



Request for Proposals:

Market analysis of the higher education sector in Bangladesh

Introduction and purpose

The Association of Commonwealth Universities (ACU) is an international membership organisation dedicated to building a better world through higher education. We believe that international collaboration is central to this ambition. By bringing universities together from around the world – and crucially the people who study and work within them – we help to advance knowledge, promote understanding, broaden minds, and improve lives.

Core to the work that we do is our members. ACU member universities form a vibrant global community with a shared commitment to realising the power of higher education to solve global challenges. With more than 500 member universities across 50 countries, our members are part of a network that reflects the breadth and diversity of the Commonwealth.

While our membership spans across the Commonwealth, we have seen exponential growth in South Asia, particularly in India, Pakistan and Bangladesh. To better serve this region, we are looking to strengthen our regional and country networks in South Asia. Our current focus is on Bangladesh, where we have 19 ACU members (see **Annex 1** for list).

We are currently developing an engagement and programme delivery strategy for Bangladesh. To support this work, the ACU is recruiting a consultant with experience in higher education to work closely with the ACU's Business Development, Programmes and Membership Unit to conduct a market analysis of the HE sector in Bangladesh and to provide recommendations on how the ACU can develop a successful engagement and contracting strategy.

Scope of work

A consultant will be appointed to undertake a market analysis of the higher education sector in Bangladesh.

The focus of the work will cover the following areas:

1. The higher education landscape in Bangladesh, including opportunities and challenges
2. ACU member engagement, i.e. how the ACU can work with members in Bangladesh to identify opportunities for programmatic work
3. Key actors in the sector, including potential partners/ alliances and funders

The scoping study will be conducted between June and August 2021.

Recipient

The primary recipient of the work will be the Association of Commonwealth Universities, specifically the Business Development, Programmes and Membership Unit.

Key stakeholders

- ACU Business Development, Programmes and Membership Unit
- ACU Senior Leadership Team (SLT)
- ACU Senior Executive Team (SET)
- ACU member universities in Bangladesh
- ACU member universities with a strategic interest in Bangladesh

Objectives

The purpose of the scoping study is to inform the ACU's regional strategy in South Asia and to uncover opportunities for engagement with the higher education sector in Bangladesh.

Objectives of this scoping study are:

1. To understand opportunities and challenges in the higher education sector in Bangladesh
2. To increase engagement in a strategically important sector and country for the ACU
3. To build alliances with key players in the sector to support contract development
4. To explore the ACU's unique selling points and identify how we can add value to our membership
5. To identify sources of funding for new programmes and initiatives that support the HE sector in Bangladesh

Methodology

Applicants should propose a methodology and a tentative work schedule to meet the Request for Proposals that delivers the objectives and scope of work.

The ACU welcomes applications that include participatory approaches during both project inception and implementation.

Deliverables

The consultant will be required to deliver the following:

1. An interim report following project set-up (expected by Friday 16th July 2021)
2. A comprehensive final report which includes:
 - a) Overview of the higher education context in Bangladesh
 - b) Key themes and target audiences
 - c) Contracting and foundation opportunities
 - d) Partners and alliances – including a competitor and collaborate analysis (including the ACU's USP)
 - e) Risks and mitigations
 - f) Recommendations for action and next steps
3. A webinar presenting findings to selected key stakeholders
4. A presentation with key findings and recommendations that can be presented by ACU colleagues internally

Following the completion of the scoping work, the ACU will convene key players to provide additional insight into the higher education market in Bangladesh and key themes/ opportunities for the ACU to explore. While the ACU will be responsible for convening and hosting the roundtable, the consultant would be responsible for suggesting appropriate participants.

Budget

There is up to £4,000 available for the scoping study.

Submissions

Please submit the following documents to Keren.Elton@acu.ac.uk by 23:59 UTC on 20 June 2021:

- Technical proposal (5 pages maximum) including proposed methodology and delivery plan
- Organisation profile (including detail of scoping studies completed in the past) and CVs of proposed project team (2 pages maximum)
- Full budget that aligns to the stated delivery plan and team profile
- A sample report from a previous scoping study

Evaluation criteria for applicants

This assignment will require a researcher or small team of researchers, who will work in close collaboration with the ACU Business Development team.

The criteria for the evaluation of applications is:

- Strength and appropriateness of proposed methodology
 - Experience of conducting scoping studies for organisational strategy development or similar
 - Experience of working in the higher education sector/ with universities in Bangladesh
 - Experience of working with funders/ donors in higher education
 - Excellent skills in collecting qualitative data through facilitating focus groups and conducting interviews
 - Adequate planning for risks associated with COVID-19 and demonstrated ability to deliver projects virtually when required
 - Value for money
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Annex 1: ACU members in Bangladesh

1. Asian University for Women
2. Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman Agricultural University
3. Bangladesh Agricultural University
4. Bangladesh Open University
5. Bangladesh University of Business and Technology
6. Bangladesh University of Engineering and Technology
7. BGMEA University of Fashion and Technology
8. Brac University
9. Daffodil International University
10. International Islamic University Chittagong
11. Jahangirnagar University
12. Metropolitan University
13. Shahjalal University of Science and Technology
14. Southern University
15. University of Asia Pacific
16. University of Chittagong
17. University of Dhaka
18. University of Liberal Arts Bangladesh
19. World University of Bangladesh