



## WASTE REPORT for May 2, 2016

### A Variety of Waste

Whole generations of Americans have fond memories of tuning in to the *Ed Sullivan Show* or the *Sonny and Cher Comedy Hour*. Others might identify more with the late-night derivation of the variety show embodied by Johnny Carson, Jay Leno, and Conan O'Brian. **Now Uncle Sam is hoping a new generation will fall in love with the variety show...in Afghanistan.**

That's right!!! The Department of State through **the U.S. Embassy-Kabul recently issued a \$1 million funding opportunity to produce 12 episodes of a variety show in Afghanistan with the ultimate purpose of teaching English.**<sup>1</sup>

Of course the show will be filmed before a live studio audience and include performances in English. But, "[t]he show should be written and performed using Dari (Persian) as the primary language. Episodes will have a considerable amount of English, but primary communication and explanation should be in Dari."

So, since the show is mostly in the native language, to reinforce English learning **there will be 60-second cutaways with English lessons on such things as how to read a menu or make a contraction.**

Taking a page from American late-night, the show will also include an "on-the-street element where people practice their English." Kind of a Jaywalking, Kabul edition; maybe they will ask Afghans what they think about *The Waste Report* or if anyone has used the [\\$43 million gas station](#) Uncle Sam paid for.

**But perhaps the most intriguing element of the show is borrowed from another genre of American TV, the game-show.** In fact the grant opportunity is very explicit that the show should include a competition element and notes exactly what should go into these games. Competition, "should involve games played in a team. The team can be two members of our target demographic (15- 25), or one member of the public playing with a local celebrity." Local celebrities? Perhaps an all-star from the [U.S. taxpayer funded cricket league](#)?

While English learning is the primary objective, the Department of State hopes the show will expand its message to other topics. They recommend the competition portion focus on specific themes such as, "environmental preservation, access to education, or volunteerism..." We recommend a theme of not wasting taxpayer's money.

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<sup>1</sup> *Television Variety Show to Support English Language Education*, Public Affairs Section, U.S. Embassy, Kabul, Afghanistan; April 2016; Funding Opportunity Number: SCAKAB-16-CA-011-SCA-04122016