

Consultancy opportunity – Researchers: Status of English in South Asia Basic Education

Responses to clarification questions

Q1: What does ‘basic education’ refer to?

A1: Basic education may differ slightly per country depending on what the legal requirement is for students to be in full time education. In South Asia it is usually either Grade 1-10 or Grade 1-12

Q2: Are you looking for primary data?

A2: We expect the majority of the data to be available through the literature and government / UN databases. However, if the consulting team felt it would be beneficial to conduct a small number of interviews (online) and could do these within the time frame / budget stipulated, this would be an appropriate addition to the methodology.

Q3: Can in-country consultants work independently or should they apply through their institution?

A3: Consultants can apply independently or through their institution. Please note that if applications are made through the institution, the same terms and conditions of contract as provided as Annex 1 will be used. As stated in the RFP *‘By submitting a Proposal, you are agreeing to be bound by the terms of this RFP and the Contract without further negotiation or amendment. Once the Contract is awarded, there will be no changes allowed to the Contract (except in accordance with the provisions of the Contract).’*

Q4: What relevant information can you provide to the research team given the short time of this work?

A4: We will be able to provide a limited amount of documentation to support the research process but we expect that the consulting teams will conduct desk research to identify the information required. Please also refer to Annex 4 which sets out the guiding questions we expect to help frame the overviews.

Q5: We are lecturers based at [UK universities] both of which permit us to conduct small consultancy projects in a private capacity. Since the proposed project is relatively small, we would prefer to take this route rather than going through our universities’ admin, legal and costing processes. Is this acceptable? We would obviously be adhering to their usual professional and ethical standards in the conduct of our work.

A5: Your preference to apply as individuals rather than through the university is acceptable.

Q6: As individual applicants, we are not registered for VAT. Is this acceptable?

A6: The fact that you are not registered for VAT is acceptable. We would therefore not expect a VAT component for invoicing purposes.

Q7: In case of proceeding in a private capacity, what should we write in Section 1: Social value of the supplier response form, since we are not an organization?

A7: The social value section asks for any evidence you have of working towards the areas outlined. You can use any example that you have been involved in personally, whether it is related to your work as an employee or outside activity.

Q8: Pricing in this case would be a straightforward daily rate for our time since we do not envisage other significant costs. Is this acceptable?

A8: Pricing as per a daily rate per each consultant is acceptable. We would just need to be clear on whether you submit a single invoice or separate ones if there is more than one consultant involved.

Q9: We are interested in submitting a proposal but this would come from a non-UK institution. Is it still worth us applying?

A9: It is not mandatory for a UK university to be involved and you are very welcome to submit your proposal. The only mandatory requirement in terms of nationality or location is that at least one team member must be from the country / countries of focus. As noted in the RFP, 'The British Council particularly encourages partnerships between UK and South Asian consultants / institutions in the development of these research teams' but this isn't a mandatory requirement.

Q10: Can individuals apply or this is only for a group and teams? Is there a qualification benchmark for both team members?

A10: We're hoping for pairs of consultants to apply together to undertake the research for each country. Within the team, all of the criteria that are outlined in section 9.3 of the RFP need to be met in order for the proposal to have a chance of being successful.

Q11: The RFP asks for teams of two, including a local early career researcher. Would a proposal with a team of three be considered?

A11: Yes this would be acceptable, providing that at least one of the team is a national of the country you were planning to focus on and that the number of days and maximum budget stipulated in the RFP is not exceeded. It's also important to point out that the local researcher does not have to be an early career researcher – they could be experienced. It's just that we're particularly interested in supporting those early on in their career.