



THE LANGUAGE FLAGSHIP

Creating Global Professionals

Flagship Technology Innovation Center FAQ September 9, 2014 Webinar

Please Note: The following is an edited version of a transcript of The Language Flagship's (TLF) technical assistance webinar (September 9, 2014) held to address questions related to the Flagship Technology Innovation Center Solicitation Guidelines released in August, 2014. The questions and answers below have been edited for clarity and brevity and have been reordered by topic. They are based on an unscripted dialogue and may contain small errors in grammar and flow. Additionally, questions received after the webinar have been added to this document.

GENERAL QUESTIONS

Q: Must an applicant be a Language Flagship institution? Should non-Flagship institutions apply?

A: There is no requirement for an applicant institution to be a Flagship institution, and the Request for Proposals (RFP) is open to all qualified institutions of higher education. The Flagship Technology Innovation Center will need to facilitate collaboration between Flagship institutions, project directors, education technology specialists, second language acquisition (SLA) specialists, and other experts as appropriate or as needed. As a result, applicants should ensure that they are familiar with The Language Flagship and the different program models being used. Please visit the website for The Language Flagship (www.thelanguageflagship.org) for information about the program, to check which institutions are working in the language(s) of interest and for contact information for individual programs.

Q: Is the RFP document provided on the website the only document model for this solicitation or is there something more extensive in terms of an outline?

A: The solicitation document that is provided on the website is the only document that we have provided.

Q: If the applicant institution has a Flagship program already, can an application be submitted by someone other than the Flagship director? How would that be viewed by the reviewers?

A: It is fine for someone other than a Flagship director to submit an application for this RFP. If your institution already has a Flagship program, and/or if your institution is known for a particular strength in a certain language (Arabic, Chinese, Russian), the proposal should be coordinated with the existing Flagship or those other programs on your campus.

Q: Can applications be submitted by the PI or are you expecting them to be submitted by the Sponsored Projects Office (or equivalent) on campus?

A: The applications should be submitted by the Sponsored Projects Office (or equivalent central office) on your campus to ensure that they have gone through the appropriate vetting processes for your institution. If your institution does not have this type of structure or process, please include a written

explanation when submitting your proposal.

FUNDING

Q: Does the \$500,000 maximum budget amount include indirect costs (IDC) or may the IDC be added on top of that?

A: The \$500,000 maximum includes IDC.

Q: Is there a maximum IDC rate that the funder will approve?

A: We cannot and do not set maximum indirect rates for any of our competitions. Institutions are allowed to recover IDC based on the agreements they have in place with the federal government. However, in past competitions reviewers have sometimes considered reduced IDCs as a competitive advantage because more of the core funding is then made available to the project itself.

Q: How likely is it that this initiative will be supported beyond the one-year period defined in the RFP?

A: We plan to support this initiative for an initial year, and then will evaluate and continue support based on results and the availability of funds. After this, we would plan to extend the funding cycle for at least two additional years, and then evaluate the whole project to decide on further funding.

Q: Are you likely to put out a new call for proposals in 2015 or would you continue to fund only the Center established under the current competition?

A: We do not plan to release a new call in 2015. Rather, we would plan to renew the awardee of this current competition for up to two additional years. This, of course, assumes both successful performance by the awardee and the availability of funds.

PARTNERSHIPS

Q: We are an institution with an established Flagship program. How will this Center affect and influence other non-Flagship language programs on campus?

A: The effect on non-Flagship language programs on your campus will depend on the openness of these other languages programs to innovation and the integration of technology. If you have colleagues in other languages on your campus who want to participate and who have other approaches they have used successfully, that could be beneficial to both the on-campus program and the Technology Center. If this situation does not exist on your campus, then working with colleagues at other institutions is fine as well.

Q: Is collaboration across more than one language with other institutions desirable?

A: Yes, but this depends on the model/approach you include in your proposal. We are open to work across languages and there may be certain technologies or approaches that could easily be tried with different languages (e.g., to see how a certain approach works with an Asian language versus an Indo-European language). There may be many benefits to having more than one language included in the technology initiative. The only requirement is that the project must include either Arabic, Chinese or Russian.

Q: Can a university partner with industry for this project?

A: Yes. The majority of the expenses covered under the RFP would be for university costs, however, the costs of convening people from industry with academic experts and other technology experts may be needed for the project. If the academic community can successfully articulate to a technology company or companies the types of products that would be valuable in the classroom, or form a Center that fosters communication so that industry understands what would be effective in the classroom, out of the classroom and in the study abroad setting, then they could develop products that Flagship can eventually use. The point is not about The Language Flagship setting up high tech projects. Rather, it is about using what exists and leveraging the talent in industry, academia and government that is available.

Q: We have a specific company/platform in mind and would like to propose developing that platform and rolling it out to the Flagship community. Would that be acceptable?

A: We are looking for institutions to propose a collaborative approach to discussing approaches and options and moving forward with input from Flagship, ed tech specialists and other experts in the field. A proposal that pre-selects one product and proposes implementation and testing on one campus is likely to be seen as narrow in convening the collaboration according to the guidelines. However, all proposals are welcome and we will let the reviewers do their evaluation according to the RFP guidelines.

We also welcome proposals that broadly bring together expertise in Flagship community, government and private industry.

Q: What are the expectations for international collaboration, such as with the Overseas Flagship Centers?

A: International collaboration is not required, but we are open to great ideas that include this. However, it is perfectly fine for the scope to focus on the domestic approach, be that in class, through co-curricular activities or both. We are open to approaches or ideas to help increase levels of language that are not tied to a particular location provided these remain within the Flagship structure.

PROGRAM DESIGN

Q: The RFP asks applicants to describe projected outcomes for the project. Can you define these outcomes a bit more? Are they deliverables, (e.g. papers and publications) or are they student performance outcomes?

A: The intended outcomes are not published papers and materials. While we will be happy if faculty and students can publish on the basis of some of the activities of this project, the outcomes we are looking for are approaches, technologies or integration of technologies that demonstrate improvement and efficiency of use or improved quality of instruction in the classroom in a measurable way. It may be difficult to show, but we are looking for an approach that brings together best practices and dissemination of good products and practices, with an eye to effective classroom and out of classroom instruction.

Q: Are you looking for institutions that have an excellent support system, experts in SLA and technology, as well as support from leaders within the institution who need the funding to get this project started? Or are you looking for a place to start this and then hire on the appropriate experts in the field to improve the resources for students?

A: The first combination would be ideal, to have the expertise on campus as well as support from the administration. Support from the administration is essential to any successful project, particularly large collaborative projects. However, a particular institution may have expertise in two or three areas, but may need to use grant funds to bring in someone either on the technology side, or some aspect of the SLA or pedagogy side to strengthen the team. Earlier, there was an inquiry about the use of consultants and it was confirmed that grant funds can be used to bring in the necessary people. Although there is a question on how much should be used to bring in consultants and how much should be used on the institutional development, it is the applicant's job to make the most convincing case to us about the right formula. However, an institution should have strength in at least part of these areas since there are not enough funds to strengthen all of the areas.

Q: Can the independent evaluation be provided by someone outside the IHE where the Center is housed?

A: Yes, independent evaluation should be done by someone from outside of the institution.

Q: Is there an expectation to implement a Learning Management System (LMS) and host material from all Flagship programs? Alternatively, is there an expectation that the Center would help Flagship institutions maximize the utility of their LMS?

A: There is no expectation that these funds be used for developing a learning management system that would host material from every Flagship. We are not specifically looking for a central repository of all materials for Flagship. The second part of the question is more in the spirit of what we are looking for, for example, looking at learning management systems in place, how they can be used more effectively and different elements that could be incorporated within these systems.

Q: Can we include some technical expenses to either examine existing models using online technology or to build the capacity to disseminate technology innovation. For example, if we need to buy some software or some equipment like microphones or webcams if we don't currently have the equipment, is that allowed?

A: Some modest investments in technology to further the purposes of collaboration are fine as long as these are within the boundaries of the RFP, as well as relevant OMB circulars on equipment purchases. For example, equipment or materials and supplies may be needed to facilitate communication, to examine the different models of technology or to implement certain techniques in a campus or a classroom setting to observe how it works in practice. We are not soliciting an R&D proposal to work on a specific technology or very technical hardware (e.g., improve speech recognition technology).

PROPOSAL STRUCTURE

Q: How many appendices are permitted?

A: We do not dictate the maximum number of appendices that may be included. You should include what you need to make your application complete, while being judicious about including too much. It is best to be as succinct as possible while also ensuring the proposal is comprehensive.