



Cambridge English Language Tests and Certification Request for Proposals

16 April 2014

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Statement of Purpose

The purpose of this RFP document is to request detailed estimates for the provision, management, supervision and audit of Cambridge English proficiency examinations to meet the need for an English Language exit qualification for Colleges of Excellence trainees at A2 (KET) and B1 (PET) level on the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR) scale. The Cambridge English qualifications will be of an international standard and one that is recognised and acceptable to employers in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia.

Additionally, the provision of an initial Placement test is requested to supplement the exit tests.

College of Excellence and Training Providers

In September 2013 the Colleges of Excellence organisation (COE) authorised the opening of 10 new vocational training colleges managed by major international providers. In September 2014 there will be a further 27 colleges in operation, with 10-15 more planned by 2015. Some existing TVTC and private colleges may also come under the umbrella of COE over the next 3 years.

These colleges will provide world-class training for various technical and vocational programmes across the Kingdom.

Saudi Skills Standards - Assessment

The assessment of trainees in the colleges will be conducted under the supervision of Saudi Skills Standards (SSS). All trainees will study a Foundation Year programme that focuses on English Language and IT Skills.

It is essential that trainees undertake assessments in English Language of the highest international standards that have global value and that are related to the CEFR.

As part of the approach to developing English Language skills, SSS wishes to source a Placement test for English Language linked to the CEFR that can be administered on demand, online, and that can give instant results to be used diagnostically to evaluate the entry level English ability of new trainees in the colleges. This test will be offered to all college providers but it will not be compulsory for them to use. If they choose to use the Placement test it will be by a direct supply arrangement.

We wish to identify a reputable company to manage the provision of the English placement test for a fixed fee.

Exit Testing

SSS requires a means of verification of English Language exit levels for Foundation and Diploma trainees through Cambridge English examinations that are:

- a) internationally recognized
- b) designed to assess general English proficiency
- c) not of purely academic nature
- d) linked to CEFR.

SSS wishes to identify a partner who will propose an appropriate curriculum and assessment for Beginners (A0), Basic (A1), Lower Intermediate (A2), and Intermediate (B1) levels, and who will set up a project team to administer and manage the testing and certification processes.

High Level Requirements

SSS wishes to gather detailed and costed proposals from a partner organisation who has the capacity and capability to:

- 1 Manage and supervise an English placement test on demand and online for a maximum of 1000 students per college by 01 September 2014. A description of how the placement test is ordered, supervised and administered is required.
- 2 Give quick feedback and results that can be used as part of the selection process or diagnostically by teachers to measure progress.
- 3 Provide internationally recognized Cambridge English Examinations at Level A1, A2 (KET) and B1 (PET) on the CEFR.
- 4 Design and deliver a programme for training COE English teachers to administer examinations (especially for speaking tests) on site.
- 5 Provide access to approved training or a willingness to develop appropriate materials where they don't already exist.
- 6 Give back-up and support to English teachers in preparing for the examinations.

- 7 Ensure examination integrity through the provision of exam auditors/invigilators to ensure impartiality in examinations.
- 8 Issue results to students within an acceptable period.
- 9 Offer flexibility in examination dates and choice of paper or computer-based examinations
- 10 Publish Cambridge international certification for students successful at each level.

Please provide evidence of success in similar projects and illustrate your capacity and resources to meet our needs in terms of the volume of COE students in the existing college locations (and including the potential expansion described above). The potential for growth is large with trainee numbers predicted to rise in each college towards a maximum of 30,000 in the first 10 colleges within 3 years and similar numbers expected in the 27 colleges to be operational from September 2014 (and also other training providers who will come under the COE umbrella).

Scheduling of Exit Tests

The colleges can enroll 3 cohorts of trainees each year, so planning for the Placement and Exit tests should be sufficiently flexible to cope with this demand.

Cohorts are recruited at the beginning of September, January and April, so the Placement tests should be planned with these dates in mind, and the Exit tests will need to be scheduled for November/early December, February/March, and June (detailed schedules will be prepared by SSS in advance of each session).

Eligibility to Submit a Proposal

Bidders should be well-established and high-performing companies with a track record in providing English Language tests to international standards. Additionally, bidders should be able to demonstrate:

- Previous experience in a similar role
- The use of qualified and experienced staff (and sufficiency of resources in general)
- Successful outcomes in previous projects or partnerships
- Previous experience in setting up and running operations in foreign countries, particularly in the Middle East and the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia is desirable (if such experience is limited the bidder should describe how the project will be supported in the Kingdom).

Submission of Proposals

Written responses to this RFP are due on **8 May 2014** and should be addressed to Engineer AIAmri via electronic copy at the email address: assessment-tenders@sss.org.sa

Proposals should be submitted in pdf format, with a maximum of 50 pages excluding annexes.

Participation in RFP

Acknowledgment and disclaimer: It is the responsibility of the Bidder to obtain all information necessary or convenient for the preparation of their Proposals.

Applicant cost: All expenses and costs incurred by the Bidder in connection with this RFP, including (without limitation) providing SSS with further information and attending meetings are the sole responsibility of the Bidder.

Contract: Nothing in this RFP should be construed to give rise to any contractual obligations or rights, expressed or implied, by the issuance of this RFP or the submission of a Letter of Information in response to it.

Confidentiality: All recipients of any or all elements of this RFP shall treat the information detailed as private and confidential.

False or misleading claims: If a Bidder is found to have made false or misleading claims or statements or to have obtained improper assistance, SSS may reject that Bidder's submission for any further consideration.

Unlawful inducements: Bidders and their officers, employees, agents and advisors must not offer any unlawful inducements in connection with the preparation of the RFP process.

Questions: All questions regarding the present Request for Proposals should be addressed to assessment-tenders@sss.org.sa

Contact Details

All questions, requests for clarification and submission of formal proposals should be addressed to Engineer Saeed AlAmri at this address:

assessment-tenders@sss.org.sa

The closing date for responses is: **8 May 2014.**