



NATIONAL ICT R&D FUND

To: Prospective Applicants

Subject: Request for Proposal (RFP) # RFP/NICTSP/REG-TEST/10/0026
National ICT Scholarship Program 2010 - “Registration & Conduction of ICT-Scholarship Award Test 2010”

The National ICT R&D Fund, through this Request for Proposal (RFP), intends to invite national registered firms to participate in the selection process for selecting a testing agency that can actively register students nation-wide and conduct ICT-Scholarship Award Test for National ICT Scholarship Program 2010.

The RFP specifies eligibility requirements and proposal submission timelines. The applicants must comply with all instructions given in the attached RFP document. The work schedule mentioned under section 5.1 of this RFP shall be strictly complied with.

The RFP can also be downloaded from: www.ictrdf.org.pk/scholarship/test

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1. OBJECTIVES

We endeavor to enhance the national ICT related human resource development capacity manifolds by promoting ICT related educational programs and activities.

Through this request for proposal we intend to select a testing agency to conduct the ICT-Scholarship Award Test nationally. The scholarship will be awarded for 4-year undergraduate degrees in ICT related fields. The selected testing agency is required to comply with all instructions provided in the Scope of Services “SOS” as provided in this document. The objectives of this RFP document are as follows:

1. To register candidates for the ICT-Scholarship Award Test;
2. To conduct an ICT-Scholarship Award Test of students in English, Mathematics, Physics, Chemistry and Computing Science (MCQ based);
3. To provide a unified and standard criteria for evaluation;
4. To provide a merit list of applicants (students) according to the criteria provided by National ICT R&D Fund;

2. NATIONAL ICT SCHOLARSHIP PROGRAM (NICTSP) 2010

The Outreach Scholarship Program (OSP) was launched as a pilot project in 2006 for students of low income groups from rural areas of Punjab. In phase-I of this pilot project, 2,500 students of most marginalized communities were selected through a transparent process and given training in aptitude based university admission test in the disciplines of ICT. 200 teachers were empowered by imparting training in modern pedagogical techniques who were engaged for this training program. In the phase-II of this project, 200 successful students were awarded scholarships for four year BS degree programs of National University of Computer and Emerging Sciences in Telecom Engineering and Computer Science.

In 2007 National ICT R&D Fund executed a more comprehensive Outreach Scholarship Program. 6,100 students from all over Pakistan were trained in phase-I in problem solving skills. 700 teachers were trained for imparting training in modern pedagogical techniques for this phase. In the phase-II of OSP 2007, 390 students were awarded scholarships worth Rs. 545 million on merit. These students are currently enrolled in the top ranking ICT related universities (FAST-NU, GIKI and NUST-IIT) of Pakistan.

In the year 2008, National ICT R&D Fund re-launched its out-reach scholarship program as National ICT Scholarship Program 2008. The total number of scholarships was increased to 550,

with a total of 11 universities participating in the program. A total of up to Rs. 440 million worth of scholarships were awarded on merit.

In the year 2009, the total number of scholarships was increased to 700, with a total of 10 universities participating in the program. A total of up to Rs. 560 million worth of scholarships were awarded on merit.

This year National ICT R&D Fund is committed to increase the total number of scholarships awarded and at the same time increase the potential out-reach so that this opportunity can be availed by maximum number of students belonging to relatively less developed/marginalized areas of Pakistan.

3. NATIONAL ICT R&D FUND

Introduction

The emerging information and knowledge age and the accompanying technological revolution are heralding a new economic and social order characterized by the development and exploitation of information and communication technologies (ICT) within all spheres of human endeavor. This era is giving rise to the emergence of information and knowledge based economies with traditional economic, industrial and commercial activities being made more efficient and productive by incorporating knowledge driven processes.

The knowledge and information economy has emerged as a new source for the creation of quality jobs, wealth generation and redistribution, rapid economic development and prosperity as well as a means of facilitating competitiveness. With the emerging information age, information and communication technologies are seen by a number of countries as critical for achieving progress in economic and social development. These technologies are offering developing countries like Pakistan a window of opportunity to leap-frog the key stages of industrialization and transform their agriculture dominated economies into service-sector driven, high value-added information and knowledge based economies that can successfully compete in the global village.

Pakistan has witnessed a phenomenal growth in its telecom industry. The Government of Pakistan has mandated that a certain percentage of gross revenue generated by all telecom service providers be allocated to development and research of information and communication technologies with the vision *to transform Pakistan's economy into a knowledge based economy by promoting efficient, sustainable and effective ICT initiatives through synergic development of industrial and academic resources*. To achieve this vision National ICT R&D Fund has been created. This vision will be realized by pursuing the following goals:

1. To provide an enabling environment that facilitates deployment and utilization of ICT education for HR capacity building and enhanced national productivity;
2. To cultivate industry-academia partnership by funding concrete development and research initiatives;
3. To facilitate industrial demand focused HR capacity building and R&D capabilities in the country and promoting ICT related educational programs and activities;
4. To use ICT as a tool for upward mobility of economically challenged citizens of the country;
5. To help develop knowledge based ICT industry for delivery of value-added ICT products and services;
6. To facilitate research and development in those sections of ICT that enhances quality of life for citizens of Pakistan.

4. SCOPE OF SERVICES

The executing agency will be responsible for the following activities:

1. The selected testing agency shall be required to register candidates for taking an MCQ based (F.Sc. level) ICT-Scholarship Award Test, from all provinces of Pakistan including FATA, FANA and Islamabad (rural), based on the prescribed population based quota, as defined by the Government of Pakistan and provided by National ICT R&D Fund;
2. The selected testing agency is required to actively register an estimated 13,000 to 16,000 eligible candidates as per the criteria set by National ICT R&D Fund;
3. The aforementioned estimated list of 13,000 to 16,000 eligible candidates will be further reduced to 11,000, based upon their Matriculation and HSSC – part 1 results;
4. Agency, with the ability to out-reach these distant areas across the length and breadth of the country and ensure enrollment, shall be given preference. The out-reach process should include an overview of the entire program for the principals of all registered schools/colleges (list available at www.ictrdf.org.pk) and provision of requisite number of registration forms;
5. The selected testing agency shall be required to reach-out and individually visit all (exceptions allowed with valid justifications) the registered schools/colleges and commit all efforts to ensure maximum student registration from each of the registered schools/colleges (list available at www.ictrdf.org.pk);
6. The selected testing agency shall only receive student registration forms from principal or their designated nominee. The total number of forms received shall be endorsed on standard receiving form, duly signed by both the principal/nominee and the representative of the selected testing agency. The representative of the agency under no circumstances shall receive any form directly from the students. The purpose of this is to let the head of the institution take the responsibility of ensuring that maximum number of eligible students are registered from his/her respective school/college. Furthermore the selected testing agency shall also be responsible for registering students who send in their forms via postal mail;

7. The selected testing agency shall be required to print a form designed by National ICT R&D Fund to collect data from principals of each of the listed schools/colleges (list available at www.ictrdf.org.pk). Softcopy of this data/information shall also be provided to National ICT R&D Fund;
8. The selected testing agency shall be required to design the candidate registration form in consultation with National ICT R&D Fund. National ICT R&D Fund would require 36,000 forms to be delivered at its office for its own internal use. These forms would be in addition to the requisite quantity required by the selected testing agency for student registration through out-reach;
9. The selected testing agency will be responsible to provide final and authentic list of eligible registered candidates, as per the requirements of NICTSP 2010, to National ICT R&D Fund. It is the responsibility of the selected testing agency to check and verify that submitted application forms of the applicants are complete, in case the form of an applicant is incomplete, the testing agency will collect the necessary information from the applicant and incorporate in the incomplete form, prior to sending the compiled information to National ICT R&D Fund. All edits/corrections are required to be incorporated through verifiable means (preferably fax or other written documents);
10. The candidate registration process, including the data entry from registration form, shall be completed in consultation with National ICT R&D Fund. Selected testing agency shall also be required to provide bi-weekly report/status on the registration of candidates;
11. The selected testing agency shall be required to advertise list of registered students on a web site and have a mechanism to receive corrections/edits; (an alternate means of reaching out to the candidates from rural areas, to ensure authenticity of data, should also be devised by the selected testing agency);
12. The selected testing agency shall be responsible for implementing a tracking system for all registration forms received prior to the deadline. Registration forms received after the deadline shall not be entertained and shall be duly recorded to ensure transparency and proper record keeping;
13. The selected testing agency shall be responsible to collaborate with the agency executing “Training of Teachers” (TOT) Program, another component of National ICT Scholarship Program 2010, to develop the “Student Manual”, which would serve as a guiding tool for the students taking ICT-Scholarship Award Test. It may be noted that the responsibility of developing and printing “Student Manual” does not lie with the selected testing agency;
14. The selected testing agency shall be responsible to prepare the final test paper in consultation with National ICT R&D Fund and all participating universities in National ICT Scholarship Program 2010 (list of potential participating universities is available at www.ictrdf.org.pk);
15. ICT-Scholarship Award Test has to be in concurrence with the testing format as designed in the aforementioned “Student Manual”;

16. The standard of test should be at par with the undergraduate admission exam of the top ICT universities of Pakistan. The testing agency should have national level standing so that participating universities are likely to adopt the ICT-Scholarship Award Test as their university entrance exam;
17. The selected testing agency shall be responsible for issuing and dispatching eligible candidate's Roll number slips and ensure timely delivery;
18. The selected testing agency must ensure that the test process is transparent, fair, secure and open to audit by external auditors. This is a key requirement on the part of the testing agency as the result of the ICT-Scholarship Award Test is the prime determinant for award of scholarship;
19. The selected testing agency shall be required to develop a fool-proof mechanism for verifying the identity of candidates taking the ICT-Scholarship Award Test;
20. The questions in the test paper should have varying order to minimize chances of copying answers. The selection of test center, seating arrangement and quality/quantity of invigilators should be such that a conducive test environment is created. Furthermore, the selection of invigilators should be such that there is no conflict of interest;
21. The selected testing agency shall be responsible to provide an authentic and legible copy of candidate's answer sheet to National ICT R&D Fund in addition to the answer sheet copy provided to the candidate after the ICT-Scholarship Award Test;
22. The selected testing agency shall conduct ICT-Scholarship Award Test of the 11,000 shortlisted, eligible registered candidates. The test shall be conducted nation-wide, simultaneous, at approximately 50 testing centers, to ensure easy accessibility for candidates. Consideration must be given to rural Balochistan, NWFP and FANA for setting up multiple testing centers at convenient locations. Test centers should be setup in consultation with National ICT R&D Fund;
23. Provide a merit list for the candidates taking the ICT-Scholarship Award Test, by developing, administering and grading an MCQ based test of the following subjects: English, Mathematics, Physics, Chemistry (at Matriculation level) and Computing Sciences (Basic Level). Merit list will include all details including (but not limited to) Test marks, Name of student, Father's name, College name, Mauza, Tehsil, District, Division, Province, etc;
24. The selected testing agency shall be responsible for setting up a helpline to facilitate potential candidates and answer their queries pertaining to registration and ICT-Scholarship Award Test. The helpline personnel shall be required to get a one day brief from National ICT R&D Fund, on National ICT Scholarship Program 2010;
25. Facilitate visits of monitoring teams, as and when required;
26. Share all documents and data relevant with the NICTSP 2010, with National ICT R&D Fund in both hard-copy and soft-copy format;

5. STANDARD INSTRUCTIONS

Return Mailing Address, Contact Person, Telephone, Fax Number and deadline for receipt of Proposals

NATIONAL ICT R&D FUND

HR & ADMINISTRATION OFFICE

ATTENTION: **Ms. NELOFAR ARSHAD**

PROJECT NAME: “REGISTRATION & CONDUCTION OF ICT-SCHOLARSHIP AWARD TEST 2010”

6TH FLOOR, HBL TOWER

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MANAGER HR & ADMINISTRATION

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Proposals must be received no later than 5:00 P.M. PST on 1st March 2010. Proposals via courier, postal mail or by hand are acceptable. A softcopy (word document) must be submitted with the actual proposal.

A bidder's failure to submit its proposal prior to the deadline will cause the proposal to be disqualified. Late proposals or amendments will not be accepted for evaluation.

5.1. Contract Term and Work Schedule

The contract term and work schedule set out herein represent the Company's best estimate of the schedule that will be followed. If a component of this schedule, such as the opening date, is delayed, the rest of the schedule will be shifted by the same number of days.

The approximate contract schedule is as follows:

S. No	Activity	Dates
1	TOR issue date	15 th February, 2010
2	Proposal submission dead line	01 st March, 2010

S. No	Activity	Dates
3	Opening of Technical Proposals (in front of applicants at 6 th Floor, HBL Tower, Jinnah Avenue, Blue Area, Islamabad)	01 st March, 2010 (5:30 pm PST) <i>Applicants may contact Manager Administration for queries</i>
4	Evaluation of the Technical proposal	02 nd March till 04 th March, 2010
5	Opening of Financial Proposals	05 th March 2010 <i>Manager Coordination shall intimate time in advance.</i> <i>As per PPRA rules 36(b)viii</i>
5	Notice of intent to award	08 th March, 2010
6	Negotiation	09 th March till 10 th March, 2010
7	Contract agreement date	11 th March, 2010
8	Contract execution	12 th March, 2010
9	Contract completion	31 st August, 2010

5.2. Bidding Procedure

The bidding procedure for this assignment is in line with clause 36(b) of the PPRA Rules i.e. Single Stage-two envelope procedure, single package containing two separate envelopes. Accordingly both the envelopes should be clearly marked ‘Technical Proposal’ and ‘Financial Proposal’.

5.3. Budget

National ICT R&D Fund estimates maximum cost of Rs. 850 per student up to 11,000 eligible registered students for conduction of the test. For the out-reach component, a maximum of Rs. 200 per registered student, up to a maximum of 16,000 eligible registered students has been estimated. Financial bid for each component (Out-reach and test conduction) should be separate. In addition there would be a payment capping based upon provincial population based quota as provided by National ICT R&D Fund.

5.4. Required Review

Questions and concerns regarding this RFP must be made in writing and received by the concerned officer mentioned above at least ten working days before the proposal submission deadline.

5.5. Amendments

If an amendment is issued, it will be inculcated at all locations where the RFP was originally placed.

5.6. Modified Proposals

Bidders may only submit one proposal for evaluation. Any alternate or modified proposal submitted after due date will not be acceptable.

5.7. Right of Rejection

The Company reserves full right to refrain from making an award if it determines that to be in its best interest.

6. ADDITIONAL TERMS AND CONDITIONS

The Company reserves the right to add terms and conditions during contract negotiations.

6.1. Contract Payment

All costs associated with the contract must be stated in Pak Rupees. Under no condition will the National ICT R&D Fund be liable for payment of any interest charges or taxes associated with the cost of the contract.

7. PROPOSAL FORMAT AND CONTENT

7.1. Introduction

Proposals must include the complete name and address of bidder's registered national firm and the name, mailing address, and telephone number of the person the Company should contact regarding the proposal.

Proposals must confirm that the bidder will comply with all provisions in this RFP. Proposals must be signed by a company officer empowered to bind the agency. A bidder's failure to include these items in the proposals may cause the proposal to be determined to be non-responsive and the proposal may be rejected.

7.2. Understanding of the Project

Bidders must provide comprehensive narrative statements that illustrate their understanding of the requirements of the assignment and the project schedule. Bidders must understand that their qualification for consideration for award of the contract depends upon their ability to perform both components i.e. Out-reach and test conduction.

Proposals submitted against RFP should provide straightforward, concise information that satisfies the requirements of this RFP. Emphasis should be placed on completeness, clarity of content and conformance with given instructions and requirements of this RFP.

7.3. Experience and Qualifications

The bidders must show that they have the capacity to execute such tests for 11,000 students in multiple geographically dispersed locations (provinces & districts).

Bidders must provide an evidence of their past experience in conducting nationwide tests and ability to grade efficiently and improve the quality of exams as desired.

Bidders must provide evidence that they meet the minimum responsiveness criteria listed above or their proposal will be found non-responsive.

The bidder should include a relevant sample test with the technical proposal.

7.4. Financial Proposal

Financial proposal must include cost per student to provide all the services mentioned in Scope of Services (section 4).

8. EVALUATION CRITERIA

All proposals will be reviewed to determine if they are responsive. They will then be evaluated using the criteria given below.

8.1. Selection - Evaluation Process

1. An evaluation committee will review in detail all proposals that are received to determine the extent to which they comply with RFP document requirements.
2. Proposals that fail to meet material (minimum responsiveness criteria) RFP document requirements may be rejected.
3. Proposals containing false or misleading statements regarding requirement of RFP documents may be rejected.
4. Financial proposal will be opened only if the associated technical proposal is determined to be qualified.

8.2. Project Evaluation Form

The total number of points to score this contract is 100. Ratio of technical to financial score is 70:30

The evaluation form is attached at Annexure “A”.

8.3. Formula to Be Used To Convert Cost to Points

In order to determine the final bid score the following may be considered:

STEP 1

List all proposal prices:

Bidder #1 –

Test conduction Rs. 800
Out-reach Rs. 150

Bidder #2 –

Test conduction Rs. 750
Out-reach Rs. 200

Bidder #3 –

Test conduction Rs. 700
Out-reach Rs. 120

STEP 2

Convert cost to points using this formula.

$$\frac{(\text{Price of Lowest Financial Proposal}) \times (\text{Maximum Points for Financial Evaluation})}{(\text{Value of each bidder's Financial Proposal})} = \text{POINTS}$$

The RFP allotted 30% (30 points) of the total of 100 points for financial evaluation. Further division of 30% (30 points) of financial evaluation is as under:

20 points Test Conduction;
10 points Out-reach.

Being the lowest, bidder # 3 receives 30 points.

Testing (Rs.700/Rs.700) x 20 = 20
Out-reach (Rs.120/Rs.120) x 10 = 10

Total points of bidder # 3 20+10=30 points

Bidder # 2 receives 24.66 points.

Testing (Rs.700/Rs.750) x 20 = 18.66
Out-reach (Rs.120/Rs. 200) x10 = 06.00

Total points of bidder # 2 18.66+06.00=24.66 points

Bidder # 1 receives 25.55 points.

Testing (Rs.700/Rs.800) x 20 = 17.50
Out-reach (Rs.120/Rs. 150) x10 = 08.00

Total points of bidder # 1 17.50+08.00=25.55 points

The scores of financial bid will be added to technical scores and final award of contract decision will be based on total of technical score plus financial score.

ANNEXURE A

Project Evaluation Form

S.No.	Criteria	Points	Marks obtained	Remarks/Justifications
	TECHNICAL			
1	Track record and understanding of “Testing Standards and Practices”.	10		
2	Conception of the Fund’s expected services.	10		
3	Quality and effectiveness of proposed test methodology.	5		
4	Transparency of the testing mechanism (open to external auditors)	5		
5	Previous track record of conducting “University Entrance Exams” across Pakistan and likelihood of acceptance of such test by universities.	15		
6	Quality of Testing systems and capacity for out-reach.	10		
7	Qualifications and competence of project team members to perform projects of a similar nature.	5		
8	Capacity of the firm to perform the project and to do so in a timely manner.	5		
9	Performance of the firm with previous clients on projects of similar nature based upon quality of the work, control of costs, ability to meet schedules or deadlines and responsiveness to the client.	5		
	SUB TOTAL	70		
	FINANCIAL			
10	Test Conduction	20		
11	Out-reach	10		
	SUB TOTAL	30		
	GRAND TOTAL	100		