

Aga Khan Foundation (AKF), Afghanistan Consultancy announcement

Position Title: Baseline Study- Consolidation and Expansion of Community-Based Education (CBE) project in Afghanistan

No of Position: 01

Duty Station: Kabul, Bamyan and Baghlan

Announcing Date: 11/08/2022

Closing Date: 24/08/2022

Vacancy Number: CS/KBL/08/22/053

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.

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.

1. Rationale

The Aga Khan Foundation (AKF), in partnership with UNICEF and Asian Development Bank (ADB), is implementing the Consolidation and Expansion of Community-Based Education (CBE) project in Afghanistan, aiming at providing formal education opportunities for boys and girls in Baghlan and Bamyan provinces through establishing new Grade 1 CBE and Accelerated Learning Program (ALP) classes, and continuing existing CBE classes from grades 2-9 that were established under other projects prior to 2022.

This ToR outlines a request for conducting a baseline evaluation (open to qualified firms and individuals) of the project to establish a baseline for the project indicators and build an evidence base for measuring the results brought by the project during the project implementation cycle (2022-2023).

2. Project Background

The project is aimed at providing learning opportunities for Afghan girls and boys by expanding and establishing community-based education (CBE) classes in Bamyan and Baghlan provinces as detailed in table 1:

Table 1: Project Geographic Coverage

Bamyan	Baghlan
Bamyan center	Baghlan-e Jadid
Waras	Doshi
Panjab	Khinjan
Kahmard	Dahna-e Ghor
Yawkalang 1 and 2	Nahrin
Saighan	Burka
Shibar	Pul-I Khumri

Outcome 1: Access to education for emergency-affected girls and boys is increased.

Under this outcome, the project will extend existing 609 CBE classes as well as establish 331 new CBE classes based on an assessment of the current needs in existing and new communities that have never been served before across Baghlan, and Bamyan provinces. The project will priorities multiple cohort CBE in existing communities to

make sure that children have access to learning opportunities in the targeted communities. The project will also establish multigrade CBE classes where applicable and required.

Outcome 2: Quality of learning for emergency-affected girls and boys is improved.

To strengthen program sustainability, the project will build strong relationships with hub schools to enable future transition of students. This will be done through inviting hub school management representatives to CBE teacher trainings and coordinating with Hub school Shuras to conduct yearly back to school campaigns. Additionally, the intervention will also focus on the smooth transition and handover of the CBE classes to build ownership of the program by the key education stakeholders, therefore increasing their support for the program and preparation for handover after the project ends. Moreover, the project will also work with hub schools to establish child friendly environment and will enable them to admit more CBE students so that they can continue their education in hub schools.

3. Scope of work / Overall objective

The purpose of this baseline study is to help the programme to focus on achievement related to a set of expected outcomes; and to empower them to collaboratively measure progress towards them, as well as review them as needed and appropriate. Aligned with this purpose, the baseline study is designed to achieve two specific objectives:

- ✓ To establish starting points or baselines for its Key Performance Indicators
- ✓ To provide recommendations for the development, implementation, monitoring, evaluation and learning for the Programme

Baseline data is intended to inform the establishment of realistic and achievable targets, provide a point of reference against which progress on or towards the achievement of outcomes can be monitored and evaluated.

4. Baseline Study Audience

The baseline study intends to understand the current situation from the perspective of the following groups and stakeholders.

- ✓ Parents
- ✓ Teachers
- ✓ School Management Shura / Council (SMS) members
- ✓ Hub school teachers and School Management Team (SMT)
- ✓ Community elders
- ✓ Students
- ✓ PED / DED Officials

5. Main duties and responsibilities

- Conduct a desk review to develop a contextual understanding of the project by using the project or other document required.
- Develop an inception report for the baseline study.
- Develop baseline methodology, tools (English and Dari), evaluation matrix, research / evaluation questions, and training / orientation materials and guidelines for the data collectors.
- Recruit and train enumerators / field staff on the data collection tools, on how to obtain consent from beneficiaries to participate in the study/taking photos, methodology and other baseline activities as required.
- Ensure data quality by employing certain parameters and quality checks.
- Use of appropriate data management system and hand over of all data sets back to AKF as part of the final baseline report as an annex.
- Clean and analyze the data collected for the baseline study including any translations needed.
- Provide regular monitoring of enumerators, updates to AKF, on data collection progress and feedback on data collection.
- Draft baseline evaluation report and revise based on feedback from AKF after a review (AKF review will take at least 2 weeks for each revision).
- Provide the final, edited, approved, baseline report as per report requirements and quality standards.
- Produce a report brief (limit of 2 pages) for management, donor, external audience use.
- Develop PowerPoint presentation capturing study findings, and other key information.

- Present study findings to AKF education management team.

6. Work locations

The consultant will conduct in person or virtual consultation meetings with AKF Afghanistan Education team alongside in Kabul and will travel to the field for trainings and data collection purposes. Subsequently, the field data collection will take place in Baghlan and Bamyán provinces of Afghanistan. The consultant / firm will need to further elaborate and explore the suggested methods and validate/contextualize them in consultation with both the Education and MERL teams. She/he will need to discuss the proposed study plan and approaches with both teams and seek technical guidance including the verification of all requested data collection, management, analysis, and reporting of proposed/planned ways forward. The consultant will report to the National Knowledge Management Coordinator, Education, who will coordinate field activities with the Baghlan regional education team.

7. Deliverables

- **Inception Report for the Baseline Evaluation** that includes a brief presentation on the field workplan, research methodology, sampling plan, quantitative and qualitative data collection tools, list of beneficiaries to be interviewed, etc
- **Develop Baseline Tools and Evaluation Matrix:** The consultant will develop the baseline study tools to capture data on the project indicators, along with an evaluation matrix containing relevant research / evaluation questions and methodologies to establish a baseline status for the project indicators. The study shall use electronic / tablet-based data collection tools and will be responsible for translating any documents that are required to be in local language (Dari)
- **Data Collection and Training:** The consultant will hire enumerators and train them on tools and data collection strategies and will collect the data with full consideration of the data quality standards, best practices, and research ethics.
- **Data Management:** The consultant is expected to suggest and develop a proper, reliable, and accessible data management system, so that the required data could be stored safely and securely. As well as she/he is expected to carefully hand over all the data sets back to AKF-A upon the completion of consultancy.
- **Data Analysis:** The consultant will develop data outputs and conduct data analysis based on the data received from AKF. She/he is also expected to develop a proper data analysis plan, so that it can further be followed up based on the nature of required indicators and needed level of data analysis.
- **First Draft of the Baseline Evaluation Report** that includes table of contents, acronym list, clear/organized headlines, executive summary, a narrative of how the study was conducted, findings, recommendations, beneficiary testimonials and photos (must be accompanied with signed consent forms), lessons learned, and evaluation appendices such as quantitative databases, tools, and a matrix with evaluation notes (clean version). The report should be concise (limit of 20 pages), well-written (no spelling/grammar mistakes), includes 1-2 sentence descriptions of all photos and graphs/tables, and should be visually appealing where tables/ graphs are easy to read and used where appropriate/useful. The consultant is also required to have a presentation to related program audience on the primary findings or as part of the first draft of baseline report, so that additional points or modifications by the program team including recommendations could also be considered in the final version of the report.
- **Final Baseline Report:** The consultant will review and incorporate comments from AKF Afghanistan and Geneva technical teams and submit a final report.
- **Final Report Brief:** A 2-page brief summarizing the baseline findings, recommendations, and other key information from the report.
- **PowerPoint Presentation** of key findings, recommendations and lessons learnt tailored to external education stakeholders (e.g., government and education partners); and should be presented in a session to AKF education team.

8. Methodology

The selected consultant/s will be required to propose a detailed baseline methodology in coordination with the AKF Afghanistan and Geneva education team. The baseline study should adopt a mixed methods approach, integrating quantitative and qualitative methods to achieve the baseline objectives.

The study will use different methods such as desk review, observation, survey(s), KIIs, FGDs to collect data from beneficiary groups e.g., students, parents, and communities, to add a diverse perspective to the baseline, triangulate results, and to encourage participation of different groups of stakeholders. While developing the methodology, the consultant will consider age, gender, and include gender analysis.

It is expected that the survey will be conducted by taking into consideration ethical standards as per the AKF **Safeguarding Guideline for Researchers and Data Collectors and Safeguarding Policy** regarding the gathering of data from girls, boys, men, and women.

Table 2: Project Result Framework

Expected Results	Indicators
Outcome 1: Access to education for emergency-affected girls and boys is increased	
Output 1.1: CBE classes are functional and meet minimum standards for quality	# of new CBE classes established
	# of existing CBE classes functioning
	# of children (m/f) regularly attending CBE (CBS/ALC) classes
	# of children (m/f) equipped with learning materials
	# of CBE learning spaces that have safe drinking water and handwashing facilities
Outcome 2: Quality of learning for emergency-affected girls and boys is improved	
Output 2.1: Teachers have improved capacity on teaching methodologies, including inclusive education and psychosocial support	# of teachers (m/f) recruited and trained on core methodologies
Output 2.2: Community decision-makers have improved knowledge on the importance and the right to education for all children, especially girls	# of trained CBE SMS and community members

In addition to the indicators in result framework, the consultant will also be responsible to propose proxy indicator(s) on measuring the baseline status of the students' learning outcomes. The consultant should also propose a sound methodology for measuring the learning outcomes along with learning outcome assessment tools that can measure the learning outcomes in primary and lower secondary levels.

9. Qualifications Required

- This assignment is open for individuals/organizations who have the below mentioned competencies with a strong record in conducting evaluations with excellent knowledge of evaluation research and a good understanding of education sector programs, particularly in the context of Afghanistan. The consultant should have the following skills and competencies:
- Minimum of master's degree in Education, Development Studies, Research / Evaluation, or any other related fields.
- At least 5 years professional experience conducting research / evaluating education projects, especially those that work with adolescents in fragile contexts, such as Afghanistan.
- Demonstrable experience with an array of qualitative and quantitative methodologies, including in the systematic verification and analysis of both quantitative and qualitative data.
- Ability to write concise analytical reports and a thorough understanding of how to tailor written content to fit different audiences.
- Demonstrable experience of producing high-quality, credible evaluation research (examples of past reports is required).
- Excellent writing and verbal communication skills in English; knowledge of local languages will be an asset but not required.
- Experience working in development / conflict contexts, like Afghanistan; and
- Ability to travel (minimum of one visit to Kabul) to Afghanistan; ability to travel to project sites in Baghlan and Bamyān provinces will be an asset but not required.

10. Terms of Payment

The payment will be processed as following:

- 30% after deliverable #3 finalized.
- 30% after deliverable #6 finalized.
- 40% after all assignment finished and approved by the AKF team.

11. Timeline / Work plan

The baseline study is expected to commence by mid-August 2022 (tentatively) with final deliverables by 30, September 2022. The total number of days for the consultancy shall not exceed 25 working days.

12. Ethical protocols and documents required (where applicable)

The assessment approach must consider the safety of participants, especially children at all stages of the consultancy. The consultant will need to demonstrate how they have considered the protection of children through the different stages, including training of enumerators, data collection, data analysis, taking photos, conducting interviews, and report writing.

The consultant is required to set out their approach to ensuring complete compliance with international good practices with regards to research ethics and protocols particularly with regards to safeguarding children, vulnerable groups (including people with disabilities) and those in fragile and conflict-affected areas. Consideration should be given to the items listed below. Note that this is not an exhaustive list and therefore, potential contractors should consider additional aspects of ethics. The consultant is also required to include a copy of their ethics policy as part of the package of supporting documents:

- Administrative, technical, and physical safeguards to protect the confidentiality of those participating in research.
- Data protection and secure maintenance procedures for personal information.
- Parental consent concerning data collection from / photographs of minors (participants under 18) or collation of data about minors.
- Age-and ability-appropriate assent processes based on reasonable assumptions about comprehension for the ages of minors and minors with disabilities they intend to involve in the research; and
- Age-appropriate participation of minors, including in the development of data collection tools.

13. Additional Significant Information to know:

All expenses (travel, translators, staff, accommodations, visa. etc.) and equipment required for research (laptop, health insurance, communication, etc.) will be borne by the consultant and AKF will not pay any additional charges made for this assignment.

Application:

Interested firms or individual should submit their proposal to Jobs.Afghanistan@akdn.org no later than 24th August 2022. For more technical information and query please contact Mr. Rahmatshah Safi at: Rahmatshah.Safi@akdn.org

Important Points:

- Please quote the Vacancy Number as the Subject of the e-mail when applying.
- Please submit the resume of responsible individual along with the company license when applying.
- Only short-listed proposals 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 and safeguarding of children, beneficiaries, partners, community members and employees in accordance with AKF(Afg)'s safeguarding policy.

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