

PROJECT OBJECTIVES, GOALS, AND IMPLEMENTATION (POGI)

FY 2014 Timor-Leste and South Pacific Scholarship Programs

Funding Opportunity Number: ECA-ECAA-E-14-019

Office of Academic Exchange Programs

East Asia and Pacific Programs Branch

The POGI guidelines apply specifically to the Request for Grant Proposals (RFGP) issued by the Office of Academic Exchange Programs, East Asia and Pacific Programs Branch, for the FY 2014 U.S. Timor-Leste and U.S. South Pacific Scholarship Programs. Proposals must conform to the RFGP, the guidelines stated in this document, and the standard Proposal Submission Instructions (PSI). Applications not adhering to the conditions set forth herein may be deemed technically ineligible. These guidelines are specific to the program mentioned above and are IN ADDITION TO the Standard Guidelines outlined in the PSI. If there is a perceived disparity between the standard and program specific guidelines and the program information supplied in the accompanying RFGP, the RFGP is to be the dominant reference.

STATEMENT OF WORK

The Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs (ECA) invites proposals to administer the FY 2014 U.S. Timor-Leste and U.S. South Pacific Scholarship Programs. Eligible applicants may submit a proposal to administer one or both of the scholarship programs. ECA expects to make one or more award of up to \$870,000 (\$435,000 for USTL and \$435,000 for USSP) for FY 2014.

The duration of the cooperative agreement(s) will be up to five years, beginning approximately on August 1, 2014. The award recipient(s) is expected to carry out the responsibilities listed below. It should be understood that in the performance of all of the services, the ECA program office must be consulted, especially in the resolution of any issues that may arise. The award recipient(s) will provide support to the following U.S. Embassies during the recruitment, selection and pre-departure phases of the U.S. Timor-Leste and U.S. South Pacific Scholarship Programs:

Embassy Dili – citizens of Timor-Leste

Embassy Suva – citizens of Fiji, Tonga, Tuvalu, Kiribati, Nauru

Embassy Port Moresby – citizens of Papua New Guinea, Vanuatu, Solomon Islands

Embassy Wellington – citizens of Samoa, Cook Islands, Niue

Responsibilities for the award recipient(s) administering the U.S. Timor-Leste and U.S. South Pacific Scholarship Programs include:

1. Support U.S. Embassy Public Affairs Section (PAS) outreach and publicity efforts by announcing and publicizing the annual scholarship competition broadly;
2. Distribute application and informational materials about the scholarship programs to Embassy Public Affairs Sections, which will take the lead on recruitment and nomination;
3. Field inquiries from prospective candidates;

4. Convene review panels including at least one country/regional expert for final academic review and assessment of U.S. university admissibility;
5. Review candidate dossiers to determine competitiveness and suitability for program; review academic credentials for completeness and relevance to proposed field of study;
6. Arrange round-trip travel for the participants from their home cities to their U.S. host institutions;
7. Ensure that participants receive pre-departure and arrival orientations;
8. Enroll participants in health coverage that meets J-1 visa requirements and assisting with claims as necessary;
9. Place the participants at appropriate U.S. institutions for academic degree study leading to a bachelor's or master's degree;
10. Develop and facilitate cultural enrichment activities;
11. Assist participants in arranging local summer internships (optional);
12. Monitor participants' adjustment and academic performance;
13. In close consultation with ECA, evaluate the program and its impact on the participants and their communities during their stay in the U.S., and after they return to their home countries;
14. Manage financial aspects of the program (e.g., participant stipends, housing allowances, accident and sickness insurance, host university agreements, activity costs);
15. Report programmatic, financial and statistical information to ECA;
16. Manage and monitor all aspects of the participants' J-1 visa status, including the issuance of DS-2019 forms;
17. Respond fully and promptly to requests for information from ECA or U.S. embassies in the region relating to the participants and alumni.

U.S. Embassy Public Affairs Sections in Dili, Suva, Port Moresby, and Wellington responsibilities will include:

1. Announce and publicize annual scholarship competition broadly;
2. Distribute scholarship application materials;
3. Advise prospective USSP and USTL applicants and/or direct inquiries to the award recipient(s);
4. Assist with screening applications through secure electronic access provided by the award recipient(s) for minimum eligibility and required documentation;
5. Notify principal and alternate student candidates after final application status has been confirmed by the award recipient(s) in consultation with ECA;
6. Coordinate pre-departure and alumni activities as appropriate.

For the overseas administration of the U.S. Timor-Leste Scholarship Program, the U.S. Embassy will participate in Dili-based interview panels for candidate selection. The award recipient(s) will provide assistance to PAS Dili in the following areas, as necessary:

1. Assess academic readiness of prospective candidates and assist with application process;
2. Evaluate English language skills of candidates and facilitate enrollment in pre-academic English language courses in Dili;

3. Administer TOEFL/IELTS or other placement tests as required by U.S. host institutions;
4. Facilitate a pre-departure orientation in close coordination with PAS Dili.

In a cooperative agreement, the Bureau is substantially involved in program activities beyond routine grant monitoring. Bureau activities and responsibilities for this program include:

- 1) Participation in the design and direction of program activities;
- 2) Approval of key personnel;
- 3) Approval and input on program timelines and agendas;
- 4) Guidance in execution of all program components;
- 5) Review and approval of all program publicity and recruitment materials;
- 6) Participation in student interviews and selection panels when feasible;
- 7) Review and approval of selection decisions prior to offer of award;
- 8) Consultation on and approval of academic placement assignments;
- 9) Approval of changes to students' proposed academic field or institution;
- 10) Approval of decisions related to special circumstances or problems throughout duration of program;
- 11) Assistance with SEVIS-related issues;
- 12) Assistance with participant emergencies;
- 13) Primary liaison with PAS and country desk officers at the State Department.

PROGRAM SPECIFIC GUIDELINES

Program administration activities should cover the time period August 2014 through August 2019. It is expected that funding will support four (4) students in the USTL program and four (4) students in the USSP program, for a total of eight (8) participants for up to four years of academic study plus English language or pre-academic training as needed. This federal assistance award will cover the entire program in the U.S. for the students selected. Under this cooperative agreement, USTL students are expected to commence their U.S. study programs as early as January 2015; USSP students should be scheduled to arrive in late summer 2015. Students must return home following the completion of their ECA-funded programs.

For both programs, administrative responsibilities include the following broad categories: program planning and management; recruitment and selection support; placement; orientation; participant supervision and support services; fiscal management and budgeting; and program reporting and evaluation. The proposal should include yearly budget projections for the full duration of the award. Programs must comply with J-1 Exchange Visitor Program regulations.

Participants

The U.S. Timor-Leste and U.S. South Pacific Scholarship Programs emphasize the selection of young men and women with leadership experience or potential who will have a positive impact on their country's future development. The Bureau seeks scholarship participants who represent all aspects of their home country's diversity. Individuals living in the United States are not

eligible and preference is given to those without significant U.S. or third-country undergraduate study experience.

Applicants in Timor-Leste should have functional English skills but often require pre-academic English training in the United States prior to beginning their undergraduate study. South Pacific applicants will not need pre-academic English training but at the master's level may benefit from up to one year of preparatory study.

Recruitment

The award recipient(s) should maintain the separate identities for the U.S. Timor-Leste and the U.S. South Pacific programs and must ensure that the Department of State is prominently identified as the program sponsor in all publicity and other scholarship program materials. The key conditions, benefits, and terms of the program -- what is, and what is not covered under the award, as well as the two-year home-residence requirement -- should be described in the application materials. The description of study opportunities should include essential information for applicants who are unfamiliar with the U.S. educational system. In addition to recruiting candidates for full bachelor's and master's degree programs, candidates with prior undergraduate study may also be recruited and funded for the final two to three years of a bachelor's degree.

Selection

U.S. Embassy Public Affairs Sections in Dili, Suva, Port Moresby, and Wellington will assist with initial screening for minimum eligibility. The award recipient(s) will convene separate panels for final academic review, including at least one country/regional expert to provide country expertise, and will present final slates of principal and alternate candidates to ECA for approval. The review panel for Timor-Leste will take place in Dili and will include one U.S. Mission representative. Embassy Public Affairs Sections will notify primary and alternate candidates after final application status has been confirmed by the award recipient(s) in consultation with ECA. The leadership elements and the expectation that students will be active alumni following the conclusion of the program should be prominently reinforced in materials, communications, and selection methodology.

Pre-academic and English Language Training

For the U.S. Timor-Leste Program, the proposal must describe plans for pre-academic preparation and English language training, and for administering TOEFL/IELTS or other placement tests as required by U.S. host institutions. It is assumed that most USTL participants will need up to one year of English language instruction in the U.S. Several levels of intensive English-language courses, from beginning to advanced, should be made available. The Bureau recommends that applicants be tested as part of the screening process using a locally available test instrument, and then given the TOEFL upon arrival in the U.S. to determine which level of English-language course is appropriate. Students who need additional instruction beyond the first year will be required to take the instruction at their placement universities.

Placement

The award recipient(s) will work with those participants who have prior undergraduate study to obtain transcripts from their home institutions and ensure that they receive maximum academic credit. Academic placement of the students should be arranged at appropriate U.S. institutions. The award recipient(s) will work to obtain financial aid, scholarships, tuition awards, in-state tuition, etc., and explain the nature of, and funding for, the program to U.S. academic host institutions. Students may be clustered together or receive separate placements. The proposal should provide justification of the approach that will be used and should describe how students will be identified as participants in the U.S. Timor-Leste and/or U.S. South Pacific Scholarship Programs.

Orientation Programs

Pre-departure orientations will be arranged by the U.S. Embassies in country, as appropriate, in close coordination with the award recipient(s). Proposals should include complete and detailed sample pre-departure orientation information that will be provided to students and Embassy Public Affairs Sections. Key points concerning academic requirements and coursework, housing, U.S. campus life, what to pack, finances, health and safety, policies on dependents, and other critical issues should be included in the material. The material should be designed to serve as a useful post-arrival reference as well, supplemented with additional information.

The award recipient(s) should ensure that upon arrival all participants receive an orientation that will expand upon the topics mentioned above, as well as introduce them specifically to the host institution and community.

Internships

Applicants may propose a U.S. internship experience for students, with or without academic credit. The goal of this program is to provide students with a paid or unpaid practical internship of approximately four to six weeks over a summer during their scholarship program, authorized under the Academic Training section of the J-1 Exchange Visitor Program regulations. Internships must be directly related to the participants' major field of study and the students must be in good academic standing. This component is not intended to provide students with summer jobs. Applicants should estimate internship costs, if any, within the proposed budget. The award recipient(s) should guide students in their search and be responsible for approving internship placements, granting academic training in advance, arranging for academic credit, if applicable, monitoring students during their internships, and conducting an overall evaluation of the internship component of the program.

Program Activities

The proposal should describe plans for: orientations, goals and approaches for the academic

portion of the program, including any special academic enrichment activities, cultural and community projects, evaluation and follow-up, and alumni tracking. Proposed activities might include volunteer work, student presentations to the local community, and matching of students with a local host family. The proposal must demonstrate that the recipient organization(s) can provide effective support systems (such as tutoring, counseling, host family, mentor or buddy system, consultation with student adviser) to the students during the program. The award recipient(s) should assign an adviser or coordinator who can serve as a central resource to students regarding their scholarship, the J-1 visa program, and cross-cultural adjustment. The adviser also serves as a link between the students and ECA.

To support the mutual understanding goal of the exchange, the Bureau is particularly interested in opportunities for academic and enrichment experiences related to U.S. institutions, society, and culture. Students are expected to study in the United States throughout the term of the program, not to travel to third countries for study there, even with other sources of funding. ECA welcomes creative ideas for exposing students to and increasing their understanding of key elements of American civil society, such as discussion groups on community issues, visits to political campaign offices and polling places, attendance at school board or city council meetings, and civic-related volunteer work. Student attendance at museums, concerts, plays, and other cultural or community events should be encouraged and facilitated whenever possible.

ECA welcomes innovative ideas on how organizations can leverage appropriate mobile and/or online technologies to maintain engagement among exchange participants, encourage project collaboration and widen participation in the overall project to a broader audience. ECA strongly encourages the organizations submitting proposals to suggest one or more virtual exchange components to complement the in-person exchange, as practical within the technical environments of the students' countries. The virtual exchange component(s) could come before, during and/or after the physical exchange. The objective for the virtual exchange component(s), defined as technology-enabled, sustainable, people-to-people, cross-cultural exchanges, is to augment the impact of the in-person exchange described in this solicitation. ECA encourages virtual exchange ideas that take advantage of ECA's existing web and social networking platforms, including our International Exchange Alumni space. Virtual exchange components would be coordinated with and approved by the ECA program office and U.S. missions abroad on a project by project basis.

As a way to enrich the campus experience and ensure greater interaction with American peers, students may be eligible for part-time campus employment not to exceed ten hours per week with ECA approval. Prior to eligibility, students must successfully complete one academic semester with at least a 3.0 grade point average.

Participant Monitoring and Evaluation

The proposal must discuss how the participants' progress in achieving program goals and objectives will be monitored at their U.S. host institutions (e.g. surveys, interviews, work plans). The proposal should describe the frequency of communication with the participants and with

representatives of the U.S. host institutions, and outline performance goals or benchmarks for each semester in the United States. The proposal should also discuss the methods to be used for gauging the quality of program activities, tracking each participant's success, and monitoring and resolving any problems that arise. Program staff working with the participants should demonstrate strong interpersonal and communication skills, sensitivity, and a flexible approach that is responsive to each student and his or her circumstances. Senior management should be involved as appropriate and available to assist as needed.

Participant Responsibilities

In accordance with J-1 regulations, participants are expected to maintain the equivalent of a full course of study. They should also maintain at least a "B" average, and must comply with the academic and other requirements of the program and host institution. Students must return immediately to their home countries upon completion of the academic program. Students may be removed from the program for academic or behavioral misconduct. The final decision to remove a student will be made after consultation with and written approval from ECA. Each student shall be required to read and sign Terms and Conditions.

Alumni Tracking and Follow-On Activities

Alumni activities are an important part of ECA's academic exchange programs. Organizations submitting proposals should indicate how they will facilitate and promote participant and alumni use of the Department of State's International Exchange Alumni website (www.alumni.state.gov). Alumni programming in the form of seminars, newsletters, and listservs provides critical program follow-on and serves to maximize and extend the benefit of the participants' program in the United States. Applicants are strongly urged to outline how they will creatively organize and financially support alumni activities at a minimal cost to ECA, and how these efforts will be coordinated with ECA and embassy Public Affairs Sections.

Alumni tracking is critical for measuring the longer-term impact of the program and for the implementation of worthwhile follow-on activities. Proposals should describe how long-term linkages with alumni will be maintained and should detail how alumni records will be maintained and updated beyond the duration of the award. All statistical information on participants and alumni should be transferred to the alumni database maintained at ECA annually. Therefore, the award recipient(s) is responsible for ensuring that its system for collecting, storing, and transferring participant data is compatible with ECA's system. Additionally, noteworthy alumni activities and accomplishments should be shared with ECA regularly.

Visa and Tax Requirements

All participants must be sponsored under an Exchange Visitor Program on a J-1 visa. A representative from the recipient organization(s) will be designated by ECA as an Alternate Responsible Officer and will be responsible for processing DS-2019 forms and ensuring that all

needed documentation reaches the relevant overseas U.S. consular offices. In addition, administration of these full scholarships must be in compliance with reporting and withholding regulations for federal, state, and local taxes as applicable.

PROPOSAL CONTENTS

Applicants should submit a complete and thorough proposal describing the program in a convincing and comprehensive manner. Since there is no opportunity for applicants to meet with reviewing officials, the proposal should respond to the criteria set forth in the solicitation and other guidelines as clearly as possible.

Proposals should address succinctly, but completely, the elements described below and must follow all format requirements.

NOTE: Proposals submitted through Grants.gov may only be submitted in the following formats:

- Microsoft Word
- Microsoft Excel
- Adobe Portable Document Format (PDF)
- ASCII Text
- Joint Photographic Experts Group (JPEG images)

Proposals should include the following items under the section headings in the GrantSolutions Application Checklist:

Online Forms

SF-424, "Application for Federal Assistance"

SF-424A, Budget Information – Non-Construction Programs

SF-424B, "Assurances - Nonconstruction Programs"

Include other attachments, if applicable, such as indirect agreements, form 990, SF-LLL, etc.

Program Narrative

Executive Summary (One page)

In one double-spaced page, provide the following information:

1. Name of organization/participating institutions
2. Beginning and ending dates of the program
3. Nature of activity
4. Funding level requested from the Bureau, total program cost, total cost-sharing from applicant and other sources
5. Scope and Goals
 - a. Number and description of participants
 - b. Wider audience benefiting from program (overall impact)

- c. Geographic diversity of program, both U.S. and overseas
- d. Fields of study covered
- e. Anticipated results (short and long-term)

Program Narrative

In 20 double-spaced, single-sided pages, provide a detailed description of the project addressing the areas listed below.

1. Vision (statement of need, objectives, goals, benefits)
2. Participating Organizations
3. Program Activities (advertisement, recruitment, orientation, academic component, cultural program, participant monitoring)
4. Program Evaluation
5. Follow-on
6. Project Management
7. Work Plan/Time Frame

Additional Information to be Submitted

Detailed Budget: The proposal must include a comprehensive line-item budget, the details and format of which are contained in the Proposal Submission Instructions (PSI). In addition, the proposal must include a comprehensive budget narrative demonstrating how costs were derived, as well as a year-by-year breakdown of expenses. The budget should start with a summary page that breaks out the program and administrative costs for one or both of the regional programs (Timor-Leste and/or South Pacific). The total amount of funding requested from ECA may not exceed \$435,000 for the U.S. Timor-Leste Program and \$435,000 for the U.S. South Pacific Program. The number of participants who will take part should be clearly stated. ECA reserves the right to reduce, revise, or increase the proposed budget in accordance with funding availability and the needs of the program.

As with other exchange programs, ECA is committed to the containment of costs consistent with overall program objectives and sound management. The program budget narrative should cite areas in which economies can be achieved, short of the full, allowable cost, and should document the proposed cost sharing in the most concrete way possible. Administrative and program costs must be cost-shared to the greatest extent feasible. Administrative costs must be kept to a minimum.

The award recipient(s) may enroll participants in the ECA-funded Accident and Sickness Policy for Exchanges (ASPE) or another policy comparable in terms of cost and coverage. Should the recipient organization(s) choose to propose a comparable policy, detailed information on the policy must be provided and the cost per student per year should be included in the budget. The proposed alternate carrier may not offer less than the ASPE coverage and the cost may not exceed \$75 per month per participant. No overhead may be charged against insurance premiums.

Calendar of activities/itinerary

Letters of endorsement

Resumes and CVs (resumes of all new staff should be included in the submission; no resume should exceed two pages.)

First Time Applicant Attachments, if applicable.

Please note: Effective January 7, 2009, all applicants for ECA federal assistance awards must include in their application the names of directors and/or senior executives (current officers, trustees, and key employees, regardless of amount of compensation). In fulfilling this requirement, applicants must submit information in one of the following ways:

- Those who file Internal Revenue Service Form 990, "Return of Organization Exempt From Income Tax," must include a copy of relevant portions of this form.
- Those who do not file IRS Form 990 must submit information above in the format of their choice.

As part of final program reporting requirements, the award recipient(s) will also be required to submit a one-page document, derived from their program reports, listing and describing their grant activities. For the award recipient(s), the names of directors and/or senior executives (current officers, trustees, and key employees), as well as the one-page description of grant activities, will be transmitted by the State Department to OMB, along with other information required by the Federal Funding Accountability and Transparency Act (FFATA), and will be made available to the public by the Office of Management and Budget on its USASpending.gov website as part of ECA's FFATA reporting requirements.

Include other attachments, if applicable, i.e. the SF-LLL form, etc.

REVIEW PROCESS

Eligible proposals will be subject to compliance with Federal and Bureau regulations and guidelines and forwarded to Bureau grant panels for advisory review. Proposals may also be reviewed by the Office of the Legal Adviser or by other Department elements. Final funding decisions are at the discretion of the Department of State's Assistant Secretary for Educational and Cultural Affairs. Final technical authority for assistance awards (grants or cooperative agreements) resides with the Bureau's Grants Officer. The Bureau reserves the right to reduce, revise, or increase proposal budgets in accordance with the needs of the program and availability of funds.

The submission will be reviewed with the following review criteria in mind:

1. *Quality of the program idea:* Proposals should exhibit originality, substance,

precision, and relevance to the Bureau's mission.

2. *Program planning and ability to achieve program objectives:* Detailed agenda and relevant work plan should demonstrate substantive undertakings and logistical capacity. Agenda and plan should adhere to the program overview and guidelines described above. Objectives should be reasonable, feasible, and flexible. Proposals should clearly demonstrate how the institution will meet the program's objectives and plan and explain how objectives will be met through specific activities to be carried out in the U.S. and in Timor-Leste and/or the South Pacific region.
3. *Multiplier effect/impact:* Proposed programs should strengthen long-term mutual understanding, including maximum sharing of information and establishment of long-term institutional and individual linkages.
4. *Support of Diversity:* Proposals should show substantive support of the Bureau's policy on diversity. Proposals should demonstrate how diversity will be achieved in the different aspects of program administration and of program design, content and implementation, including individual grantee/participant recruitment, selection and placement. It is important that proposals have a clearly articulated diversity plan and not simply express general support for the concept of diversity.
5. *Institutional Capacity:* Proposed personnel and institutional resources should be adequate and appropriate to achieve the program or project's goals. Proposals should describe the applicant's knowledge of or prior experience with, students from Timor-Leste, and/or the South Pacific nations, and/or other developing countries.
6. *Institution's Record/Ability:* Proposals should demonstrate an institutional record of successful exchange programs, including responsible fiscal management and full compliance with all reporting requirements for past Bureau awards (grants or cooperative agreements) as determined by the Bureau Grants Staff. The Bureau will consider the past performance of prior recipients and the demonstrated potential of new applicants.
7. *Follow-on Activities:* Proposals should provide a plan for continued follow-on activity (without Bureau support) which insures that Bureau supported programs are not isolated events.
8. *Project Evaluation:* Proposals should include a plan to evaluate the activity's success, both as the activities unfold and at the end of the program. The Bureau recommends that the proposal include a draft survey questionnaire or other technique plus description of a methodology to link outcomes to original project objectives. Award recipients will be expected to submit quarterly program reports.
9. *Cost-effectiveness and cost-sharing:* The overhead and administrative components of the proposal, including salaries and honoraria, should be kept as low as possible. All other items should be necessary and appropriate. Proposals should maximize cost-sharing through other private sector support as well as institutional direct funding contributions.
10. *Value to U.S.-Partner Country Relations:* Proposed programs should receive positive assessments by the Bureau's geographic area desk and overseas officers of program need, potential impact, and significance in the partner country(ies).

ADHERENCE TO ALL REGULATIONS GOVERNING THE J VISA

The Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs places critically important emphases on the security and proper administration of Exchange Visitor (J visa) Programs and adherence by award recipients and sponsors to all regulations governing the J visa. Therefore, proposals should demonstrate the applicant's capacity to meet all requirements governing the administration of Exchange Visitor Programs as set forth in 22 CFR 62, including the oversight of Responsible Officers and Alternate Responsible Officers, screening and selection of program participants, provision of pre-arrival information and orientation to participants, monitoring of participants, proper maintenance and security of forms, record-keeping, reporting and other requirements.

The award recipient(s) will be responsible for issuing DS-2019 forms to participants in this program. A copy of the complete regulations governing the administration of Exchange Visitor (J) programs is available at <http://J1visa.state.gov> or from:

Office of Designation, Private Sector Programs Division
U.S. Department of State
SA-44, Suite 668
301 4th Street, SW
Washington, DC 20547

APPLICATION SUBMISSION

The RFGP indicates the date the complete proposal is due and the manner in which proposals must be submitted. There are NO EXCEPTIONS to this deadline. For further information regarding this program or the competition, please contact Julia Findlay, Office of Academic Exchange Programs/East Asia and Pacific Programs Branch, at (202) 632-9453; Fax: (202) 632-9411; e-mail: FindlayJM@state.gov.