

Aga Khan Foundation, Afghanistan

Job Opportunities

Position Title : The Academic Supervision Competency-Based Professional Development Program
Duty Station : Kabul
Announcing Date: Aug 18, 2019
Closing Date : Aug 31, 2019
Vacancy No : CS/KBL/06/19/067

The Aga Khan Foundation (AKF) is a non-denominational international development agency established in 1967 by His Highness the Aga Khan. Its mission is to develop and promote creative solutions to problems that impede social development, primarily in Asia and East Africa. Created as a private, non-profit foundation under Swiss law, it has branches and independent affiliates in 19 countries.

AKF seeks to provide sustainable solutions to long-term problems of poverty, hunger, illiteracy, and ill health. In Afghanistan, AKF works with rural communities in mountainous, remote or resource poor areas to improve quality of life in the areas of natural resource management, market development, governance, education and health.

The Aga Khan Foundation, Afghanistan (AKF (Afg)) is an agency of the Aga Khan Development Network (AKDN), a group of international, private, non-denominational development agencies working to improve living conditions and opportunities for people in some of the poorest parts of the developing world. The Network's organizations have individual mandates that range from the fields of health and education to architecture, rural development and promotion of private-sector enterprise and institutions that seek to empower communities and individuals, usually in disadvantaged circumstances, to improve living conditions and opportunities.

Rationale

Quality and relevant education is one of the main goals of the Afghan Ministry of Education (MoE) outlined in its National Education Strategic Plan III (NESP III). In partnership with its development partners, the MoE has undertaken a variety of initiatives to provide quality and relevant education programs to children in Afghanistan. Teacher standards and competencies have been developed by the MoE and its partners under the Teacher Credentialing and Accreditation Project (TCAP). MoE and its partners have successfully piloted the competency-based teacher professional development and credentialing in selected provinces.¹ An ambitious, comprehensive teacher policy is being developed by the MoE and its partners supported under the Education Quality Reform in Afghanistan (EQRA) project. The teacher policy is building upon the work done under the TCAP project. A number of development partners² have initiated assessment of Teachers' performance based on the Teacher standards and competencies. Additionally, under its curriculum reform program, MoE and its partners are presently developing students' subject specific standards and life skills competencies.

A small scale needs assessment study of MoE academic supervisors commissioned by the Aga Khan Foundation (AKF) and conducted by its partner Aga Khan University (AKU) demonstrated that there are varied expectations from the district level academic supervisors: the academic supervisors are overloaded with too many tasks, and they require standard professional development programs on instructional planning, modelling effective teaching, school and class observation, pedagogical coaching and counselling, evidence based program supervision, and planning and implementing

¹ TCAP project coverage provinces (Herat, Kabul and Nangarhar)

² AKF, Save the Children, CARE international and CRS have initiated this program for CBE teachers under the STAGES II project.

improvement programs³. Likewise, capacity-building and professionalization of academic supervisors to perform their functions through approved competency framework, performance assessment standardization, training on core competencies and coaching were identified as core needs of the General Directorate of Academic Supervision (GDAS) staff by the MoE officials.⁴

This document outlines a request for consultancy services (open to both individuals and / or a consultancy firm) to develop a comprehensive competency-based professional development program for the Ministry of Education Academic Supervisors at all levels (National, Provincial and District).

2. Background and context

In Afghanistan, enrolment, attendance rates, and learning outcomes remain low, especially for girls, children living in remote areas, and children with disabilities. Last year, primary school attendance fell for the first time since 2002.⁵ According to the United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund (UNICEF),⁶ only 42% of school-aged children (aged 5-14) are enrolled in school, leaving an estimated 3.7 million children out of school, of which 2.2 million are girls. The reasons for non-attendance in education are multi-faceted, related not only to issues of access and quality of education, but also to wider socio-economic factors. On the supply side, the following institutional, organizational and individual challenges and needs exist: low capacity of teachers and school administrators; lack of relevant capacity to supervise and provide tailored targeted support to teachers at the district and village levels due to lack of a competency framework, standardized training materials, observation tools, guiding manuals, etc.; insufficient number and qualification level of academic supervisors; lack of school infrastructure, especially in girls' schools (only 16% of schools are girls' schools); distance to schools (no more than 2 out of 5 rural households live within a 2km radius⁷); shortage of teachers, especially female teachers (32% of teachers are women); lack of quality learning materials; lack of efficiency in spending development budget and corruption.⁸ On the demand side, the challenges are: limited awareness of education's value, particularly for girls (Steps Towards Afghan Girls' Educational Success (STAGES) II project, Baseline); and traditional practices that limit inclusion, such as early marriages.⁹ In the past, efforts of the government and donors were overwhelmingly directed at improving access, but the low quality of education is increasingly recognized as a problem. Of particular concern is the disparity in quality between rural and urban areas.

The **Afghanistan Quality Learning** (AQL) is a four-year (2019-2022) project that focuses on *improving the quality and relevance of education in rural areas in Afghanistan by supporting interventions at school, district, provincial and national levels to strengthen academic supervision, promote the professional development of teachers and improve learning environments*. It is funded by the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation and implemented by the Afghanistan Quality Learning Consortium. The Consortium is led by the Aga Khan Foundation Afghanistan, with Save the Children and CARE Afghanistan as Consortium Members. The overall goal (impact) of the project is that all girls and boys in the project target geographies benefit from quality learning in a conducive environment. The goal will be achieved through two inter-linked outcomes: Outcome 1) Communities contribute to improved (inclusive,

³ Dr. Takbir Ali (2018). Training Needs Assessment of the Afghanistan's Ministry of Education Academic Supervision Directorate Staff, Aga Khan University, Karachi, Pakistan

⁴ GDAS consultation meeting minutes (June 6, 2018)

⁵ "Global Initiative on Out-of-School Children All Children in School and Learning - Afghanistan Country Study (2018)", UNICEF.

⁶ UNICEF data 2016. <https://www.unicef.org/afghanistan/education>.

⁷ Afghanistan Education for All 2015 National Review, p.12.

⁸ NESP III states that the Ministry of Education estimates that up to 42'000 Tashkeel teacher positions would have to be added to ensure the grade-specific student/teacher ratio. However, no new teacher positions have been approved in the national budget since 2012.

⁹ Across the country, girls continue to marry young. Around 17% marry before their 15th birthdays; this causes school dropouts (ALCS 2017).

equitable, and safe) learning environments in support of quality education and relevant learning outcomes; and, Outcome 2) Educational institutions, especially Academic Supervision, at the national and sub-national levels, provide better services to enhance school performance, quality, and relevancy of learning and equity.

The project adopts a holistic and comprehensive approach to improving the quality of education: on the one hand, it develops the capacities of the Government of Afghanistan's Ministry of Education institutions at national and sub-national levels to assist teachers and principals to provide better, relevant, and meaningful quality education; on the other hand, the project also mobilizes communities to improve school environments, enhance transparency and address access, protection/safety, inclusion, and equity concerns. In doing so, it supports the implementation of the Ministry of Education's National Education Strategic Plan III by contributing to its intermediate outcomes of strengthened supervision and community engagement.

A strong link from MoE's national level to community level capacity to oversee and support improved attendance rates and learning outcomes is needed. The group within the MoE that can influence and improve and has responsibility for improving learning outcomes and attendance rates are the General Directorate of Academic Supervision (GDAS) and the Directorate of Social Mobilization and Shuras (DSMS). GDAS and DSMS work closely with the Policy and Planning Department and the Education Management Information System EMIS Department in the MoE to plan and track relevant indicators. The main target groups of the AQL are national, province, and district-level professional staff of the MoE, specifically, the GDAS and DSMS staff.

The main partner of AQL is the General Directorate of Academic Supervision (GDAS). Created in 2011, its main objective is to improve the quality of education through subject-based supervision at school level. GDAS is composed of two Directorates: Academic Supervision (AS) and Learning Assessment (LA). The Academic Supervision Directorate is responsible for the overall academic supervision of the education programs of schools at district, provincial and national levels. This Directorate works closely with the General Directorate of Science and Technology (DGST) and the Teacher Education Department (TED) to provide on-the-job support to the teachers. The Learning Assessment Directorate is accountable for monitoring learning outcomes. This department works closely with the Curriculum Department (CD) and the TED to design a framework and tools for assessment of student learning outcomes.

GDAS has a professional cadre of 40+ specialists nationally, and has a strong sub-national presence with 12 specialists provincially (on average) and 8 specialists (1 leader, 5 subject specific specialists, 1 pedagogy specialist and 1 social mobiliser) at the district level. The district office is accountable for visiting schools in their coverage areas (i.e. districts), observing classes and school environment, checking quality of service by supporting teachers, overseeing school logbooks and records, and submitting reports to the provincial office. In the current structure, the staff at the district office provide pedagogical support to the teachers based on their own fields of study (math, biology, physics, chemistry, etc.). The provincial office is responsible for consolidating reports received from the district office and submitting it to the national office. They also oversee the performance of district staff and provide support when needed. Finally, the national office is mainly responsible for reviewing and developing policies, guidelines, bylaws and supervision tools, conducting professional development workshops for the provincial and district supervision staff, consolidating provincial reports and sharing best practices and lessons learned with concerned education officials.

At the time of project design, initial needs assessment meetings with GDAS were conducted, where the Directorate expressed the following needs:

- A review of Directorate's structure and bylaws to inform the development of necessary policies, staff key competencies, guidelines, tools and procedures for effective functioning of the Directorate;
- An assessment of GDAS employees to ensure that staff are qualified enough to conduct academic supervision at the school level. Development of a clear competency matrix for staff recruitment, development and appraisal;
- A GDAS policy (a legal document that outlines GDAS mandates, objectives, etc.), as at the moment there is no policy in place; there is only one Laiha (Bylaw) developed in 2016 and one general guideline (UNICEF developed) that are not sufficient;
- A review and strengthening of the existing monitoring, mentoring and reporting tools with appropriate technical support;
- Orientation training and initial mentoring support of GDAS staff at all levels on the developed policies, guidelines, tools and procedures;
- The introduction of a new Academic Supervision model (School Level Academic Supervision), with ,in addition to the academic supervision team at the district level the head teacher will act as a coach;
- Development of a clear support system, including guidelines and required tools, where national GDAS team supports the provincial teams, the provincial teams support district teams, and district teams support government schools; and
- Transportation incentives for District Academic Supervision staff to be able to visit schools regularly.

In summary, the needs of the General Directorate of Academic Supervision (GDAS) staff are:

- Capacity-building and professionalization to perform its functions through finalized competency framework, performance assessment standardization, training on core competencies, coaching to deliver to standard.
- Training on specific roles for different levels (on national role, to be able to train provincial/district staff to carry out their role, on provincial role, and district role to work at community / school levels.
- Improved collaboration with DSMS.

Gender considerations:

- GDAS increased numbers of and support for female staff.

3. Objective

The objective of this consultancy is to develop a comprehensive competency-based professional development program for Afghanistan MoE's Academic Supervisors at all levels (National, Provincial and District) through 1) development of the Academic Supervision Competency Framework, 2) a comprehensive needs assessment of the academic supervisors, and 3) supporting the development of standard professional development programs for academic supervisors on the basis of defined competencies and identified gaps in the needs assessment.

The specific objectives of this consultancy are to:

- Lead the development and finalization of the Academic Supervision Competency Framework using a consultative, participatory approach, and working in close coordination with the MoE's GDAS and AQLC teams;
- Lead a comprehensive needs assessment of GDAS staff working at the national, provincial and district levels to identify capacity gaps on the basis of defined competencies; and
- Provide technical support for the development of standardized training packages targeting academic supervisors based on the developed competencies.

4. Main Duties and Responsibilities

The consultant will directly lead all the technical activities under this consultancy. The major responsibilities are listed below. They include but are not limited to:

General:

- Conduct desk review of the existing MoE, AQLC partners and other development partners' relevant documents and tools, especially teacher standards and competencies and students subject specific standards and life skills competencies;
- Conduct literature review of best practices around academic supervision models and systems regionally and globally;
- Study the details of the Education Quality Reform in Afghanistan (EQRA), Afghan Children Read (ACR) and any other relevant large scale education projects being implemented in Afghanistan and, once in Afghanistan, meet with these project stakeholders to understand the projects in detail to identify synergies and prevent overlap and duplication efforts;
- Conduct project field visits to understand the context through visiting schools and academic supervisors offices to get a general overview of the education systems;
- Meet with local and national education officials including school teachers, school administrators, district and provincial level academic supervisors, national academic supervision specialists, etc. to understand current academic supervision structure, their effectiveness, what is working, and what is not working.

Academic Supervision Competency Framework:

- Organize a series of national and provincial level consultation meetings and workshops to collect inputs from the relevant stakeholders (GDAS, DSMS, Directorate of Policy, Curriculum Department, Teacher Education Department, General Education, UNICEF, World Bank, UNESCO, GIZ, JICA, AQLC, and any other Development Partners identified by AQLC) for the development of the Academic Supervision Competency Framework;
- Develop necessary documentation (i.e. Power Point presentation(s), concept brief(s) and a summary of the Academic Supervision Competency Framework) for presentation in the relevant education consultative meetings and forums;
- Participate in relevant education working group meetings and forums (CBE working group, Teacher Policy working group, Teacher Education Working Group, EMIS working group, etc.) to learn from other education programs and to provide updates on the development of the Academic Supervision Competency Framework; as required.

Training needs assessments of GDAS staff:

- Develop assessment tools for the MoE's staff capacity needs, jointly with the MoE;
- Lead the assessment of the capacity needs of GDAS staff to identify capacity gaps;
- Analyze data, prepare and submit a report with recommendations for the professional development of MoE's academic supervisors.

Development of standardized professional development training programs:

- Review the existing training packages, including the inclusive education training package, academic supervision training package, social audit guide and tools, class observation tools (including World Bank developed TEACH class observation tool), teacher mentoring guide and tools, school development planning guidelines and tools;
- Review and revise the existing project training index and finalize the training index aligning it with the competencies;
- Develop a detailed work plan for the preparation of professional development packages, manuals and handouts;
- Develop curriculum and syllabi for each professional development programs defining program objectives and learning outcomes;
- Assign different task forces within the technical working groups for the development of professional development programs, tools and resources;
- Develop any required supervision tools, including class observation tool, school assessment tool, teacher growth plans, etc. in close accordance to the competencies and training index;
- Ensure quality of developed professional training package development and write progress reports.

Pilot and finalization of the Academic Supervision Competency Framework and associated professional development programs

- Lead the pilot of the professional development training programs in two provinces and assess the effectiveness of the pilot;
- Revise the Academic Supervision Competency Framework and associated training packages with support from the MoE and the AQLC Technical Working Group (TWG);
- Develop a plan for scaling up the training in 8 AQL project provinces in close consultations with the MoE and the AQLC;
- Present the final Academic Supervision Competency Framework to the MoE, AQLC and relevant stakeholders.

5. Qualifications Required

- Open to both, groups of Individuals (a group of national and international experts) with minimum of Master's degree (PhD is preferred) in academic supervision, educational monitoring, curriculum development, quality assurance, school management and/or a related field; AND, organizations with extensive experience in academic supervision, school supervision, curriculum development in developing countries;

- Demonstrated experience developing large scale national level policies, frameworks and strategies, particularly related to academic supervision (pedagogical leadership, teacher capacity development, school assessment, teacher coaching and mentoring, etc.);
- Demonstrated understanding and/or experience working in the national level large scale programs in areas of teacher competencies and standards, student learning standards, student life skills competencies, school development/monitoring planning, and pedagogical observation;
- Experience of designing capacity building courses and training packages;
- Extensive experience in teacher education and school management;

6. Deliverables

The consultant will be responsible for fulfilling all of the consultancy deliverables and activities. Consortium partners will only provide logistical support. The consultant will consult with the AQLC technical advisers and relevant MoE point persons if required. All the costs including requirement of assistants and associates to the consultant should be reflected in the budget.

Deliverable #1: A detailed inception plan developed

The awarded consultant will be required to prepare a detailed inception plan outlining activities, work plan, budget and milestones. The plan should clearly state the number of required consultation meetings and workshops with clear outcomes of each consultation. The inception plan should include details regarding the development of professional development training packages (number of task forces, timelines, etc.) and the needs assessment study. The inception plan will be reviewed and approved by the MoE and the AQLC partners. All the planned activities are expected to be led by the consultant's team in coordination with the MoE and the AQL technical team.

Deliverable #2: Academic Supervision Competency Framework drafted

After the approval of the inception plan, the consultant will start the implementation of the plan. The Academic Supervision Competency Framework should be developed using a participatory, consultative methodology. A number of consultation meetings and workshops are anticipated at this stage. Regular progress updates (weekly or bi-weekly) should be given to the AQLC.

Deliverable #3: Academic Supervisors large scale needs assessment study conducted

Working closely with the MoE and AQLC members, the consultant will commission a large scale needs assessment study with an aim to find capacity needs of the academic supervisors at national, provincial and district levels in close accordance with the defined competency. Assessment tools and instruments will be developed by the consultant and AQL project's TWG and M&E working groups. The final needs assessment study should clearly identify capacity gaps of academic supervisors at the national, provincial and district levels. Capacity gaps of academic supervisors in one province may be different from other provinces, and this should be clearly reflected in the needs assessment study final report.

Deliverable #4: Completion of a detailed curriculum plan of training programs required for the academic supervision staff.

The consultant will develop a training index of the training programs that are required for the professional development of the academic supervisors working at the national, provincial and district levels. This master list should include objectives and descriptions of each training program. The consultant will serve as a lead curriculum developer and develop all the curriculum and syllabi for each training program. The consultant will form curriculum development task forces out of the AQLC project technical working group members that will act as junior curriculum developers for the development of the training packages. TWG members will help the review of existing training packages, but it is the role of consultant to fine-tune draft works and finalize the packages. The consultant should also develop a quality control mechanism for the timely completion of the training packages.

Deliverable #5: Piloting the Academic Supervision Competency Framework and finalize it based on the realities on the ground.

The draft Academic Supervision Competency Framework and its associated training programs should be piloted in at least two provinces (rural and urban settings). The effectiveness of the piloted program should be properly assessed. The draft Academic Supervision Competency Framework and its associated training programs should be revised and finalized based on the realities on the ground and lessons learned during the pilot.

Deliverable #6: Submission of the final report and completion of any consultancy documents that require revision and refinement.

The consultant will submit a final consultancy report to the consortium partners. The report should include a summary of the consultancy activities, challenges, lessons learned and recommendations. Additionally, any pending documents that require revision of the consultant should be completed and submitted.

7. Reporting line

The Consultant will report directly to the AQL Project Coordinator and AKF Education Director. The consultant will be a staff of the AKF for the assignment period and will lead all the technical activities under this consultancy.

8. Work location(s)

The consultant(s) will be based in Kabul, Afghanistan, frequently meeting with GDAS relevant staff, SDC representatives, and Consortium Partners in Kabul. The consultant will travel to 2 to 3 provinces (Badakhshan, Takhar, Bamyan, Jawzjan, Kandahar, Kapisa, Balkh, and Parwan) to visit program sites and meet with field staff.

9. Schedule (including number assignment days in Afghanistan, total assignment days, total payable days)

The schedule will be subject to the work plan the consultant(s) offers. However, the proposed work plan might change according to the context of program areas and AQL consortium partners' suggestions.

- Consultancy duration: Between 5 to 7 months, 60 working days.

10. Terms of Payment

The payment will be processed based on the completion of the deliverables.

10% of the fees will be paid after the completion of the inception report which is satisfactory to MoE and AQL consortium partners. 20% of the fees will be released when Deliverable 2 is completed and AQL consortium members and MoE are satisfied with the framework draft. 20% of the fees will be released when Deliverable 4 is satisfactorily completed and the needs assessment report is submitted. 20% of the fees will be released when Deliverable 4 is completed and AQL consortium members and MoE are satisfied with the professional development curriculum and training programs. 20% of the fees will be released when MoE approves the framework (Deliverable 5). 10% of the money will be paid after the submission of the final pending documents that require editing or revision and the final consultancy report.

11. Budget source

SDC – AQL– Consultancy – Kabul

12. Additional Significant Information

The consultancy period is between 5 to 7 months (60 working days) subject to the agreement of consultant and partners. The travel days to and from Afghanistan will be paid according to AKF (Afg) policy. Accommodations, health insurances, meals and refreshments will be also paid/provided by AKF. Perdiems, incidentals and any other costs should be reflected in the proposal budget. AKF will pay all three meals for day's consultant works in AKF office/guest house for which case per diem will not be paid anymore. If consultant prefers to stay in an accommodation other than AKF guesthouses, per diem will be paid according to AKF policy to cover accommodations and meals costs.

Application

Groups of individuals/organizations interested in leading this consultancy must submit their CVs/fact sheets and a technical and cost proposal, including daily rate (Maximum 20 pages) through electronic mail by COB (Kabul time) Aug 31 2019 to jobs.afghanistan@akdn.org. Any queries regarding this consultancy should be communicated through email to jobs.afghanistan@akdn.org at least one week ahead of the submission deadline.

The criteria through which the proposals will be evaluated are as below:

No	Criteria	Description	Score	
1	Technical proposal	ToR	Understanding of the ToR and addressing the ToR deliverables	10
		Consultancy methodology	Sound methodology of the consultancy including the procedures, timeline, etc.	15
		Proposed intervention approach	Cost-effectiveness, ownership and sustainability of the approach proposed are taken into consideration throughout the technical proposal.	15
		Writing style	Integrity, coherence, and originality of the proposal	10
2	Consultant background	Relevant experience and technical knowledge in academic supervision; school improvement; and experience working in Afghanistan or any other least-developed country.	30	
3	Cost/budget	Reasonable and appropriate costing. Clear budget alignment between level of effort, technical approach, and deliverables.	20	
Total			100	

Important Notes:

Please quote the Vacancy Number as the Subject of the e-mail when sending your application. Supporting documents, e.g. diplomas, recommendation letters, identification card(s) etc., are not required at this stage, therefore not to be sent along with the application.

Only short listed candidates will be contacted for further assessment.

Female candidates are encouraged to apply. Aga Khan Foundation Afghanistan recruitment and selection procedures reflect our commitment to equal opportunity, safe guarding of children from abuse and zero tolerance to sexual-harassment.

Your details and information shared on this advertisement shall remain confidential.