U.S. Department of State
Bureau of Near Eastern Affairs
Office of Assistance Coordination
Catalog of Federal Domestic Assistance (CFDA) Number: 19.500
Supporting Private Sector Growth in Algeria
Opportunity Number: *SFOP0004343*

Key Information:

Announcement Type:	New
Date Opened:	4/12/2018
Deadline for Questions & Notification of Intent to Apply:	5/10/2018
Application Deadline:	6/12/2018
Expected Date of Notification:	9/3/2018
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Funding Opportunity Synopsis

The U.S. Department of State's Bureau of Near Eastern Affairs, Office of Assistance Coordination (NEA/AC), Middle East Partnership Initiative (MEPI) announces a funding opportunity that supports the private sector in Algeria by increasing access to finance for Small to Medium Enterprises (SMEs). Algeria's SMEs have limited access to finance. They face cumbersome administrative and application procedures in accessing financial services, are limited in the number of financing options given the nature of their enterprises, have to meet difficult challenging requirements to qualify for credits, and do not have access to advice and assistance to enhance their qualifications. Financial institutions themselves often do not have the skills nor motivation to serve enterprises on the smaller end of the enterprise spectrum.

In 2017, MEPI programming coalesced a taskforce and network of business and supporting organizations (BSOs); and facilitated the creation of an Economic Reform Agenda (ERA) that presented recommendations for business and economic reform in Algeria. Successful applications will build on two recommendations of the ERA: 1) strengthen the capacity of banks and financial institutions for better business services, and 2) extend and diversify financing options for businesses. Additionally, applications will work to bolster the business and financial acumen of high-growth SMEs to help them gain access to finance. Among others, project activities should include: building the BSO-SME network to establish a program that can offer services to high-growth SMEs such as securing access to finance; preparing BSOs to offer training to at least 20 high-growth SMEs to enhance skill sets related to accessing finance, including financial management and business development; preparing BSOs to guide SMEs through the relevant administrative and application processes; increasing BSOs' credibility to become key facilitators in lender-SME engagement; identifying and providing technical

support/training to lenders or investors who are willing to develop new financial products or services to address the needs of SMEs identified by the BSO network; and creating/strengthening feedback mechanisms between traditional and non-traditional lenders and BSOs and SMEs.

This project contributes to U.S. foreign assistance objectives of fostering economic opportunities in Algeria by addressing challenges to economic instability through initiatives that boost privatization and private-sector growth, foreign investment, and employment opportunities. The project further supports MEPI's strategic objective of increasing economic diversification in Algeria by improving the business-enabling environment.

Eligible Countries and Territories:
In this announcement, we seek to support projects in *Algeria.*   Please note: Applications that focus on activities in countries and territories other than those listed will NOT be considered.

All applications must be submitted in English. Applicants may submit only one application per applicant. **Complete information on how applicants can submit proposals for this opportunity can be found in <u>Section VI</u> below.**

Background Information about NEA/AC: The U.S. Department of State's Bureau of Near Eastern Affairs, Office of Assistance Coordination (NEA/AC) offers Economic Support Fund (ESF) assistance to groups and individuals striving to bring about positive change in the Middle East-North Africa region. The Assistance Coordination Office works in 20 countries and territories, partnering with governments, civil society organizations (CSOs), community leaders, youth and women activists and private sector groups to advance their efforts. Competitively selected projects aim to foster participatory governance, economic reform, and educational advancement in response to local interest and needs.

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I.   FUNDING OPPORTUNITY DESCRIPTION

MEPI seeks proposals that promote private sector growth in Algeria by supporting the private sector's access to finance. Successful applications should propose a strategy to work with established networks of BSOs, build the capacity of SMEs to access finance, and work with lenders to develop financial products and services tailored to the needs of SMEs.

Previous MEPI programming coalesced a taskforce and network of BSOs; and facilitated the creation of an Economic Reform Agenda (ERA) that presented recommendations for business and economic reform in Algeria. Successful applications will specifically address recommendation three in the ERA, "Financing Economic Activity," in support of the following objectives:

- Strengthen the capacity of banks and financial institutions for better business services. [Objective 8 in the ERA]
- Extend and diversify financing options for businesses. [Objective 9 in the ERA]
- Bolster the business and financial acumen of high-growth SMEs to help them gain access to finance.

Successful applications shall clearly and succinctly outline a detailed plan for how each objective will be achieved and how monitoring and evaluation data will be collected and analyzed. Successful applications shall also demonstrate a strong capacity to establish partnerships and work with SMEs, BSOs, and traditional and/or non-traditional lenders or investors.

A. PROBLEM STATEMENT

In 2017, Algeria ranked 156 out of 190 on the World Bank's Ease of Doing Business Index. These structural impediments have limited competition and restricted the private sector while inversely boosting the informal economy. Private sector growth and opportunity are imperative to long-term economic stability and job creation. Since 2005, the Government of Algeria (GOA) has taken steps to enhance the private sector through small and medium-size enterprise (SME) development programs. The National Agency for the Development of SMEs (ANDPME) was established to boost SME competitiveness by conducting technical and financial training to SMEs; and the National Agency for the Support of Youth Employment (ANSEJ) supports young entrepreneurs by providing grants and access loans with subsidized interest rates. However, financial products and services have not kept pace with the diverse needs of Algeria's private sector. Further, SME loan guarantees have not substantially improved private sector lending or increased SMEs' access to financial products and services that are required to maintain cash flow and expand their operations.

MEPI's past initiative in this area resulted in the publication of the ***Programme de Réformes Economiques pour l'Entreprise/Economic Reform Agenda (ERA).*** The ERA's third recommendation focuses on enhancing financing opportunities for economic activities. In particular, the ERA highlighted how the current banking system is focused on commercial activities and does not sufficiently support the needs of SME activities. Banks lack transparency, impose heavy conditions on borrowers such as high interest rates, are too slow in granting credit, have insufficient funds, and do not offer staff the necessary training. The ERA also highlighted

the need to have company ratings to improve management of financing procedures.

On the business side, many SMEs in Algeria lack the necessary managerial, human, and financial resources in order to be competitive. Specifically, Algerian SMEs are not aware of financial products provided by banks and other lenders, and lack the business development and financial management skills to effectively apply for and manage financing.

B. ACHIEVABLE OBJECTIVES

Under this NOFO, MEPI seeks proposals that support 1) training SMEs on business development and how to gain access to finance, and 2) the ERA's third recommendation to strengthen the capacity of banks and financial institutions to offer better services to SMEs.

A successful project will result in:

1. A network of businesses and supporting organizations (BSOs) that work together to prepare high-growth SMEs to secure access to financing.
2. BSOs offering SMEs relevant skill sets and guidance on the financial and administrative processes with the end goal of understanding different financial products and services, and securing financing.
3. Lenders or investors developing new financial products and services tailored to the needs of SMEs.
4. Established feedback mechanisms between traditional and non-traditional lenders and BSOs and SMEs.

C. PROJECT DESIGN
Projects must exhibit potential to promote this objective through activities that build the capacity of private-sector SMEs, increase the utility and credibility of BSOs, and work with lenders to increase SMEs' access to financing.

Project activities *should* include:
a. Build the BSO-SME network to establish a sustainable, scalable program that can offer services to high-growth SMEs in gaining access to finance.
b. Prepare BSOs to conduct training to at least 20 high-growth SMEs to enhance skill sets related to accessing finance, including financial management and business development.
c. Prepare BSOs to guide SMEs through the relevant administrative and application processes.
d. Increase BSOs' credibility to become key facilitators in lender-SME engagement and develop feedback loops.
e. Identify and provide technical support/training to at least 10 lenders or investors who are willing to develop new financial products or services to address the needs of SMEs identified by the BSO network.

Project beneficiaries *should* include:
a. An established network of business support organizations (BSOs).
b. At least 20 high-growth, private-sector Small to Medium Enterprises (SMEs).

     c. At least 10 public and private sector lenders, including banks, non-traditional lenders, or investors.

     d. Women and youth-owned SMEs.

Note: Applicants should read this NOFO in its entirety before writing their proposal, and should **refer to the full Evaluation Criteria provided in [Section VII](#)** while drafting all materials. The following activities and costs are **NOT ALLOWED** under this announcement:

- Exchange activities with other countries or territories;
- Social welfare projects: Paying to complete activities begun with other funds;
- Activities that appear partisan or that support individual or party electoral campaigns;
- Academic or analytical research (if not necessary as part of a larger project);
- One-time events, such as stand-alone conferences and one-off round tables;
- Medical and psychological research and clinical studies;
- Projects of a commercial or profit making nature;
- Cultural presentations, cultural research, cultural clubs, or festivals, etc.' and Entertainment costs (e.g., receptions, social activities, ceremonies, alcoholic beverages, guided tours).

NOTE: Applications that include any of these activities or costs above may be eliminated at the Technical Eligibility Review stage and will not advance to the Merit Review Panel.

D. DEFINITIONS
The following are **definitions** accepted under this announcement:

Capacity Building:
Strengthen the capacity of CSOs for policy analysis, advocacy, coalition-building, internal governance, membership representation and services, and engage in other activities aimed at fostering more peaceful and democratic societies. Areas of capacity building may include, but are not limited to, technical expertise (e.g. human rights, legal reform); CSO self-regulation (e.g. establishing NGO Codes of Conduct); organizational capacity (e.g. strategic planning, financial management and accountability, public relations, issue management, and outreach, revenue generation, accountable fundraising); and targeted advocacy training and technical assistance.

High Growth SMEs:
The OECD defines "high growth" enterprises as those with average annualized growth greater than 20% per year over a three-year period, and with 10 or more employees at the beginning of the observation period.

II.   MEASUREMENT OF RESULTS

Applicants shall provide a logic model or a theory of change to demonstrate how the proposed project (including activities, the project design, and the surrounding context) will achieve the stated objectives. The logic model or theory of change statements can be generated using the template in Appendix II. Please see [Section VI](#) below for more information.

Successful applicants will work with the MEPI program and monitoring and evaluation (M&E) teams to create a plan based on the proposed logic model/theory of change to measure qualitative and quantitative indicators as part of the award negotiations process. The successful applicants will be responsible for collecting data against these indicators, which will be monitored throughout the period of performance of the award to gauge necessary modifications to the project's design, and assess the results of the project's success in meeting expected outcomes.

III.   AWARD INFORMATION

Funding Mechanism Type:	**Grant or Cooperative Agreement**
Estimated Number of Awards:	**1**
Estimated Total Program Funding:	**$500,000**
Estimated Award Ceiling	**$500,000**
Estimated Award Floor:	**$300,000**
Cost-Sharing or Matching:	**Encouraged; NOT Required**
Estimated Length of Project Period:	**12 months**

Contingent on the availability of funds, approximately $500,000 in Economic Support Funds for 1 award will be awarded through this announcement. If selected to receive an award, an applicant will be awarded funds for up to 1 year, depending on the activities and countries proposed. The estimated start date for this project is September 30, 2018. NEA/AC reserves the right to award more or less than the estimated program funding, and reserves the right to award funding under this announcement for a period of up to two years after the announcement's close date.

This request for full applications **does not** constitute an award or commitment on the part of the U.S. government to make any awards, **nor does it commit the U.S. government to pay for costs incurred in the preparation and submission of an application.**

IV.   SUBSTANTIAL INVOLVEMENT

If an award is issued under this NOFO as a cooperative agreement, NEA/AC shall be involved in the program and management performance of these cooperative agreements through consultation and technical collaboration on specified program activities.

NEA/AC Responsibilities
Examples of NEA/AC responsibilities for a cooperative agreement may include:

- Collaboration in establishing annual program objectives and approval of an annual work plan;
- Collaboration in development of training materials;
- Participate in Selection Process of Candidates;
- Government provided key resources or logistical support for the project

If an award is issued as a grant, the above will not apply. Whether to award a grant or a cooperative agreement shall be determined in conjunction with the merit review panel and application selection.

V.   ELIGIBILITY INFORMATION

All applicants will be screened by NEA/AC to determine whether they meet all of the program eligibility requirements detailed below.

NOTE: Applications that do not demonstrate that they meet all of the eligibility requirements in <u>Section A</u> and <u>Section B</u> will not advance past the Technical Eligibility Review stage and may be deemed ineligible for funding under this announcement. Nothing can be added to an application once the competition deadline has passed.

A. ELIGIBLE APPLICANTS

Eligible applicants include:
- U.S. or foreign
    - Non-profit organizations;
    - For-profit organizations;
    - Private institutions of higher education;
    - Public or state institutions of higher education;
    - Public international organizations;
    -

NEA/AC strongly encourages applications from organizations headquartered in the Middle East and North Africa region. International non-governmental organizations with principal bases of operations outside the Middle East and North Africa are also encouraged to apply, **but the percentage of total budget actually spent in the region through local partners will be among the elements of evaluation for this competition**.

NEA/AC is committed to an anti-discrimination policy in all of its programs and activities. NEA/AC welcomes applications irrespective of an applicants' race, ethnicity, color, creed, national origin, gender, sexual orientation, or disability. We encourage applications from organizations working with underserved communities, including women, people with disabilities, and youth.

A.1. Prime Applicant

To be considered for funding under this opportunity, applicants SHALL:

- Have demonstrable previous experience working on economic and business initiatives in the MENA region. This should be addressed within the project narrative section of your application.
- Meet ALL of the registration requirements listed in *Section F* below.
- Meet any requirements listed as MANDATORY in *Section G, Additional Eligibility Considerations*, below.

A.2. Local Partners

Applicants are REQUIRED to include partnerships with local organizations as part of their project design for this NOFO. **Applicants who do not incorporate local partners in their proposal will be deemed ineligible and will not advance past the Technical Eligibility Review stage.** Applicants should propose partners that would work together on specific programmatic objectives or priorities and that utilize local expertise. Partnerships may, but are not required to, take the form of sub-grants.

A partnership is defined as a negotiated arrangement among organizations or individuals that defines substantive, collaborative roles for each of the partners in planning and implementing a project. When proposing partners, applicants shall provide the following in their submission:

- Describe how the partner(s) will contribute to the objectives of the project;
- Detail how the partner(s) has been involved in the project design at the proposal stage;
- Clearly define the roles and responsibilities of the partner(s) in the implementation of the project, project evaluation, and the project sustainability relative to the lead applicant's;
- Provide a description of the organization (including a link to its website) as well as specific examples of its experience working in the proposed content area(s);
- Explain how the applicant organization will provide programmatic oversight and support to the partner(s); and,
- Provide a letter of intent or letter of agreement from the prospective partner(s) detailing how they will collaborate with the applicant organization on the proposed project.

B. REGISTRATION REQUIREMENTS
To apply for NEA/AC (Federal) funding, organizations, whether based in or outside the U.S., must have a Unique Entity Identifier (UEI) number, currently referred to as a DUNS number, and an active account with the System for Award Management (SAM). Local partners who receive any federally funded sub-awards are only required to have a DUNS number. Applicants who do not meet all registration requirements are NOT eligible for funding under the opportunity.

UEI Number
The UEI number is a nine-digit number established and assigned by Dun and Bradstreet, Inc. (D&B) to uniquely identify business entities.

All applicants must have a UEI number. To obtain a UEI number, please follow the steps below:
Go to http://fedgov.dnb.com/webform/pages/CCRSearch.jsp.

Select the country or territory where your organization is physically located. Complete and submit the form. Organizations will need to provide basic information, including physical and mailing addresses, name and title of the chief executive, primary Standard Industrial Code (SIC), and annual revenue.

For technical difficulties in obtaining this number, please contact D&B at: govt@dnb.com.

System for Award Management (SAM)
SAM is a U.S. government wide registry of vendors doing business with the Federal government and requires annual renewal. The system centralizes information about grant applicants/recipients, and provides a central location for grant applicants/recipients to change organizational information.

Further, applicants must maintain an active account, with current information, while its application is under consideration for funding. To keep an active SAM.gov account, applicants must renew it at least once each year. **If an organizations account expires, the organization cannot submit a grant application until it is renewed.**

To create a new account, please follow the steps below:

Go to http://www.sam.gov.
Select *Create User Account*, and then select *Create an Account* on the left-hand side of the screen under *Individual Account Details.* Organizations must have a UEI number and a CAGE number (US Domestic Organizations) or a NCAGE number (Foreign Organizations), to create an account.

Complete and submit the online form. If the applying organization already has the necessary information on hand (see the SAM User Guide), the online form takes approximately one hour to complete, depending upon the size and complexity of the applying entity. Because of the different steps in the process, it might take anywhere from **three to fourteen business days** to complete the process of creating an account with the system.

For help with SAM.gov, please visit their support page at https://www.fsd.gov or contact them at: 001-334-206-7828.

C. ADDITIONAL ELIGIBILITY CONSIDERATIONS

C.1. Cost-Sharing or Matching
There is no minimum or maximum percentage required for this competition. However, NEA/AC encourages applicants to provide maximum levels of cost sharing and funding in support of its programs.

Cost-sharing or matching is NOT an evaluation criteria of this NOFO.

VI.   APPLICATION AND SUBMISSION INFORMATION

A. APPLICATION DOCUMENTS

All applications must include the application components detailed below. **All application documents must be submitted in English. Applicants may submit only 1 application.** Please refer to Section B below for additional submissions guidance and requirements.
NOTE: Applications that do not include all the required documentation described in Section 1 below will not advance past the Technical Eligibility Review state. Further, applications that exceed the allowable page limits will not be reviewed by the review panel.
Applicants may not add any materials to an application once it has been submitted and the competition deadline has passed.
Instructions for Drafter: Please use/modify the text below (1, 2). Update page limits and required forms as it applies to your program.

A.1. Required Documents

Federal Assistance Application Forms (SF-424, SF424a, and SF-424b):
Applicants must complete all three forms online to be considered for funding. **Guidance on how to complete the SF-424 and SF424a is provided in Appendix 3. NOTE: In addition to following all guidance outlines below regarding application materials, applicants are strongly encourage to review the Application Evaluation Criteria section of this NOFO closely as they prepare their proposal. The Evaluation Criteria section is the rubric by which each application will be scored.**

Project Narrative:
The Project Narrative describes the efforts the applicant will undertake to address the priorities and goals of this announcement. It may **be no longer than 10 pages**. More details on preparing the Project Narrative are provided in Appendix 3. **Applicants are strong encouraged to review Appendix 3 before preparing their Narrative.**

Budget & Budget Narrative Submission:
Applicants must provide the following three elements as part of their budget submission:
- Summary Budget
- Detailed Line Item Budget
- Budget Narrative

There is no page limit for this section of an application. A sample fillable template can be found in Appendix 1. This template includes three tabs: The first tab includes written guidance on preparing the **Budget Narrative.** Applicants are strongly encouraged to create their Budget Narrative in Word and submit as either a Word Doc or PDF file. Please note that the Budget Narrative should include designations of who is considered Key Personnel for this project. The second tab has the template for the **Summary Budget**. This tab will auto-fill as you complete the Detailed Line Item Budget, which can be found on the third tab. The third tab is where you can fill in the template for the **Detailed Line Item Budget** as stated above. **NOTE: Applicants are strongly encouraged to use the same format as provided in the template, and to submit summary and detailed line item budgets in Excel form, and the Budget**

Narrative as either a PDF or Word file. If the applicant does not use the template, the applicant must ensure that their submission includes all elements outlined in the sample. The template, which includes more detailed instruction, can be found in Appendix 1. **Applicants are strongly encouraged to review Appendix 1 before preparing their Narrative.**

Logic Model:
Applicants shall provide a logic model or theory of change to demonstrate how the proposed project (including activities, the project design, and the surrounding context) will achieve the stated objectives. The logic model or theory of change statements can be generated using the template in **Appendix 2**. **NOTE: Applicants are strongly encouraged to use the same format as found in the sample.** If the applicant does not use the template, the applicant must ensure that their submission includes all elements outlined in the sample. This section **may be no longer than 3 pages.**

Project Timeline:
Applicants must provide an overall breakdown of the order and timeframe in which all project activities will take place. This item should provide a macro snapshot of what will take place from beginning to end of the project. Applicants must ensure that the timeline of activities/events corresponds with details provided in the Project Narrative and Logic Model. This section **may not exceed 2 pages.**

Job Descriptions / Biographical Info for Key Personnel Positions:
For each position designated as key personnel for this project, applicants must provide the following:
1. If the position is already filled: Provide brief biographical information summarizing the person's qualifications, as well as a brief description of the roles or responsibilities pertaining to this project.
<div align="center">**OR**</div>
2. If the person to fill a key position has not yet been hired: Provide a brief summary of the job description, which should include a description of the roles and responsibilities pertaining to this project, as well as a description of qualifications of eligible candidates.

NOTE: If an applicant is proposing sub grant partner(s) as part of their project design, **Key Personnel/Positions of the sub grantee must also be included.** This section of the application **may not exceed 5 pages.**

Letters of Agreement or Letters of Intent: Applicants proposing partner organizations and/or government bodies shall include Letters of Intent or Letters of Agreement from their proposed partners.

Negotiated Indirect Cost Rate Agreement: NOTE: This item is required only IF applicable.
Applicants proposing indirect costs in the Budget greater than the 10% de minimis must provide

a copy of their Negotiated Indirect Cost Rate Agreement (NICRA). This item will not be counted toward any page limits.

A.2. Optional Documents

Applicants may submit additional documents for consideration with their application. These documents are not required and there is a 10 page limit for this section of the application. Below are examples of some additional documents an applicant may wish to submit.

1. **Organizational Chart:** The organizational chart outlines the clear lines of responsibility and authority in the applicant organization to include budgeted level of effort listed by each person.
2. **Risk Mitigation & Contingency Planning Summary:** This item should provide detail regarding the applicant's intended due diligence to assess and mitigate risks, and put in place adequate measures to address them. This should include specific actions by the applicant to ensure risks are adequately and routinely assessed, and that measures are commensurate with operational concerns specific to Algeria including securing visas, government buy-in at the national and/or local level, complicated NGO laws, payment issues, etc. The applicant should also include a contingency plan that highlights potential challenges and limitations to project implementation in the operating environment and propose contingency plans should program activities be impacted. Please note that this section should not be limited to physical security and risk but should cover any applicable factors relevant to the given operating environment. This section **may not exceed 5 pages.**

NOTE: Applicants must adhere to all maximum allowed page counts. Applications that exceed any of the allowable page limits will not advance past the Technical Eligibility Review stage.

B. APPLICATION FORMATTING REQUIREMENTS
The required font is 12-point, Times New Roman. All application documents must be single spaced, with all margins (left, right, top, and bottom) of at least one inch each. Also, applicants should ensure all pages in the application package are numbered consecutively and meet the page limit requirements outlined in Section A.1 and A.2 above. **The Standard Forms 424 (SF-424, SF-424a, and SF-424b) are excluded from the page numbering.**

It is strongly recommended that applicants submit grant applications using Microsoft Office. If applicants do not have access to Microsoft Office products, Adobe PDF files may be submitted.

C. SUBMITTING AN APPLICATION
Applicants must submit their application electronically using either Grants.gov OR SAMS Domestic.   Both systems require that the applying organization have an account with the system and both require a UEI number and SAM.gov account as detailed in B.3 above. **It is the responsibility of the applicant to ensure they have an active account and will be able to submit its application. Applicants must select one of these systems to submit their**

application; do not submit an application through both systems. NEA/AC is not in a position to grant exceptions to these requirements.

The application process is not complete until the applicant receives notification that its application has been validated and forwarded to the granting agency (NEA/AC). Please allow sufficient time for entering the application into these systems. It is the responsibility of the applicant to monitor its application to ensure that it is successfully received and validated.

C.1. Grants.gov
Grants.gov is a single portal for applicants to find and apply to U.S. government funding opportunities. Creating an account with this system is a five-step process: 1) obtain a UEI number; 2) create an account with the System for Award Management; 3) create a profile, including username and password; 4) obtain Authorized Organization Representative (AOR) authorization; and 5) track AOR status. This process can take 10 business days or longer, even if all the steps are completed in a timely manner. **To create an account, go to** www.grants.gov **and click on the "Register" link, located at the top, right-hand side of the page.**

C.2. SAMS Domestic
SAMS Domestic is a comprehensive grants management system that allows applicants to apply for, manage, and report on the use of U.S. government funds for multiple programs, accessed online at mygrants.service-now.com.
To create an account, go to http://mygrants.service-now.com, and click the "create an account" hyperlink, located above the user name prompt. Users will be directed to a page entitled "User Registration Request;" complete the online form and click the "Submit" button. Users will receive an activation email entitled "Verify Your Grants Account Registration;" click the activation link within the email to receive a username and password.

SAMS Domestic has Quick Tours available to educate users about the system. These documents can be found on the Support tab upon logging into the system.

D. SUBMISSION DATES AND TIMES
Applications must be time stamped before 17:00:00 eastern time (ET) on 6/12/2018 There will be no grace period, and any application not received by the application deadline will be deemed ineligible and will not advance to be reviewed. **Applicants are encouraged to submit an application far enough in advance of the deadline so it can alert NEA/AC (nea-grants@state.gov) of any technical difficulties and allow sufficient time to resolve difficulties before the deadline.** Although NEA/AC will work with applicants to resolve technical issues, it is not in a position to grant exceptions to the submission requirements outlined in this announcement.

VII. FUNDING LIMITATIONS, RESTRICTIONS, AND OTHER CONSIDERATIONS
1. Awards to Commercial Firms or For-Profit Organizations
The Department of State prohibits profit under its assistance awards to commercial organizations. No funds will be paid as profit to any recipient that is a commercial organization.

Profit is defined as any amount in excess of allowable direct and indirect costs. The allowability of costs incurred by commercial organizations is determined in accordance with the provisions of the Federal Acquisition Regulation (FAR) at 48 CFR Part 31. Program income earned by the recipient may be:

- added to the total of the amount of this award, including the required cost sharing or matching, and use it to further eligible project objectives;
- used to meet the recipient's cost sharing or matching requirement;
- OR deducted from the total project or program allowable cost in determining the net allowable costs on which the federal share of costs is based.

2. Audit Requirements

Domestic and foreign organizations that expend $750,000 or more in a fiscal year in federal assistance must perform an independent, recipient-contracted Single Audit or Program Specific Audit. (***Program-specific Audit*** means an audit of one Federal award program. ***Single Audit*** means an audit which includes both the entity's financial statements and the Federal Awards to be conducted in accordance with Generally Accepted Government Auditing Standards (GAGAS). The audits must be independently and professionally executed in accordance with GAGAS either prescribed by a government's Supreme Audit Institution with auditing standards approved by the Comptroller General of the United States, or the host country's laws or adopted by the host country's public accountants or associations of public accountants, together with generally accepted international auditing standards. However, foreign entity audits consistent with International Standards for Auditing or other auditing standards are acceptable with the Grants Officer's approval. More information can be found at http://gao.gov/assets/590/587281.pdf

For sub-non-Federal entities expending $750,000 or more in Department of State award funding during their fiscal year, Department of State standard audit provisions require that Prime non-Federal entities certify that audits of sub-non-Federal entities are performed annually and according to the standards described above. The cost of audits required under this policy may be charged either as an allowable direct cost to the award, OR included in the organizations established indirect costs in the award's detailed budget.

3. Compliance with Applicable Federal Funding Regulations and DOS Terms and Conditions

Payment of funds awarded under this Notice of Funding Opportunity will not be disbursed until the DOS has been assured that the Recipient's financial management system will provide effective control over and accountability for all Federal funds in accordance with 2 CFR 200 and 2 CFR 600 as applicable. Awards issued under this NOFO are subject to the Department of State Standard Terms and Conditions and 2 CFR 200 and 2 CFR 600 as applicable.

VIII.   APPLICATION REVIEW AND SELECTION PROCESS

A.   APPLICATION EVALUATION CRITERIA

Achievable Objectives (30 points)
Each of the project objectives listed above (in Section I) are clearly addressed.

- Impact and Effectiveness: The applicant describes the project's potential contribution to solving the problem addressed in the problem statement and achieving results.
- Timeframe: The applicant describes realistic results to be accomplished within the timeframe of the proposed award.
- Beneficiaries: The applicant clearly identifies the anticipated beneficiaries and explains how the project's objectives will positively affect them.
- Milestones: The applicant provides realistic milestones to indicate progress toward goals and objectives as described in the program announcement.
- M&E: The applicant explains how monitoring and evaluation activities will be carried out throughout the award's period of performance and who will be responsible for them.

Project Design (40 points)
The applicant clearly describes how each proposed project activity will address each of the objectives outlined in the requested priority area above (Section I).

- Responsiveness to NOFO: Explain how the proposed activities respond to the objectives listed in the NOFO.
- Rationale: To justify how the proposed activities will achieve the above objectives in this context.
- Project Management: Clear description of how the project will be managed in terms of initiation, planning, implementation and closing.
- Partnerships and Buy-ins: The applicant addresses how the project will engage or obtain support from relevant stakeholders and identifies local partners.
- Feasibility: The applicant proposes activities that are feasible, and are also practical, and/or experiential in nature to encourage innovation.
- Beneficiaries Selection Criteria and Process: The applicant explains how participants will be selected (e.g., criteria for selection, selection process).
- Duplication: The applicant acknowledges if activities similar to those proposed are already taking or have taken place previously, and provides an explanation as to how proposed new activities will not duplicate or merely add to existing/recent activities.
- Division of Labor: The application describes the division of labor among the applicant and any partners.

Organizational Capacity (20 points)
- The applicant demonstrates experience (e.g., has previously worked and/or has established contacts/partners) in the proposed country/territory/region.
- The applicant demonstrates an institutional record of successful programs in the content area proposed (e.g., economic reform).
- The applicant demonstrates capacity for responsible fiscal management of donor funding (e.g., successful management of a previous sub-award or grant).
- The applicant demonstrates the ability to meet monitoring and evaluation requirements.
- The applicant has adequate staffing and demonstrates the capacity to manage the proposed project.
- The applicant includes letters of intent/commitment/agreement from proposed partners.

Staff and Position Specifications (10 points)

- Pre-identified key staff members, including volunteers, demonstrate experience working in the country/territory/region proposed and with participants from that area (e.g., language skills, cultural understanding).
- A description of the roles of each person or position on the project, whether staff, partner, consultant, or volunteer demonstrates that the project will be adequately but efficiently staffed, avoiding redundancy or duplication of effort.
- A job description, including hiring criteria, is provided for each open key position.
- Pre-identified key staff members, including volunteers, demonstrate experience and knowledge in the proposed content area.
- Applicant and/or partner staff have relevant language competencies.

Budget & Budget Narrative (Acceptable or Not Acceptable)
- The costs proposed are reasonable in relation to the proposed activities and anticipated results, which are clearly explained in the budget narrative.
- The budget provides details of calculations, including estimation methods, quantities, unit costs, and other similar quantitative detail sufficient for the calculation to be duplicated.
- The preponderance of the budget is spent on supporting the project participants/activities in country.
- The budget includes costs dedicated to management, monitoring, and evaluation.
- Adequate travel costs are proposed.
- The budget demonstrates a reasonable cost per participant.
- The budget accounts for monitoring and evaluation costs.

B. REVIEW AND SELECTION PROCESS

NEA/AC is committed to ensuring a competitive and standardized process for awarding funding. Applications will be screened initially in a Technical Eligibility Review stage to determine whether applicants meet the eligibility requirements outlined in Part V and have submitted all required documents outlined in Part VI. Applications that do not meet these requirements will not advance beyond the Technical Eligibility Review stage and will be deemed ineligible for funding under this NOFO.

NEA/AC reserves the right to have all applications deemed to be eligible undergo a Subject Matter Expert (SME) review prior to the Merit Review Panel. Applications that do not pass SME review will not proceed to the Merit Review Panel.

All applications that proceed to the Merit Review Panel will be evaluated by U.S. government and non-governmental subject matter and/or country-specific experts and will be rated on a 100-point scale. Point values for individual elements of the application are presented in Part VII, Section A. Panel Reviewers' ratings, and any resulting recommendations, are advisory.

Final award decisions will be influenced by whether the application meets NEA/AC's programmatic goals and objectives, how it supports the Department's overarching foreign policy priorities, and the geographic distribution of the top-ranking applications.

IX. ADMINSTRATION INFORMATION

A. AWARD NOTICES
Applicants who do not advance beyond the Technical Eligibility Review stage will be notified 30 business days after the closing of the announcement. The authorized representative and program point of contact listed on the SF-424 will receive the notification via email. If an applicant does not receive such a notification, their submission was put forward for review.

NEA/AC expects to notify applicants who proceeded past the Technical Eligibility Review stage about the status of their application by September 3, 2018. Final awards cannot be made until funds have been appropriated by Congress, allocated and committed through internal bureau procedures. Successful applicants will receive a Federal Assistance Award (FAA) from the bureau's Grants Office. The FAA and the original proposal with subsequent modifications (if applicable) shall be the only binding authorizing document between the recipient and the U.S. Government. The FAA will be signed by an authorized Grants Officer, and transmitted to the recipient's responsible officer identified in the application. NEA/AC reserves the right to award funding to applicants under this announcement for a period of up to two years after the announcement's close date.

B. REPORTING REQUIREMENTS
Reporting is critical to effective program management and oversight. Reports are required as a means of evaluating the recipient's progress and utilization of resources. They are divided between a performance progress report and a financial status report.

Recipients will, at a minimum, be required to submit Quarterly Performance Reports (QPR) and a Quarterly Financial Report (QFR). The QPRs will compare actual to planned performance and indicates the progress made in accomplishing each assistance award tasks/goals noted in the grant agreement and will contain analysis and summary of findings, both quantitative and qualitative, for key indicators. The QFRs provide a means of monitoring expenditures and comparing costs incurred with progress.

Recipients must report ***immediately*** when a program faces unplanned delays in implementation, fails to meet program targets or milestones, or costs increase. Any changes or revisions to the approved budget require prior approval from the NEA/AC Grants Officer per 2 CFR 200.308. Recipients are required to report program and beneficiary achievements on a quarterly basis (or provide written confirmation that there is no related news for the given quarter) beginning with second quarter's program report.

C. TRAVEL NOTIFICATIONS
Selected applicants will be required to provide prior notification of all international travel as a requirement of their agreement. This includes travel which is already included in the approved budget and Scope of Work. The purpose of this notification is to enable NEA/AC to inform the relevant U.S. Embassy or post of the recipient's intent to travel. The recipient must notify the Grants Officer at least three (3) business days prior to any travel. The Grants Officer reserves the right to advise against specific travel arrangements for security-related reasons.

D. BRANDING AND MARKING REQUIREMENTS FOR GRANTEES
Grantees awarded under this announcement will be required to make all materials produced under the award with the standard U.S. flag in a size and prominence equal to (or greater than) any other logo or identity. Materials are defined as but not limited to: training materials, materials for recipients, or materials to communicate or promote with foreign audiences a program, event, project, or some other activity under this award, including but not limited to invitations to events, press materials, event backdrops, podium signs, etc. In addition, sub-recipients or sub-awardees are subject to the marking requirements and the grantee shall include a provision in the sub-recipient or sub-awardee's agreement indicating that the standard, rectangular U.S. flag is a requirement. Exceptions to this requirement can be discussed with NEA/AC when negotiating an award.

E. UEI NUMBER REQUIREMENT FOR SUB AWARDEES
All sub-awardees are required to have a UEI number. For information on obtaining a UEI number, please see Part III, Section B.1. **Proposed sub-awardees are not required to have a UEI number prior to the submission of an application but must have one prior to a sub-award being issued.**

F. SUB AWARDEE REPORTING REQUIREMENT
Grantees awarded under this announcement will be required to report all sub-awardees receiving funds of $25,000 or more to http://www.fsrs.gov. More information about this requirement can be found at this site.

X. AGENCY CONTACTS

For questions regarding this funding opportunity including: completing an application, financial and grants management issues, or technical matters, contact:
Program Specialist
Ayhan Ucok
nea-grants@state.gov

All questions and a confirmation of Intent to Apply must be submitted in writing to nea-grants@state.gov by May 10th, 2018 at 17:00:00 eastern time (ET). NEA/AC will create a document of the submitted questions along with the answers and post it on SAMS Domestic and Grants.gov. Questions submitted after the deadline will not be addressed.

The intent to apply is a notification to the Bureau of Near East Affairs Office of Assistance Coordination via email expressing the intent to submit a proposal under this announcement. The notification does not require any specific format or template, and unless specifically indicated, the notification is not mandatory.

The intent to apply is optional and will not be binding.

For questions regarding creating an account with or using grants.gov to submit an application, contact the grants.gov Contact Center. The Contact Center is available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, excluding Federal holidays.

Grants.gov Contact Center
(800) 518-4726
support@Grants.gov

For questions regarding creating an account or using SAMS Domestic to submit an application, contact the ILMS Help Desk. The Help Desk is available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, excluding Federal holidays. The ILMS Help Desk utilizes a user-facing ticketing interface that allows users to submit and monitor their SAMS Domestic tickets. The ILMS Self Service Portal can be accessed by going to https://afsitsm.service-now.com/ilms/home.

ILMS Help Desk
(888) 313-ILMS (4567)
ILMS Self Service Portal

XI.   DISCLAIMER

The terms and conditions published in this NOFO are binding and may not be modified by any Bureau representative. Explanatory information provided by the bureau that contradicts public language will not be binding. Issuance of the NOFO does not constitute an award commitment on the part of the U.S. government. The Bureau reserves the right to reduce, revise, or increase proposal budgets in accordance with the needs of the program and the availability of funds. Awards made will be subject to periodic reporting and evaluation requirements listed in this NOFO.