Request for proposal:
Open and Distance Learning Course Catalogue for use in the Pacific

Proposal due:
October 15, 2021

Contents

1. Summary

The Commonwealth of Learning (COL) is seeking a contractor, preferably based in the Pacific region or if not with extensive experience of working in the Pacific, to upgrade/re-develop, host and maintain a searchable online course catalogue of open and distance learning courses (ODL) available to teachers in the Pacific.

A prototype was developed as an example and subjected to a three-way review and regional consultancy process (technical, and school- and university-based end-users). The contractor will be expected to upgrade or redesign the prototype according to the review feedback.

2. Background

2.1 The larger project

Open, distance and flexible learning (ODFL) is an important channel for increasing educational opportunities and outcomes. It is particularly relevant for the Pacific region given small, dispersed, remote populations and limited access to secondary and post-secondary opportunities in rural and outer island locations. Despite the importance of ODFL to the region, there has been limited investment and there is an immediate need to build capacity. The COVID-19 pandemic has further reinforced the Pacific's need to be well prepared for non-contact teaching and learning approaches outside traditional classroom-based practices.

New Zealand's Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade has partnered with COL to implement a project to contribute to enhanced capacity and efficiency of Pacific education sectors through greater use of innovative delivery mechanisms and technology. The project works with the nine Commonwealth countries in the Pacific, which are: Fiji, Kiribati, Nauru, Papua New Guinea, Samoa, Solomon Islands, Tonga, Tuvalu and Vanuatu.

It focuses on the following four areas:
1. Immediate response to COVID-19
2. Supporting Youth Employment
3. Building resilience in Pacific Education Systems
4. Supporting Activities.

2.2   Workstream 3.2 Ongoing professional development for teachers in distance learning

This workstream sits within the third area of the project – Building resilience in Pacific education Systems. The workstream has three components:

1.   Mapping existing programmes by levels, duration, focus and mode
2.   Developing a course portal that can be searched for matching programmes to requisite skills development area
3.   Hosting, upgrading and updating the course catalogue portal and contents on a continuous basis up to and including November 2022 based on feedback from users in the Pacific region.

The course catalogue should preferably be built on open-source software and be configured to work even in low-bandwidth environments as well as on mobile devices.

As noted above, a prototype was developed as the basis for seeking feedback from potential users on the content and functionality they would like to see.

The prototype repository can be viewed at:

https://www.ppodl.org

Reports from the three-way review process will be availed to the successful bidder.

3. Project objectives and scope

COL is seeking a qualified contractor, preferably based in the Pacific region or at least with extensive experience of working in the Pacific, to upgrade or redesign the prototype repository based on the initial three-way review and regional consultancy process.

What really matters

The searchable online course catalogue must:

Key requirements	Details
• Reflect the Pacific Region	For example, all images should reflect the diversity of cultures in the Pacific region.
• Be informed by Pacific and Educational values and pedagogy	For example, the course catalogue should reflect courses that meet the needs expressed by teachers in the Pacific region.

Key requirements	Details
• Acknowledge both similarities and differences between Pacific countries	For example, the course catalogue might contain courses that are available only nationally as well as those available regionally.
• Acknowledge the bandwidth and connectivity challenges existing in many parts of the Pacific	For example, avoid use of high resolution or long video content.
• Provide alternative ways for teachers to find available courses that will address their professional development needs in a quick and efficient way	For example, search by course type, duration, level, free or fee-paying, etc.
• Provide information and links to courses that teachers may find useful in at least the following areas and dimensions (and taking cognizance of feedback from users):	o Post-graduate higher education, Under-graduate higher education, TVET teaching, Secondary School Teaching, Primary School Teaching, Non-formal education teaching, ECD/ECCE, Physical Education, Inclusive/Special Education. o Both courses that are **about** an aspect of ODL e.g. *An introduction to blended learning* **and** courses for teaches that **use** ODL methods e.g. A *Post-Graduate Certificate in Primary Mathematics Teaching* offered online o Duration (months) o Workload (hours per week) o Free or fee-paying o Fully online or not o Course description o Link to source
• Institution offering course and link to site/course catalogue for further information.	

Target audience

The priority audience for the searchable online catalogue of ODL courses is:

- Teachers at all levels of the education system
- Teacher-trainers
- Education Ministry teacher education professional development departments.

Working process

The contractor will need to work closely with COL and gather feedback on the design and functionality of the ODL Course Catalogue from users across the Pacific.

The contractor will need to support administrators identified by institutions and/or ministries with uploading and maintaining the currency of the course information related directly to their institution or division.

The budget for development should not exceed CAD115,000. Value for money should be clearly demonstrated as should the breakdown of project activities e.g. development/testing/review cycles envisaged and the processes related to these. COL reserves the right possibly to award the contract to more than one provider.

The work to be done for development is indicated in the table below. Submissions should indicate the proposed budget allocation for these components. COL reserves the right to award different components of the work to different providers.

Deliverables and budget

Deliverables	Maximum budget	Target completion dates
1. A project plan outlining the proposed approach to design/re-design, ongoing development, hosting and maintenance of the course catalogue. This must include: a. underpinning values and principles to guide the design, ongoing development and maintenance of the online course catalogue b. a process for gathering input and feedback from Pacific users throughout the project c. a process for working with COL team members d. a clear plan for the development and implementation of the online course catalogue, including: i. identifying what is in and out of scope ii. identifying how the course catalogue will be designed/re-designed to acknowledge what matters most	CAD 115,000	30 November 2021

Deliverables	Maximum budget	Target completion dates
iii. identifying already existing ODL courses which can be uploaded to the course catalogue iv. identifying gaps in course information available based on searches which do not yield results v. design mock-ups of what the revised/new course catalogue will look like vi. identifying how the online course catalogue will be continually user-tested vii. how the number of visitors to the course catalogue and the number of distinct users of the course catalogue will be tracked. viii. a detailed budget identifying how funding will be allocated.		
2. An upgraded or new version of the searchable online course catalogue which clearly demonstrates learning from the three-way and ongoing review processes		31 January 2022 (or before)

4. Criteria for evaluating proposals

Proposals must include a completed application form (included as an attachment with this RFP document) and a separate Budget document detailing elements of expenditure and value for money approach. Proposals will be evaluated against the following criteria, using the weightings noted where the Budget information will be evaluated against the 'Value for money' criteria below.

Criteria	Weighting
1. **Experience** Experience developing online solutions and working in the Pacific, and in the university/teacher education sector. *COL is seeking organisations, companies, or collaborative groups (Proponents) who have the following experience:* *• Designed and implemented online solutions which meet international standards with a suitable certification or appraisal (eg. IMS certified or CMMI)*;*	40%

	• Created online solutions based as far as possible on openly-licensed software; *• Developed online solutions for low bandwidth environments;* *• Provided a service for a range of clients outside of own organisation (provide a reference list of clients within the last three years)*;* *• Demonstrated experience in designing and delivering software systems at a similar or higher complexity level;* *• Demonstrated experience in leveraging test-driven development and continuous integration as part of the software development process*;* *• Used design-led or co-design processes to develop online solutions that meet user needs;* *• Developed solutions that take account of technical and budgetary constraints of user groups;* *• Developed solutions with the explicit intent that these should subsequently be owned and managed by others with no residual dependencies on the original developer;* *• Worked with people from a range of Pacific countries;* *• Experience working in the Higher Education/Teacher Education sector;* *• Customised existing user interfaces for Pacific contexts.* **Evidence by way of documentation must be provided along with the proposal. Lack of such evidence in a proposal can lead to being deemed incomplete and may limit further consideration.*	
2.	**Values and principles** The high-level approach to the project shows a clear understanding of the importance of user-led design and reflects Pacific and teacher professional development values and principles. *COL is looking for Proponents with the capacity to:* *• Describe (at a high-level) an appropriate approach to the project.* *• Clearly articulate the values and principles they will use to guide the development of the ODL Course Catalogue and describe how they will apply those through the project.* *• Clearly articulate appropriate ways of working with a wide range of stakeholders (COL and potential users).*	35%
3.	**Risk identification and mitigation strategies** Clear strategies for identifying and mitigating risks to the project must be identified.	10%

Proponents must outline that they: • *Have clear processes for identifying and mitigating risks.* • *Can establish and maintain effective communication processes.* • *Can work within tight timeframes to produce quality, fit-for-purpose products in a responsive way over an extended period.*	
4. **Value for money** Ways of ensuring value for money while creating a quality, fit-for-purpose product, are to be identified. *The Proponents must demonstrate that they:* • *Can produce quality work within budgetary constraints.* • *Are able to understand and prioritise within a set budget.* • *Are able to work collaboratively and creatively to deliver value for money* • *Are able to find, reuse and repurpose openly licensed resources.*	15%

5. Key details and dates

Note: All dates below are in Pacific Daylight Time (PDT), i.e. Vancouver time

o   Questions related to this Request for Proposal can be sent to COL up to Friday October 8, 2021 to: opportunities@col.org with the subject line 'Online ODL Course Catalogue Questions'

o   All Proposals must be received by 0800 hours Pacific Time (Vancouver) Friday October 15, 2021.

o   Proposals (including any attachments) must be sent in one email to: opportunities@col.org by the due date above with the subject line 'Online ODL Course Catalogue Proposal'.

Key Dates

Stage	Date
Stage Date RFP published	September 27, 2021
Questions related to the RFP can be submitted up to	October 8, 2021
Proposals received by COL	October 15, 2021
Selection Process	October 15-21, 2021*
Notification to Proponents	October 22, 2021*
Agreement Issued	October 29, 2021*
Project starts	November 15, 2021*

*COL reserves the right to amend these dates as necessary.

6. Ownership of Proposals

All Proposals become the property of COL. COL agrees to treat all Proposals as confidential and agrees to use the Proposals only for purposes related to this RFP process.

COL is headquartered at Suite 2500 - 4710 Kingsway, Burnaby, V5H 4M2, CANADA.

7. COL's Intentions

COL intends to obtain the offer most suitable and most advantageous to its requirements and interests. Notwithstanding anything else contained within this RFP, COL reserves the right in its sole discretion to reject or accept any proposal, compliant or not, including the right to reject all Proposals.

8. Use of COL Logo

Proponents may use COL's logo only for the preparation of their Proposal for this RFP, with the stipulation that the Proponent follows the brand guidelines at: https://www.col.org/about/col-logo. The Proponents are not permitted to use COL's logo for any other purpose without written consent from COL.

9. Conflict of Interest

Proponent's must identify any real or potential conflict of interest that may exist in connection to this RFP and/or any subsequent agreements. A conflict of interest is any situation or relationship that give the Proponent a real or perceived unfair advantage or any situation or relationship that is not in keeping with the Proponent's own conflict of interest standards. Any non-disclosure of any potential conflicts of interest may be sufficient cause to disqualify the Proposal or terminate/cancel any subsequent agreements.

11. Irrevocable Offer

Proposals constitute a valid and irrevocable offer which is open for acceptance by COL for a period of 60 days following the Closing Date of October 15, 2021.

12. Compensation

No Proponent shall have any claim for any compensation of any kind whatsoever as a result of participating in this RFP, and by submitting a Proposal, each Proponent shall be deemed to have agreed that it has no claim.