
From: Trita Parsi [tparsi@niacouncil.org]
Sent: Wednesday, February 22, 2006 12:33 PM
To: 'Anisa Afshar'
Subject: RE: one more question regrading your proposal
Funding for this project or NIAC as a whole?

From: Anisa Afshar [mailto:anisaa@ned.org]
Sent: Wednesday, February 22, 2006 3:29 PM
To: Trita Parsi
Subject: RE: one more question regrading your proposal
Importance: High

Please send me info about your current funding (no numbers just names) and you previous funding (of course besides NED).

Thanks,
anisa

Anisa Afshar
Assistant Program Officer
Middle East & North Africa
National Endowment for Democracy
(202) 293 9072

From: Trita Parsi [mailto:Tpars@niacouncil.org]
Sent: Tuesday, February 07, 2006 3:19 AM
To: Anisa Afshar
Cc: 'Trita Parsi'
Subject: RE: one more question regrading your proposal

Dear Anisa:
Here you go. Sorry for the late reply. Attached, you will also see our interim report.

List of activities since April 2005

Since April 2005, the following activities have been undertaken:

- The NGO Resource Center website was designed and launched. The Website had to be esthetic while at the same time designed in such a way that it could be easily accessed by users in Iran, where high-speed internet remains uncommon.
- A forum was added to the website in order to enable users to communicate with each other and NIAC's NGO expert on topics related to NGO management and funding.
- The contents of the website was written and launched. At the time of the launch, the website contained more than 180 pages in Persian on various topics of NGO management and capacity building. The contents were based on a comprehensive literature survey, after which English texts were both translated an "Iranized" to conform to the Iranian NGOs particular

cultural context. In addition, entire sections were written by NIAC's NGO expert based on his extensive experience in working with Iranian NGOs.

- Extensive outreach to Iranian NGOs has been conducted; more than 200 NGOs in Iran have been contacted, either directly or via umbrella organizations. Furthermore, through extensive web-advertisement (Gooya.com, Iranian.com, Payvand.com), the Center has been contacted various Iranian NGOs who have sought advise and assistance with various management, capacity building or fundraising issues. Most importantly, most of these NGOs have been young and virtually unknown to the outside world (as well as to the Iranian authorities).
- Through these contacts, a database of Iranian NGOs has been slowly built, with a specific focus on the NGOs deemed to have the greatest potential to participate in future NIAC activities and workshops. NIAC has patiently established trust with these NGOs, which is a laborious task continuously undermined by the political atmosphere in Iran, and the high-level of tensions between Iran and the outside world.
- After the launch of the Website in August 2005, additional chapters to the eBook have been prepared and launched. One such chapter delta with "Organizational Assessment Tools" and presented a practical tool for conducting the procedure of assessment through questionnaires and strategic planning. Another chapter discussed the issue of "Organizational Evaluations," which discussed the concept of organizational evaluation and various assessment methodologies.
- In order to facilitate the process of connecting Iranian NGOs with international grantors, an appendix to the eBook was added. It lists and links other international resources for Iranian NGOs and is based on the database of potential grantors that is being developed. The database is based on the category of their work and funding interest.
- The Center has successfully advised Iranian NGOs on various management and capacity building issues. In particular, Iranian NGOs have been curious about international funding opportunities and the Center has helped them design competitive projects and connect them with grantors. A Chapter on the grant process is being written and will b launched later this spring.

Thus far, the project has delivered the following:

- Persian-English NGO management expert advising Persian-speaking NGOs on capacity-building practices.
- Interactive website in Persian on capacity building activities and best-practice working procedures and protocols.
- Database of Iranian NGOs and international foundations supportive of NGO activities in Iran.

The following deliverables are currently being developed:

- Translation of grant submission processes of foundations supportive of NGO activities in Iran.
- Monthly newsletter in Persian with updates on grant opportunities, new capacity building documents and upcoming seminars and workshops.

Evaluation process

The evaluation of the project will be based on the following:

- **Track the number of visitors to the website and local groups that join the network of Iranian NGOs on the website.** The visitors to the website have steadily increased as our advertisement program has intensified and as word of mouth regarding the services provided have spread. Since its launch in August, the website has had 155,492 total page views, averaging 419 per day (a very high number for an all Persian website)
- **Track the number of exchanges between Iranian NGOs and international NGOs and funding agencies.** Though interest in international funding opportunities has been significant, few NGOs have yet been ready to submit a proposal to international foundations. NIAC hopes to help several Iranian NGOs with this task in planned workshop in the region later this year.
- **Conduct follow-up interviews with local groups on the content of the website.** NIAC has been in constant contact with Iranian NGOs regarding the site and its utility. The feedback received thus far has been extremely positive, and we have done our utmost to incorporate their suggestions. Certain sub-chapters in the e-book are direct results of feedback received from NGOs.

Overall, we deem the NGO center a major success whose continued development is of critical importance.

Impact of project (achievements, success stories, difficulties and barriers)

The Ngo Resources Online is the first online source on capacity building and management of NGOs in Persian. Through the internet, the Center has managed to establish direct contact with Iranian NGOs in the most remote areas of the country, i.e. avoiding the umbrella organizations that are closely monitored by the Iranian regime. Furthermore, the many of the NGOs NIAC has reached are in the greatest need of the services the Center provides precisely because they are new and because they do not have access to the existing umbrella and support organizations that exist in Iran.

The Center has been able to help various types of NGOs on small to large management issues, including NGOs that have had no other place to turn. For instance, one of the NGOs we have aided consists of young Iranians with HIV who have put together a small NGO working on HIV issues.

The greatest difficulty facing the Center is the process of building trust with the Iranian NGOs. Mindful of the political climate in Iran, the various threats being made against Iran by the US and the public discussions in the US about allocating funds for democracy promotion in Iran, it is not surprising that Iranian NGOs are cautious. Nevertheless, we believe that the Center has managed quite well in spite of the climate, as the high-number of website visits indicates.

Dr. Mohammad Mansouri, NGO Expert

Dr. Mohammad Mansouri has worked as management consultant and system analyst in several national projects in Iran. He is also a founder of several NGOs, in which he has held managerial positions. He has researched extensively on behaviors of complex systems. He is a frequent lecturer on the NGO sector in Iran, as well as on project management, system design and analysis, social and economic development, and on modernity. Dr. Mansouri has conducted various seminars and also instructed on management topics at George Washington University, the International Center for Dialogue among Civilizations, the University of Tehran, and Sharif University of Technology.

He has also worked as a consultant at the World Bank, and has authored several literary pieces including short stories, poems, plays, screenplays, and novels in Persian and in English. Dr. Mansouri holds a Doctor of Science degree from the George Washington University in Engineering Management. He received his Master's from the University of Tehran and his Bachelor's from Sharif University of Technology in Industrial Engineering. His native language is Persian; he is fluent in English and is familiar with Arabic and German.

From: Anisa Afshar [mailto:anisaa@ned.org]
Sent: Monday, January 30, 2006 5:18 PM
To: Trita Parsi
Subject: one more question regrading your proposal

Dear Mr. Parsi:

I just emailed you three questions for your IA (interim assessment). I have one more question / request:

Please give me one small paragraph about your project director Mr. Mansouri. It will be useful to mention that in the background section.

Thanks,
Anisa

Anisa Afshar
Assistant Program Officer
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