE-supported regional and provincial institutions of higher education in producing graduates who have the English language skills and experience that they need to contribute successfully to the development of their nation.

Objectives of the CECF and CESPF:

English Department programs in MoHE-supported higher education institutions will provide leadership and support for the development of English speakers who have a broad understanding of the modern world and are capable of utilizing English in a range of professional capacities, including the teaching of English Language, all for the purpose of contributing to the development of the local and global communities.

In two years, MoHE-supported universities should be able to provide

- Certification in English proficiency,
- Bachelor of Arts degrees in university English Language and Literature Departments and
- Bachelor Degrees in Education with specializations in English Teaching.

To the extent possible, the courses will be taught in classrooms with adequate instructional resources.

Graduates of English Language and Literature departments and graduates from English Departments in Teacher Education faculties should be able to qualify for entry into a Master's Degree program, either in general education or Teaching English to Speakers of

Other Languages (TESOL) that are offered at MoHE-designated public education universities.

In five years, where prior approval is received, it is hoped that Master's Degrees will be offered in five or six designated, comprehensive research universities (see National Higher Education Strategic Plan, Sub-program 1-4, "Graduate Training", pp. 15-16) through English Departments, with specializations in Teaching English, Translation and Interpretation, Applied Linguistics, English Literature and English Writing. Additionally, the higher education community hopes that at least one of those universities will initiate a doctoral program in English Literature in five years.

Overview of the Common Framework

The MoHE Common English Curriculum Framework (CECF) is based on international English language proficiency standards, research-supported content and pedagogies, international technology standards for quality higher education English programs and best practices in assessment. The MoHE encourages individual institutions of higher education to design their English Department curricula to accommodate the needs and average entry proficiency levels of students enrolling in the departments. In addition, universities are encouraged to align their English curricula with current effectiveness research in the area of language acquisition. Finally, MoHE encourages the development of national standards for integrating technology into instruction, as well as standards for the assessment of English language skills and knowledge will ensure that graduates of English programs meet the outcomes listed above.

Objectives

For both the Common English Curriculum Framework (CECF) and the Common English for Specific Purposes Framework (CESPCF):

1. Student Objectives and Performance Indicators for Integrated English Language Skills classes for all four levels (1-4) that will facilitate students meeting the proficiency expected of each level.
2. Alignment of the English Language Skills required upon completion of each level with the English Language Proficiency expected for each level of certification.
3. Guidelines for grading student performance
 - a. Standards of student performance for MOHE-established percentage grades from 50% to 100%.
 - b. Minimum passing scores for exam
4. Guidelines for student performance and corresponding percentage of the course grades attached to
 - a. Student attendance and class participation
 - b. In class tasks
 - c. Student presentations
 - d. Homework assignments
 - e. Final exams

For the CECF:

1. A list of course topics and student learning objectives for the following course categories:
 - a. Each category of literature (British, American, World Lit and Afghan Lit
 - b. Expository and Creative Writing Courses
 - c. Translation and Interpretation
 - d. Applied Linguistics
 - e. English Language Teaching
 - f. Education Foundation Courses
2. Expanded CECF Appendix materials as follows:
 - a. Appendix A: A sample lesson plans for
 - i. an English Language class
 - ii. an English Literature class
 - iii. an English Writing class
 - b. Appendix D: Expanded Notes on Assessments
 - c. Appendix E: Examples of Assessment instruments for
 - i. Student tasks in class
 - ii. Student presentation
 - iii. Homework
 - iv. Final Exams
 - d. Sample of MOHE Administrative and Evaluative Forms and Guidelines to be included and insert those materials into the framework
 - e. Appendix G: Examples of resource materials that should be included here
 - f. Appendix H: An example of the course revision process based on the template provides and guidelines for the process and frequency of revision.
3. A list of course topics and student learning objectives for the following course categories:
 - g. Each category of literature (British, American, World Lit and Afghan Lit
 - h. Expository and Creative Writing Courses
 - i. Translation and Interpretation
 - j. Applied Linguistics
 - k. English Language Teaching
 - l. Education Foundation Courses

For the CESPCF

1. For two discipline areas (e.g., Agriculture and Psychology) Determine ESP Language Requirements for all four levels
2. For two discipline areas, examples of each English proficiency certification level
3. For two discipline areas, samples of appropriate assessment instruments and processes
4. For two discipline areas, sample materials for ESP instruction developed by using the templates in Appendix C, D and E.