

2019-2020 MEPI Local Grants Program NOFO Questions
Opportunity Number: MEPILOCALGRANTS2020

- 1) It is duly noted that only one application is allowed. However, as per Section V. A. Eligible Applicants, “organizations that have an established local office in the country they propose to implement their project will be eligible to apply. Awards will be issued to the local office and not any partner or affiliate office that may be located outside of the country of implementation. We are an international organization with locally established and registered offices in multiple countries eligible under this funding opportunity. Our question is: May multiple local offices apply to this funding opportunity, or only one?
ANSWER: Each local office that meets the location requirement and are properly registered can apply independently to this funding opportunity.
- 2) Should applications from local offices of an international organization apply our organizational NICRA, or the *de minimis* (as per VI.AI “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) if applicable”)?
ANSWER: If each local office has its own NICRA, they can only apply with that rate and cannot utilize the *de minimis* rate.
- 3) Is a limit to the number of submissions per organization? And can one organization send more than one proposal?
ANSWER: Per section VI, part A. of the NOFO, “Applicants may submit only one (1) application.”
- 4) Can we submit the application through the grants.gov portal?
ANSWER: Applicants cannot submit applications through grants.gov. Per version 2 of the NOFO, “Applicants must submit their complete application materials electronically through email to NEA-Grants@state.gov.”
- 5) Is there a list of prior MEPI-recipients and the programs that were approved?
ANSWER: Recipients of previous MEPI-funded projects can be reviewed by performing a search through <https://www.usaspending.gov/#/>.
- 6) Can our project start date be November 1, 2020? We can only expect to hear back about the grant's approval on September 30, 2020, and therefore it may be difficult to start implementing the project on October 1, 2020.
ANSWER: Yes. The start date of grants are negotiated prior to the issuance of an award.
- 7) For past donors, how many years back are we supposed to list?
ANSWER: It would be helpful if applicants providing donor funding received in the past five years. If the funding was from the U.S. Government, please include the requested details regardless of how long ago it was received.

8) Are organizations from Yemen eligible to apply? A reference is made to Yemen under point D Applicant Vetting as a Condition to the Award (page 28) in the document. But country specific project priorities for Yemen are not mentioned under point D Project Design (Page 5).

ANSWER: Applicants from Yemen are not eligible to apply as there will not be any local grants in Yemen for this year.

9) Under point D Applicant Vetting as a Condition to the Award, DS Form 4184, Risk Analysis Information is mentioned. Please provide us a link to get this form.

ANSWER: If an applicant should be recommended for funding, organizations required to undergo vetting will do so at that time. There is no action required for applicants at this point in time.

10) The following registration requirements are mentioned.

***SAM account

***DUNS number

***NCAGE number

Are all these mandatory? If so, can you provide us a link for registering for the NCAGE number?

ANSWER: Yes, all of the above-detailed registrations are mandatory. To obtain an NCAGE Code, visit: <https://eportal.nspa.nato.int/AC135Public/scage/CageList.aspx>. Make sure the legal business name and physical address you provided to get your DUNS Number and your NCAGE Code are exactly the same. It takes up to 3 business days to obtain a NCAGE code.

11) It was mentioned in the documents that we could apply through the grants.gov location and through sending the application documents to the following Email (nea-grants@state.gov), the question is if we send the whole filled documents through the Email (nea-grants@state.gov) we still have to complete the three forms online to be considered for funding (SF-424, SF-424a, SF-424b –if applicable)?

ANSWER: Per version 2 of the NOFO, “Applicants must submit their complete application materials electronically through email to NEA-Grants@state.gov.” In addition, these forms need to be completed manually by the applicant organization and submitted at the same time as all other application materials are submitted. These forms are available under the “Information for the applicant” section of the opportunity posted on <https://www.grants.gov/>. Note that the SF-424b is required only for those applicants who have not registered in SAM.gov or recertified their registration in SAM.gov since February 2, 2019 and completed the online representations and certifications.

12) Regarding the Not Allowed cost of certain activities, you mentioned Handicrafts and Purchase of equipments..., the question if the targeted group is a business sector (private sector) and needs to be empowered and their business is within the handicrafts sector you considered it as Not Allowed Cost? And regarding Purchasing of Equipments, the question is if the Business of the target groups that needs to be developed required certain infrastructure development that includes purchasing of equipments and necessary for

achieving the project objectives, in this case it will be considered as Not Allowed or Allowed Cost?

ANSWER: In both cases this would be correct, it will not be allowed as a proposed item of cost.

13) Do we need to be partnered with a US agency and the money will go through them (for example they be the lead applicant and us be the co-applicant) then through us as a local NGO in Jordan because the budget template states "US based personnel" so we were not sure what that line item stands for. Or can we apply as a NGO alone? And if so please advise what we should put in the budget where it says US based personnel? If we can apply alone, can we adjust the budget template to remove the part where it says US based personnel?

ANSWER: No, applicants do not need to be partnered with a US agency and you can apply yourself as a local NGO. The budget template can be revised as needed.

14) Can an organization submit more than one proposal in response to this funding opportunity?

ANSWER: Per section VI, part A., "Applicants may submit only one (1) application."

15) Can a US higher education institution be part, as sub-awardee, of a proposal submitted by a higher education institution in one of the countries in the MENA region or is this funding opportunity strictly reserved for organizations in the region or with offices in the region? If the answer is yes, then I would like to know the following: Can a US higher education institution be part of more than one proposal (more specifically two proposals from two different countries)?

ANSWER: An applicant can propose a U.S. institution of higher education as a sub-awardee. In addition, there are no limits to how many applications a proposed sub-awardee can be included in for this NOFO.

16) We signed in to our account, reached the opportunity page, the "Apply" button is grey, unclickable. Does this mean that we are not allowed to apply online through Grants.gov?

ANSWER: That is correct. Per version 2 of the NOFO, "Applicants must submit their complete application materials electronically through email to NEA-Grants@state.gov."

17) Regarding the forms, the instructions say that we need to fill them online. We could not find them at the opportunity page along with the rest of the related documents. We accessed the Forms page and reached the needed forms SF424 and SF424a. As per guidance in Appendix 3, items 10 to 13 of form SFA-424 should be completed for us, but on the form that we accessed as explained above, these fields are blank. Please advise how to go about filling these items, or if we accessed the wrong forms please guide us to where we should find them.

ANSWER: This is an error. These forms need to be completed manually by the applicant organization and submitted at the same time as all other application materials are submitted. These forms are available under the "Information for the applicant" section of the opportunity posted on <https://www.grants.gov/>. Note that the SF-424b is required only for those applicants who have not registered in SAM.gov or recertified their

registration in SAM.gov since February 2, 2019 and completed the online representations and certifications.

- 18) Are we allowed to attach documents such as CVs of persons involved in the projects, letters of recommendations for our organization, theory of change, legal registration, etc. to this opportunity? If yes, what is the limit of documents or pages allowed?

ANSWER: Yes, applicants may submit optional documents with their application, though these are not required. There is no limit though such forms should be limited to only those necessary to support detailed information provided in the application materials.

- 19) I do have one question regarding the sentence “Applicants may submit only one (1) application”. Can you please indicate if we and another institution can submit several applications that are different in researchers and in scope? Does one applicant mean one researcher?

ANSWER: Each applicant can only submit one application per country. For this NOFO, applicant means the organization submitting the application. Individuals are not eligible to apply to this NOFO.

- 20) Is Iraq one of the countries that can participate in the program? What are the projects priority areas for Iraq?

ANSWER: Applicants from Iraq are not eligible to apply as there will not be any local grants in Iraq for this year.

- 21) I would like to know where one can find the list of appendices mentioned in the guideline booklet? I am looking for appendices 1 2 3. Under the "related documents" we can't find the SF-424 and SF-424a forms. Would you please advise?

ANSWER: These forms have been added to the announcement on <https://www.grants.gov/> under the “Related Documents” tab, “Folder: Other Supporting Documents – Information for the applicant” section.

- 22) Once completed, we would like to send our proposal directly via email to NEA-Grants@state.gov and not via the grants.gov website. Would that be okay, or would we still need to file SF-424 and SF-424a online as mentioned in the NOFO?

ANSWER: This is an error. These forms need to be completed manually by the applicant organization and submitted at the same time as all other application materials are submitted. These forms are available under the “Information for the applicant” section of the opportunity posted on <https://www.grants.gov/>. Note that the SF-424b is required only for those applicants who have not registered in SAM.gov or recertified their registration in SAM.gov since February 2, 2019 and completed the online representations and certifications.

- 23) We have our DUNS and NCAGE numbers but our SAM entity registration is outdated and needs to be renewed, and we have lost our previous SAM username/password. There is no email to contact under the HELP section on sam.gov. Would you kindly provide us with one so we may solve that issue?

ANSWER: No email is available. Per section V., part B. of the NOFO, under *System for Award Management*, help with SAM.gov can be provided through a support page or via phone. Please review this section of the NOFO to utilize these methods.

24) How to get the Appendices?

ANSWER: The appendices are available on the announcement under the “Related Documents” tab, “Folder: Other Supporting Documents – Information for the applicant” section.

25) Since development of a mobile application (Apps) is one of the main activity of my proposed project in order to improve the local services provision, I am wondering how to cover the cost of this activity while it is in the NOT ALLOWED activities and cost list?

ANSWER: The cost would not be allowed and thus the project idea is not viable for this NOFO.

26) Is there any MEPI local grants for Yemen?

ANSWER: Applicants from Yemen are not eligible to apply as there will not be any local grants in Yemen for this year.

27) The project that I plan to do, which related to the Syrian society, will not be implemented in Syria but in Turkey, given the presence of 3,600,000 Syrian refugees registered with the Turkish government and also because of the difficulty of implementing such projects in the current situation in Syria, whether in the areas controlled by the Syrian oppositions or in areas under control of the Syrian regime. In this case, can MEPI exclude such projects from the location requirement?

ANSWER: No exclusions will be provided and the location requirement must be met for this NOFO.

28) The other point related to the organizational capacity is that my organization is newly established. Again, my question is about the possibility of excluding this condition!!

ANSWER: No exclusions will be provided and the formal registration requirement (and any country-specific registrations) must be met for this NOFO.

29) Finally, I would like to ask about the specific conditions. As you mentioned in the NOFO document some special conditions related to Algeria, Lebanon, Israel and Morocco. Are there any special conditions related to Syria and you can provide us with them?

ANSWER: Applicants from Syria are not eligible to apply as there will not be any local grants in Syria for this year.

30) Given that the guidelines for Lebanon indicates that “priority will be given to proposals which include regions outside the greater Beirut area”, shall the activity be located outside of Beirut or the beneficiaries?

ANSWER: It depends on the nature of the proposal, but in general proposals that include activities outside the Beirut area and/or beneficiaries from outside Beirut are preferable. That being said, strong, effective proposals, regardless of whether they are in Beirut or outside Beirut, will be viewed favorably.

- 31) I have registered under grants.gov, added to my profile my organization, as we wish to apply to the MEPILOCALGRANT2020. How do I apply to the grant? The button "Apply" is inaccessible to me (in gray color) on the MEPILOCALGRANT2020 page.
ANSWER: Applicants cannot submit applications through grants.gov. Per version 2 of the NOFO, "Applicants must submit their complete application materials electronically through email to NEA-Grants@state.gov."
- 32) We need to know if the (Yemen Country) are Eligible to apply for this Opportunity, where Yemen located in (Middle East and North Africa region). On other hands, Yemen not listed within excepted countries of this Opportunity announcement.
ANSWER: Applicants from Yemen are not eligible to apply as there will not be any local grants in Yemen for this year.
- 33) We would like to clarify a point regarding the eligibility for Morocco grants. Are Moroccan NGOs currently implementing a project funded by the Local MEPI Program eligible to apply for this additional funding opportunity? Our current MEPI project ends September 30th, 2020.
ANSWER: Yes, you are eligible to apply for this funding opportunity.
- 34) Within the NOFO, there was a portion that stated Tunisia: see Future Addendum to the NOFO. Is there any updated information on when this portion will be released, specifically for Tunisia?
ANSWER: The Tunisia addendum has been posted to the announcement on <https://www.grants.gov>.
- 35) We are registered in the USA and are going to register in other nations as we develop. Do we have to be registered in the host nation at the time of application? Or can we register upon negotiation of award in order to register in nations in which we are applying? The project that I have created covers each nation listed and I can launch in every country if awarded.
ANSWER: The location requirement and formal registration requirement (and any country-specific registrations) must be met for this NOFO at the time of application.
- 36) Are we allowed to cover every specified nation within this NOFO, if our concept and project scope meets the goals for the NOFO. Or would it be preferred to apply in separate applications in relation to the individual nations?
ANSWER: This NOFO is intended for country-specific projects as each Embassy has their own priorities. As such, regional projects under this NOFO would be found to not be responsive. Each applicant can only submit one application per country as long as they meet the location requirement and formal registration requirement (and any country-specific registrations) are met for this NOFO at the time of application. For this NOFO, applicant means the organization submitting the application. Individuals are not eligible to apply to this NOFO.
- 37) I just wanted to be sure that website development concepts could be used. As "applications" are not allowed under this announcement.

ANSWER: Yes, website development concepts can be proposed only if they are not the primary focus of the proposal.

Israel

- 38) I am writing to you to ask if possible, regarding the 2020 Notice of Funding for MEPI Local Grants in Israel, is this NOFO for Israel only? Or it is also for Palestinian NGOs (especially Gaza Strip). In addition, it was written that the applicant must be registered with the Israeli Ministry of Justice. Is that for all applicants or it is for the Israeli NGOs?

ANSWER: This funding opportunity is for entities falling under Israeli government only.

- 39) While we are registered with the Ministry of Justice, we do not yet have a "nuhul takin" or a "Certificate of Proper Management", which organizations receive only after 2 years of activity. We have submitted the documentation for this certification but are still waiting to receive it. Is this document "Nihul Takin" a requirement for submitting an application for a MEPI grant?

ANSWER: No, you do not need to have a Nihul Takin, however you must be registered with the Israeli Ministry of Justice.

- 40) We would be grateful if you could answer whether "advocacy" in this priority refers only to advocating on behalf of individuals, or does it also include broad advocacy regarding government policy, budget allocations, administrative reforms, etc.

ANSWER: Advocacy may refer to both. However, advocacy that is broad-based, involving working with decision-makers such as government could produce results that are more widespread, and therefore more favorable in the selection process.

- 41) We submitted a proposal to the MEPI Local call last year. If we think that we can improve the proposal, and that the core idea has started and has the potential to be expanded, can we resubmit?

ANSWER: If your proposal meets the country priority detailed, yes you may submit the proposal.

- 42) The same project was submitted to the recent call for CMM, as it has aspects of conflict mitigation. Are we still eligible to submit to the MEPI Local call?

ANSWER: Your status as an applicant for a different USG-funded opportunity does not impact your ability to apply to this NOFO. MEPI does not do conflict mitigation. It is not recommended to employ a revolving door behavior between USAID and MEPI.

- 43) We would love to submit a proposal dealing with healthy sexuality educational program for minority groups. We would like to know if it would be in the framework of funding for this grant.

ANSWER: A healthy sexuality educational project that addresses gender issues is eligible.

- 44) I would appreciate if you could advise me on applying as both lead and secondary organizations. We have a proposal we are planning to submit as the prime applicant together with another Israeli organization. In addition, we are considering partnering with

a different organization and assuming a secondary role in that application. Would this be possible? Can our organization appear in two separate proposals?

ANSWER: Yes, your organization can be proposed as the recipient in one application and as a sub-recipient in a different application.

45) Page 9 of the MEPI 2020 Local Grants call for proposal notes that “Implementers of a MEPI Local Grant with a current MEPI project still under implementation by August 1, 2020 are not eligible to apply for this funding opportunity.” We are wondering how the term “implementers” is defined. We are a partner in a current MEPI project that ends 30 September 2020, although we were not the applicant organization nor are we the signatory organization on the contract. Would we be eligible to apply as the applicant for this call? Additionally, would we be eligible to be a partner with another applicant – both if we are allowed and do apply for this call and if we are not eligible to do so?

ANSWER: Yes, your organization is eligible to apply for this NOFO and could also be proposed as a sub-recipient in a different application.

46) Our question is about the target population of our project. The project's target population are BOTH Israeli and Palestinian women (from the West Bank). Would this project be eligible for your support?

ANSWER: Yes, as long as the NGO or non-profit institution is itself headquartered in Israel.

47) If the participants in our program have a background in community engagement and volunteering, is that enough of a social activist background under your requirements? I understand that you don't want to take on projects that train people "from scratch", but many of our target audience are active volunteers in our community or in other capacities and are eager to take this engagement to the next level and become more politically and socially involved, and we would like to offer them the training to be able to do so.

ANSWER: A background in community engagement and volunteering is fine.

48) As part of our activist training we would like to include microgrants for participants to implement a project of their own, of course with our supervision and support. Is this kind of expense allowed under the MEPI guidelines?

ANSWER: As long as the activities to be supported through micro-grants directly continue to the project's objectives, they can be proposed.

49) Is there a requirement for a minimal organization annual budget/turnover? Also, is there a maximal percentage of your award out of the NGO turnover? Can it be more than 50%?

ANSWER: If the organization has a high turnover rate, the sustainability of the organization, or lack thereof, will be taken into account when the proposal is evaluated against a criteria that considers ability to complete the project. There is no formal requirement related to annual budget, nor is there a requirement that MEPI funds compose a certain percentage of the organization's overall donor support. Some of our recipients are funded solely by MEPI, others have several ongoing projects with different donor funds.

50) I could not find a way to apply or even to see one's eligibility through grants.gov.

ANSWER: Applicants cannot submit applications through grants.gov. Per version 2 of the NOFO, “Applicants must submit their complete application materials electronically through email to NEA-Grants@state.gov.” In addition, eligibility is detailed in section V, part A. of the NOFO as well as in the country-specific section.