CALL FOR PROPOSALS

Supporting the Organizational Capacity Assessment and Development of an Institutional Improvement Plan for the Quality Assurance and Accreditation Directorate (QAAD), Ministry of Higher Education, Afghanistan

Type of Contract: Implementation Partnership Agreement

Duration of contract: 1 July 2019 – 31 December 2020 (tentatively)

Closing date: 7 June 1019 (5:00 p.m. Bangkok time)

Background

With support from the Higher Education Development Program (HEDP), Ministry of Higher Education (MoHE) in Afghanistan, UNESCO will conduct an organizational capacity assessment and facilitate the development of an institutional improvement plan for the Quality Assurance and Accreditation Directorate (QAAD), MoHE, Afghanistan. UNESCO Bangkok will select an implementation partner to join the QAAD assessment and planning process.1

In line with Sustainable Development Goal 4.3, the QAAD capacity assessment and improvement plan aims to ensure equitable and increased access to quality higher education and research, with due attention to quality assurance. The provision of flexible learning pathways, as well as the recognition, validation and accreditation of the knowledge, skills and competencies acquired through non-formal and informal education are critical to promote quality lifelong learning opportunities for all. To support the achievement of SDG4.3, the QAAD capacity assessment and improvement plan will help strengthen quality assurance of higher education in Afghanistan.

The project objectives are:

1) Review the current organizational structure and management system(s) of QAAD to achieve its mission and goals in line with SDG4.3;

2) Develop a realistic institutional development plan for changes or adjustments to ensure optimal organization and management to assist the QAAD in accomplishing its mission;

3) Support the development of a five-year strategic plan with the help of the institutional development plan.

1 Main features of an Implementation Partner’s Agreement with UNESCO online: https://manual-part1.unesco.org/EN/Chap7/Pages/Item7.5.aspx#para54
As the only UN agency with a mandate in higher education, UNESCO is well-suited to conduct the capacity assessment of QAAD. With its headquarters in Paris, France, Field Offices in Kabul, Afghanistan and the Asia and Pacific Regional Bureau for Education in Bangkok, Thailand, UNESCO has the capacity to draw on a wide range of experiences to strengthen internal and external quality assurance, and promote evidence-based policy in higher education and research.

Assignment

QAAD requires a detailed and clear strategic review in order to elaborate on its annual operations and action plans. The capacity assessment will cover the roles and actual performance of the QAAD, QAA Board and QAA Committees, in relation to organizational structures and lines of authority and management and the QAAD with respect to strategic and operational planning and decision-making. The review will also include an assessment of the QAA Board’s role and functioning based on UNESCO and MoHE’s guidance. Together with UNESCO, the implementation partner will be involved in planning the assessment and monitoring and evaluating outcome documents.

With support from UNESCO Bangkok, the partner will:

1. Conduct a desk review and prepare a draft inception report, including proposed assessment methodology and a detailed schedule for the assessment (5-10 pages)
2. Finalize the assessment report based on fieldwork by UNESCO and key stakeholders (20-30 pages)
3. Prepare a draft institutional improvement plan and presentation in Bangkok (10-15 pages)
4. Submit a final institutional improvement plan
5. Draft monitoring and evaluation report with actionable recommendations (5-10 pages)

Research approach

Under the direct supervision of the Chief of Section for Educational Innovation and Skills Development at UNESCO Bangkok, the partner will submit a draft inception report of the proposed organizational assessment and prepare a draft improvement plan. This includes the following considerations:

- Preparatory meetings between UNESCO, international consortia members, and steering committee to explain the context of the assessment, particular issues to be looked at, challenges, expected outcomes, agreement on the scope of work and contents of a resulting work plan;
- Desk research/review to better understand the organizational structure of QAAD, management tools, systems and approaches, and interview formats;
- Giving feedback on the interview schedule in coordination with the project steering committee;
- Ensuring the quality of interviews conducted by external consultants with QAAD staff, the QAA Board, QA Committees and staff of other relevant MoHE directorates (e.g. via Skype);
- Observing the process of developing a coherent strategic plan for the next five years, including facilitating participatory SWOT analyses with staff during consultations in Bangkok, Thailand.
Schedule and deliverables

The partner shall complete the following work assignment by the indicated tentative timeline for UNESCO’s review and approval:

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<tr>
<th>Activity / Deliverable</th>
<th>Timeline</th>
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<tr>
<td>1. Desk Review and Drafting the Inception Report</td>
<td>31 July 2019</td>
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<tr>
<td>2. Final Assessment Report (including MoHE feedback)</td>
<td>29 November 2019</td>
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<tr>
<td>3. Draft Institutional Improvement Plan in Bangkok</td>
<td>31 January 2020</td>
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<td>4. Final Institutional Improvement Plan (including MoHE feedback)</td>
<td>28 February 2020</td>
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<td>5. Monitoring and implementation report (evaluation led by UNESCO based on inputs from QAAD and key stakeholders)</td>
<td>31 December 2020</td>
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All work will be completed by **31 December 2020** at the latest. In line with UNESCO’s overall gender mainstreaming strategy, the partner is expected to integrate a gender perspective and apply gender analysis and mainstreaming concepts whenever feasible.

How to submit a proposal

An offer comprising of:

1. A technical proposal, which should include a cover letter describing the added value of the partnership such as monetary or in kind contributions of the prospective partner;
2. A financial proposal. Financial estimates should include any detailed fees, including costs to join a five-day meeting in January 2020 in Bangkok, Thailand.

The technical proposal and financial proposal should be attached in an email to UNESCO Bangkok in two separate files and sent to the following email address no later than 5 p.m. on **7 June 2019 (Bangkok time): eisd.bgk@unesco.org**. For any requests for clarification, please contact Mr. Wesley Teter (wr.teter@unesco.org).