

Request for Proposal
FELLOWSHIP COORDINATION CONTRACTOR

Deadline: November 8, 2013

*****SEE UPDATED BIDDER QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS SECTION BELOW**

CRDF Global seeks to engage a contractor to provide logistical and administrative support for up to ten Iraqi fellows to be hosted in the United States as participants in a program sponsored by the U.S. Department of State (DOS) called the Iraq Science Fellowship Program (ISFP), which CRDF Global implements.

CRDF Global is a nonprofit organization authorized by the U.S. Congress and established in 1995 by the National Science Foundation. CRDF Global promotes international scientific and technical collaboration through grants, technical resources, and training. CRDF Global is based in Arlington, Virginia, with offices in Moscow and St. Petersburg, Russia; Kyiv, Ukraine; Almaty, Kazakhstan; and Amman, Jordan.

Background:

Initiated as a public-private partnership in 2008 and originally called the Iraq Engineering Enhancement Program (IEEP), the fellowship focused on increasing the professional and technical capacity of Iraqi engineers while promoting infrastructure and workforce development. In 2010/2011, the fellowship program was expanded to also include chemists and biologists and was renamed the Iraq Science Fellowship Program.

ISFP is part of the U.S. and Iraq's ongoing commitment to the development of Iraq's science and technology sector. In 2008, the U.S. and Iraq signed the Strategic Framework Agreement (SFA), which DOS and CRDF Global support through fellowships that allow Iraqi scientists and engineers to increase their professional and technical skills through opportunities in the U.S. Since 2008, U.S. academic institutions and private organizations have hosted 60 fellows.

ISFP applicants undergo a rigorously competitive selection process. Fellows are typically between the ages of 30-55, men and women, and come from Iraqi government ministries, universities, and small businesses. Fellows are required to:

- Receive approval from their employer in Iraq to attend the fellowship and to continue to receive their salary while away;
- Return to Iraq upon completion of their fellowship; and
- Not bring family members on their fellowship.

Upon completing the three to six month fellowship, fellows return to Iraq with the knowledge of how to teach current industry practices and how to serve as liaisons between Iraqi and U.S. governmental ministries, educational institutions, and private sector companies.

2013/2014 Fellowship Program

Between September 2013 and May 2014, CRDF Global will take the following steps to implement ISFP:

- Distribute the call for applications and receive applications;
- Screen applicants and make final participant selection;
- Identify host institutions and match applicants with hosts; and
- Prepare scopes of work between host institutions and fellows

Summary of Expectations for the Logistical Contractor:

The contractor will be integral to the implementation of ISFP by providing logistical support for up to ten fellows beginning with their pre-departure from Iraq, throughout their stay in the U.S. and concluding with their return back to Iraq. Below is a list of tasks and deliverables that outline the cradle-to-grave involvement and coordination CRDF Global will expect the logistics contractor to undertake and perform successfully.

Tasks and Deliverables:

CRDF Global is seeking a logistics contractor to provide the following services in support of ISFP:

A. Program Logistics

- 1) Manage pre-departure arrangements, including:
 - a. Establishing e-mail and phone communication with each fellow
 - b. Obtaining U.S. J-visas for fellows
 - c. Arranging medical exams in Iraq to certify that fellows are fit for travel
 - d. Securing comprehensive emergency medical insurance for each fellow
 - e. Arranging roundtrip travel to the U.S., and in-country travel to host city
 - f. Securing fully-furnished housing for fellows in their respective host cities, with renter's insurance, as close to host institution as possible. Homestay housing not preferred
 - g. Arranging a pre-departure orientation in Baghdad, Iraq, that should cover Program information, policies and regulations, as well as guidance related to international travel, at a minimum.
- 2) Provide an orientation in Washington, DC, prior to fellows' arrival at their host institutions. Contractor will make all necessary arrangements including fellow lodging and event catering. May be held at the CRDF Global Arlington office. Past orientations have been between three to five days in length. Orientation should cover:
 - a. Introduction to ISFP (material provided by CRDF Global)
 - b. Administrative and logistical concerns including, but not limited to:
 - i. Establishing U.S. bank accounts
 - ii. Communication (cell phones, SIM cards, etc.)
 - iii. Health Insurance
 - iv. Stipends and Finance
 - c. A cultural orientation to living in the U.S.

In past orientations, bank accounts were opened in person with the fellows and cell phones were purchased for them. Inclusion of a local sightseeing outing preferred.
- 3) In case a fellow cannot participate in the group orientation, the Contractor may be expected to provide an on-site orientation to individual fellows at their host institutions.
- 4) Arrange all payments to fellows and fellowship vendors, including but not limited to:
 - a. Monthly stipends, as appropriate for each fellow's location and not to exceed the FTR travel allowance maximums. Stipends are meant to support the fellows' regular living expenses, including meals and incidentals (personal care, clothing, etc.)
 - b. Ground Transportation allowance
 - c. Rent and lodging related expenses
 - d. Any allowable reimbursable expenses to the fellows (baggage fees, etc.)

Note: In years past, fellowships ranged from 3-6 months in length. Proposals can assume an average of 5 months of expenses per fellow. The actual length of each fellowship will be determined in early 2014.

- 5) Arrange travel for fellows to approved supplemental activities, such as professional conferences, laboratory visits, trainings, etc. Travel arrangement may include airfare, lodging, per diem, ground transportation and any necessary registration/event fees. CRDF Global expects an average of two supplemental activities per fellow with expenses averaging \$1,500.00 per trip.
- 6) Arrange U.S. culture exposure opportunities, which may include: dinner with American families, visits to museums, state/local fairs, etc., in respective host cities.

B. Care and Monitoring

Contractor is to be the fellows' first point of contact for all fellowship-related issues and concerns, including those related to housing, health/insurance, travel, financial and legal issues and any personal emergencies. Contractor will be expected to provide ongoing care and monitoring support of fellows to address personal or logistical issues via phone or email. In the past, bi-weekly calls were scheduled for the length of the fellowship.

Reporting

Contractor will provide regular programmatic reporting to CRDF Global on fellowship matters. In addition, Contractor will be expected to submit quarterly reports detailing incurred and projected expenses, including detail on individual fellowships.

Proposal Requirements:

Each proposal should address the bidder’s approach to the task and deliverables, including an explanation of the overall philosophy in implementing fellowships for foreign nationals in the United States.

The proposal should demonstrate a proven track record of providing excellent logistical and administrative services for international fellowship programs, demonstrate ability to work with a diverse group of individuals and bring cultural sensitivity and awareness to project implementation.

CRDF Global is seeking an experienced logistics contractor that can show initiative and flexibility in difficult, time-sensitive situations, can offer strong written and oral communication skills with non-native English speakers, exercises sound judgment when arranging logistics that are in the best interest of the fellow and has on-call availability for emergency situations.

In addition, each proposal must include:

- Cost proposal with itemized fee detail as related to tasks and deliverables;
- Fee Validation;
- Resumes of key staff that would be responsible for implementing the contract; and
- A minimum of two professional references.

Contractor Selection Criteria:

CRDF Global will select the contractor that provides the best value to CRDF Global in terms of the logistics contractor's ability to:

- Meet the requirements;
- Highlight examples of past experience with fellowship programs and/or similar programs, particularly with international visitors’
- Proposed total cost; and
- Have staff members who are proficient or fluent in Arabic is preferred.

Contract Award:

CRDF Global reserves the right to not award a contract to any candidate, if none are deemed suitable.

Timetable:

October 18, 2013	Deadline for Bidder questions on the RFP
October 25, 2013	All questions will be addressed by CRDF Global and issued to all parties that inquired about the RFP
November 8, 2013	RFP submissions due
December 1, 2013	CRDF Global selects logistics contractor
January 1, 2014	Logistics contractor start date (CRDF Global expects the fellows to arrive in one group in June 2014)
December 31, 2014	Logistics contractor contract end date

Submission:

Final proposals should be submitted to isfp@crdfglobal.org, no later than 5:00 PM EST on November 8, 2013. Proposals should be submitted as electronic documents in PDF, Word or Excel format.

UPDATE: SUBMITTED BIDDER QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

1. **What type of contract is anticipated for the awarded contractor?**
 - A. CRDF Global fields both cost reimbursable and fixed-price proposals, but the nature of the program lends itself to a cost-reimbursable agreement.
2. **Is there an incumbent and if so, please cite the name of the firm.**
 - A. CRDF Global subcontracted this activity in the past, but every year we openly compete this program to all potential bidders. This is not only CRDF Global policy for an award of this size, but we feel it translates to a stronger program. The incumbent is World Learning.
3. **Did the federal government's shutdown impact the timetable provided in the RFP?**
 - A. CRDF Global has all the necessary approvals from our counterparts at the U.S. Department of State to proceed with this activity for 2013-2014, so we do not anticipate any negative impact from the federal shutdown.
4. **Is the logistics contractor responsible for arranging participant travel from their home to the PDO and to the airport in Iraq?**
 - A. Yes, the logistics contractor is responsible for arranging and coordinating all travel to the PDO and to the airport. Participants may choose to transport themselves, but the contractor is expected to facilitate transportation for participants that cannot transport themselves.
5. **What in-country partners if any would CRDF Global prefer or recommend to the logistics contractor?**
 - A. CRDF Global does not have a preference. The contractor is free to work with any in-country partners that it sees fit.
6. **What role does CRDF Global anticipate the U.S. Embassy will play in the ISFP?**
 - A. We expect the Embassy's role to be limited, with regular consular services being their primary role. Representatives from the Embassy may request to be present at the pre-departure orientation, which the contractor would be notified about well in advance.
7. **How will host institutions be selected?**
 - A. CRDF Global identifies and matches possible institutions based on the specific research interests of the fellow and prospective hosts and their willingness to participate in the Program. See a list of previous host institutions below.
8. **How many fellows will be placed at each host institution?**
 - A. CRDF Global will place up to ten fellows at up to ten different host institutions. Multiple fellows have been placed with the same host in the past, but we typically place all the fellows at different institutions.
9. **The RFP states that the contractor will provide "logistical support for up to ten fellows beginning with their pre-departure from Iraq, throughout their stay in the U.S. and concluding with their return back to Iraq." This means the logistics contractor is not expected to facilitate or implement alumni activities, correct?**
 - A. The logistics contractor is not expected to facilitate or implement alumni activities. The scope of work pertaining to engaging with the fellows ends when the fellow returns to Iraq.
10. **Does the logistics contractor provide fellows with separate payments for incidentals (meals, personal care, clothing, etc.), transportation, and rent? Or can all of these expenses be covered by one monthly stipend?**
 - A. The contractor may determine and propose the method of payment, though we would prefer rent and any utilities to be paid directly to the vendors, not as part of the fellows' stipends. Stipend amounts have previously ranged from \$800 - \$1,100 depending on the host institution location; however, we defer to the bidders to propose stipend policies for the program.

11. Should the contractor pay the monthly fee for mobile devices?

A. The contractor may determine and propose the method of payment.

12. Please clarify what is considered to be allowable reimbursable expenses as only one example (baggage fees) is included.

A. CRDF Global adheres to the Federal Travel Regulations guidelines, which we must flow down to the selected contractor for this activity. These regulations allow for a wide range of allowable miscellaneous travel expenses, but in the past our contractor has narrowed this list for reimbursable expenses per their own travel policies.

13. Does the past performance of a team (i.e., a firm and its proposed team members) count toward the requirements presented in the solicitation document or does the firm alone have to meet these requirements?

A. At a minimum, the past performance of the firm itself meets the requirements for the proposal. However, we also would like you to submit resumes/CVs of proposed team members if possible.

14. The RFP states each proposal must include “a minimum of two professional references.” Who qualifies as a professional reference: funder, partner, participant, or all of the above? And in what form should the professional reference be (PPR, letter, other)?

A. The references should either be former funders/clients or partners who can attest to the the performance of the bidder. At a minimum, the reference information should include a point of contact and contact information. Supplemental letters, testimonials, or other information from the reference are welcome.

15. What is the anticipated funding level for the 2013/2014 Fellowship Program?

A. CRDF Global does not disclose the funding level of the program, but we welcome the bidder to propose a comprehensive budget for the program, considering all the factors necessary to implement the program as outlined in the RFP.

16. Is the logistics contractor required to monitor participant academic progress? If so, in what form (surveys, progress reports, instructor evaluations, etc.)?

A. The logistics contractor is not required to monitor the academic progress of the participants -- CRDF Global is responsible for this task. The contractor is responsible to monitor all logistical arrangements while the fellow is at the host institution, though the contractor should notify CRDF Global any academic issues should they become aware of any.

17. Will fellows use monthly stipends to pay for U.S. culture exposure opportunities (dinner with American families, visits to museums, state/local fairs, etc.)? Or should the budget include a separate line item for these expenses?

A. In the past, the cultural events were arranged and paid for directly by the contractor as a separate line item. We would not be opposed, however, to other possible arrangements for these activities.

18. The RFP asks that “fee validation” be included with the proposal. Could CRDF provide additional information regarding what it would consider adequate fee validation? For example, would a NICRA letter be sufficient to justify budgeted indirect costs?

A. The fee validation is to certify that the costs proposed to CRDF Global are consistent with with the bidder offers to similar clients for similar work, therefore the NICRA can be included as support of the fee validation.

PREVIOUS AND CURRENT ISFP HOST INSTITUTIONS

- Arizona State University
- Baker Hughes
- Coastal Carolina University
- Florida International University
- Georgia Institute of Technology
- Georgetown University
- Iowa State University
- John Hopkins University
- Kansas State University
- Lawrence Berkeley National Laboratory
- Lawrence Livermore National Laboratory
- The Louis Berger Group
- Manhattan College
- The Mayo Clinic
- McKissack & McKissack
- Missouri University of Science and Technology
- National Renewable Energy Laboratory
- New Mexico Institute of Mining and Technology
- Oregon Health & Science University
- Penn State University
- Syracuse University
- Texas A & M University
- Texas Tech University
- Tulane University
- United States Army Corps of Engineers
- United States Department of Agriculture – Agricultural Research Service, Ft. Collins, CO
- University of Akron
- University of California Irvine
- University of California San Diego
- University of Connecticut
- University of Cincinnati
- University of Georgia
- University of Illinois
- University of Louisville
- University of Michigan
- University of Nevada Las Vegas
- University of New Orleans
- University of South Alabama
- University of South Florida
- University of Toledo
- University of Utah