**U.S. Department of State**

**U.S. Embassy in Harare, Zimbabwe**

**Notice of Funding Opportunity**

**Funding Opportunity Title:** Culture of Research and University Exchanges Prep program (CRUX) in One Health and Agricultural STEM

**Funding Opportunity Number: AFHAR-FY21-01**

**Deadline for Applications: July 15, 2021**

**CFDA Number: 19.040**

**Total Amount Available:** $150,000

**A. PROGRAM DESCRIPTION**

The Public Diplomacy section of the Embassy of the United States in Harare announces an open competition for United States Institutes of Higher Education (HEIs) to submit applications for the **Culture of Research and University Exchanges Prep program (CRUX Program).** We anticipate funding approximately one to two grants in the following subject and research areas: 1) One Health [[1]](#footnote-1)and 2) Agricultural STEM (Science Technology Engineering and Math)[[2]](#footnote-2). Proposals can be submitted for both focus areas or one individually.

We seek proposals that build the research capacity of faculty and students at Zimbabwean academic institutions and cultivate university partnerships between these institutions and their U.S. counterparts. Proposals should be submitted to PublicDiplomacyGrants-ZIM@state.gov **by July 15, 2021.**

This program will focus on building cultures of research at Zimbabwean universities and establishing research methods that adhere to international standards; building or expanding research capacity; connecting Zimbabwean researchers with their U.S. counterparts and catalyzing university partnerships. This program supports the U.S. Department of State, Bureau of Africa Affairs’ University Partnership Initiative (UPI) to galvanize efforts to expand partnerships between U.S. and African higher education institutions. The UPI acknowledges that, “expanding existing links and promoting new partnerships at the university level will strengthen Africa’s educational institutions as instruments of national development – enhancing regional prosperity, security, and stability.”

Theory of Change: *If universities in Zimbabwe increase their ability to collaborate and improve their research capacity; and if these universities develop a campus-wide culture of research, then Zimbabwe will be better positioned to build comprehensive university partnerships with U.S. counterparts and better position higher education to contribute to national development strategies in Zimbabwe.*

***Key Deliverables:***The 18-month CRUX program seeks to accomplish the program’s goals through the completion of the following deliverables:

1. **Online Capacity-Building sessions** on research methodologies, grant applications and compliance for Zimbabwean university faculty and staff (approximately 25). Additional topics could include (but not limited to) market-based research, private-sector integrations, critical thinking and problem-solving skills, important characteristics of a productive research environment and building up under-graduate student research capacities.

Proposals should include a wide range of topics that focus on how to foster a culture of research, including:

* Value and importance of a culture of research, including leadership support for a campus-wide strategic vision;
* Main characteristics of a productive research environment, including professional development prioritization;
* Critical policy components and successful steps for implementing a culture of research;
* Case studies of successful university research development programs and initiatives that lead to achieving international standards in research methods and administrative support;
* Structured Networking sessions with multiple U.S. HEI counterparts to build professional connections and catalyze; and
* Other key areas that support this effort.
1. **Professional Networking Activities** that support new academic collaborations and university partnership opportunities in the focus subject areas (One Health and Agricultural STEM).

NOTE:Proposals that present a broad group of U.S. HEIs and innovative/creative online networking strategies efforts will be prioritized.

1. **Virtual Study Tour** of multiple U.S. HEIs for up to ten Zimbabwean university academics and administrators from the 25 selected for Online Capacity-Building sessions participants (if budgets allow, an in-person program is also an option). These interactions should address potential research priority areas and focus on building academic research partnerships and other potential international programs.

**Program Participants and Beneficiaries**

In partnership with the Public Diplomacy section at the U.S. Embassy in Zimbabwe and local educational counterparts, the program will target up to 25 Zimbabwean academics and administrators in each subject focus area (One Health and Agricultural STEM). Recruitment and selection will be jointly conducted by the grantee and the U.S. Embassy in Zimbabwe. In consultation with the U.S. Embassy in Zimbabwe, the number of participants in each program component may change depending on local conditions and budget considerations.

**B. FEDERAL AWARD INFORMATION**

Length of performance period: up to 18 months
Number of awards anticipated: 1-2 awards (either individually or jointly in one proposal)
Award amounts: approximately US$ 75,000.00
Total available funding: approximately US$ 150,000
Type of Funding: Public Diplomacy Funds – Smith Mundt

Anticipated program start date: September 15, 2021

**This notice is subject to availability of funding.**

**Funding Instrument Type:** Cooperative Agreement. The target audience and beneficiaries will be identified by the Public Diplomacy Section at the U.S. Embassy in Zimbabwe.

**Program Performance Period**: Proposed programs should be completed in 18 months or less.

**C. ELIGILIBITY INFORMATION**

1. Eligible Applicants: The following organizations are eligible to apply: U.S. Public and private higher education institutions (consortia applications are eligible) with academic programs in One Health and Agricultural STEM.

2. Cost Sharing: Cost sharing is anticipated, particularly for joint proposals that address both subject focus areas (i.e., One Health and Agricultural Stem). Proposals that include cost-sharing will be assigned additional review points which will be used to break ties among applications with equivalent scores after evaluation against all other factors.

3. Other Eligibility Requirements

In order to be eligible to receive an award, all organizations must have a unique entity identifier (Data Universal Numbering System/DUNS number from Dun & Bradstreet), as well as a valid registration on www.SAM.gov. Please see Section D.3 for information on how to obtain these registrations. Individuals are not required to have a unique entity identifier or be registered in SAM.gov.

**D. APPLICATION AND SUBMISSION INFORMATION**

1. Address to Request Application Package

Application forms required below are available at [http://zw.usembassy.gov](http://zw.usembassy.govv) and [www.grants.gov](http://www.grants.gov).

2. Content and Form of Application Submission

Please follow all instructions below carefully. Proposals that do not meet the requirements of this announcement or fail to comply with the stated requirements will be ineligible.

**Content of Application**

Please ensure:

* The proposal clearly addresses the goals and objectives of this funding opportunity
* All documents are in English
* All budgets are in U.S. dollars
* Other Eligibility Requirements
* All pages are numbered

The following documents **required**:

**1. Mandatory application forms**

* **SF-424 *(Application for Federal Assistance – organizations)* at the U.S. Embassy Harare website and www.Grants.gov**
* **SF-424A *(Budget Information for Non-Construction programs)* at the U.S. Embassy Harare website**
* **SF-424B *(Assurances for Non-Construction programs)* at the U.S. Embassy Harare website *(note: the SF-424B is only required for individuals and for organizations not registered in SAM.gov)***

**2. Summary Page:**Cover sheet stating the applicant name and organization, proposal date, program title, program period proposed start and end date, and brief purpose of the program.

**3. Proposal (10 pages maximum):** The proposal should contain sufficient information that anyone not familiar with it would understand exactly what the applicant wants to do. You may use your own proposal format, but it must include all the items below.

Application details:

* **Proposal Summary:** Short narrative that outlines the proposed program, including program objectives and anticipated impact.
* **Introduction to the Organization or Individual applying**: A description of past and present operations, showing ability to carry out the program, including information on all previous grants from the U.S. Embassy and/or U.S. government agencies.
* **Problem Statement:** Clear, concise and well-supported statement of the problem to be addressed and why the proposed program is needed
* **Program Goals and Objectives:** The “goals” describe what the program is intended to achieve.  The “objectives” refer to the intermediate accomplishments on the way to the goals. These should be achievable and measurable.
* **Program Activities**: Describe the program activities and how they will help achieve the objectives.
* **Program Methods and Design**: A description of how the program is expected to work to solve the stated problem and achieve the goal. Include a logic model as appropriate.
* **Proposed Program Schedule and Timeline:** The proposed timeline for the program activities. Include the dates, times, and locations of planned activities and events.
* **Key Personnel:**Names, titles, roles and experience/qualifications of key personnel involved in the program. What proportion of their time will be used in support of this program?
* **Program Partners:** List the names and type of involvement of key partner organizations and sub-awardees.
* **Program Monitoring and Evaluation Plan:** This is an important part of successful grants. Throughout the time-frame of the grant, how will the activities be monitored to ensure they are happening in a timely manner, and how will the program be evaluated to make sure it is meeting the goals of the grant?
* **Future Funding or Sustainability** Applicant’s plan for continuing the program beyond the grant period, or the availability of other resources, if applicable.

**4. Budget Justification Narrative**: After filling out the SF-424A Budget (above), use a separate sheet of paper to describe each of the budget expenses in detail. See section *H. Other Information: Guidelines for Budget Submissions* below for further information.

**5. Attachments**:

* 1-page CV or resume of key personnel who are proposed for the program
* Letters of support from program partners describing the roles and responsibilities of each partner
* If your organization has a Negotiated Indirect Cost Rate Agreement (NICRA) and includes NICRA charges in the budget, your latest NICRA should be included as a PDF file.
* Official permission letters, if required for program activities
* Unique Entity Identifier and System for Award Management (SAM.gov)

**Required Registrations:**

Any applicant listed on the Excluded Parties List System (EPLS) in the [System for Award Management (SAM)](https://sam.gov) is not eligible to apply for an assistance award in accordance with the OMB guidelines at 2 CFR 180 that implement Executive Orders 12549 (3 CFR, 1986 Comp., p. 189) and 12689 (3 CFR, 1989 Comp., p. 235), “Debarment and Suspension.” Additionally, no entity listed on the EPLS can participate in any activities under an award. All applicants are strongly encouraged to review the EPLS in SAM to ensure that no ineligible entity is included.

All organizations applying for grants (except individuals) must obtain these registrations. All are free of charge:

* Unique entity identifier from Dun & Bradstreet (DUNS number)
* NCAGE/CAGE code
* www.SAM.gov registration

Step 1: Apply for a DUNS number and an NCAGE number (these can be completed simultaneously)

DUNS application: Organizations must have a Data Universal Numbering System (DUNS) number from Dun & Bradstreet. If your organization does not have one already, you may obtain one by calling 1-866-705-5711 or visiting <http://fedgov.dnb.com/webform>

NCAGE application: Application page here: <https://eportal.nspa.nato.int/AC135Public/scage/CageList.aspx>

Instructions for the NCAGE application process:

<https://eportal.nspa.nato.int/AC135Public/Docs/US%20Instructions%20for%20NSPA%20NCAGE.pdf>

For NCAGE help from within the U.S., call 1-888-227-2423

For NCAGE help from outside the U.S., call 1-269-961-7766

Email NCAGE@dlis.dla.mil for any problems in getting an NCAGE code.

Step 2: After receiving the NCAGE Code, proceed to register in SAM.gov by logging onto: <https://www.sam.gov>. SAM registration must be renewed annually.

Other Submission Requirements

All application materials must be submitted by email to: PublicDiplomacyGrants-Zim@state.gov.

**IMPORTANT:** Please label your email submission “CRUX” and copy Public Diplomacy Officer, John Hishmeh at HishmehJO@state.gov.

If you are unable to email your application, please deliver your application to:

 U. S. Embassy Harare

Attn: Public Diplomacy Grants - CRUX

2 Lorraine Drive

Bluffhill

Harare, Zimbabwe

**Submission deadline is July 15, 2021.**

**E. APPLICATION REVIEW INFORMATION**

1. Criteria: Each application will be evaluated and rated on the basis of the evaluation criteria outlined below.

**Quality and Feasibility of the Program Idea** **– 20 points:** The program idea is well developed, with detail about how program activities will be carried out. The proposal includes a reasonable implementation timeline.

**Organizational Capacity and Record on Previous Grants – 20 points:** The organization has expertise in its stated field and has the internal controls in place to manage federal funds.  This includes a financial management system and a bank account.

**Program Planning/Ability to Achieve Objectives – 15 points:** Goals and objectives are clearly stated and program approach is likely to provide maximum impact in achieving the proposed results.

**Budget – 10 points:** The budget justification is detailed. Costs are reasonable in relation to the proposed activities and anticipated results. The budget is realistic, accounting for all necessary expenses to achieve proposed activities.

**Monitoring and evaluation plan – 15 points:** Applicant demonstrates it is able to measure program success against key indicators and provides milestones to indicate progress toward goals outlined in the proposal. The program includes output and outcome indicators, and shows how and when those will be measured.

**Sustainability – 20 points:** Program activities will continue to have positive impact after the end of the program.

2. Review and Selection Process

A review committee will evaluate all eligible applications.

3. Federal Awardee Performance & Integrity Information System (FAPIIS)

For any Federal award under a notice of funding opportunity, if the Federal awarding agency anticipates that the total Federal share will be greater than the simplified acquisition threshold on any Federal award under a notice of funding opportunity may include, over the period of performance (see §200.88 Simplified Acquisition Threshold), this section must also inform applicants:

i. That the Federal awarding agency, prior to making a Federal award with a total amount of Federal share greater than the simplified acquisition threshold, is required to review and consider any information about the applicant that is in the designated integrity and performance system accessible through SAM (currently FAPIIS) (see 41 U.S.C. 2313);

ii. That an applicant, at its option, may review information in the designated integrity and performance systems accessible through SAM and comment on any information about itself that a Federal awarding agency previously entered and is currently in the designated integrity and performance system accessible through SAM;

iii. That the Federal awarding agency will consider any comments by the applicant, in addition to the other information in the designated integrity and performance system, in making a judgment about the applicant's integrity, business ethics, and record of performance under Federal awards when completing the review of risk posed by applicants as described in §200.206 Federal awarding agency review of risk posed by applicants.

**F. FEDERAL AWARD ADMINISTRATION INFORMATION**

* 1. Federal Award Notices

The grant award or cooperative agreement will be written, signed, awarded, and administered by the Grants Officer. The assistance award agreement is the authorizing document and it will be provided to the recipient for review and signature by email. The recipient may only start incurring program expenses beginning on the start date shown on the grant award document signed by the Grants Officer.

If a proposal is selected for funding, the Department of State has no obligation to provide any additional future funding. Renewal of an award to increase funding or extend the period of performance is at the discretion of the Department of State.

Issuance of this NOFO does not constitute an award commitment on the part of the U.S. government, nor does it commit the U.S. government to pay for costs incurred in the preparation and submission of proposals. Further, the U.S. government reserves the right to reject any or all proposals received.

**Payment Method:** Payments will be made via electronic funds transfer at program intervals negotiated in the final award provisions.

* 1. Administrative and National Policy Requirements

Before submitting an application, applicants should review all the terms and conditions and required certifications which will apply to this award, to ensure that they will be able to comply.

 These include:

* [2 CFR 25 - UNIVERSAL IDENTIFIER AND SYSTEM FOR AWARD MANAGEMENT](https://www.ecfr.gov/cgi-bin/text-idx?SID=81a5f41de81c46a9844617d93a9db081&mc=true&node=pt2.1.25&rgn=div5)
* [2 CFR 170 - REPORTING SUBAWARD AND EXECUTIVE COMPENSATION INFORMATION](https://www.ecfr.gov/cgi-bin/text-idx?SID=81a5f41de81c46a9844617d93a9db081&mc=true&node=pt2.1.170&rgn=div5)
* [2 CFR 175 - AWARD TERM FOR TRAFFICKING IN PERSONS](https://www.ecfr.gov/cgi-bin/text-idx?SID=81a5f41de81c46a9844617d93a9db081&mc=true&node=pt2.1.175&rgn=div5)
* [2 CFR 182 - GOVERNMENTWIDE REQUIREMENTS FOR DRUG-FREE WORKPLACE (FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE)](https://www.ecfr.gov/cgi-bin/text-idx?SID=81a5f41de81c46a9844617d93a9db081&mc=true&node=pt2.1.182&rgn=div5)
* [2 CFR 183 - NEVER CONTRACT WITH THE ENEMY](https://www.ecfr.gov/cgi-bin/text-idx?SID=81a5f41de81c46a9844617d93a9db081&mc=true&node=pt2.1.183&rgn=div5)
* [2 CFR 600 – DEPARTMENT OF STATE REQUIREMENTS](https://www.ecfr.gov/cgi-bin/text-idx?SID=81a5f41de81c46a9844617d93a9db081&mc=true&tpl=/ecfrbrowse/Title02/2chapterVI.tpl)
* [U.S. DEPARTMENT OF STATE STANDARD TERMS AND CONDITIONS](https://www.state.gov/about-us-office-of-the-procurement-executive/)

In accordance with the Office of Management and Budget’s guidance located at 2 CFR part 200, all applicable Federal laws, and relevant Executive guidance, the Department of State will review and consider applications for funding, as applicable to specific programs, pursuant to this notice of funding opportunity in accordance with the following: NOTE:

* [Guidance for Grants and Agreements in Title 2 of the Code of Federal Regulations](https://www.ecfr.gov/cgi-bin/text-idx?SID=81a5f41de81c46a9844617d93a9db081&mc=true&node=pt2.1.200&rgn=div5) (2 CFR), as updated in the Federal Register’s 85 FR 49506 on August 13, 2020, particularly on:
	+ Selecting recipients most likely to be successful in delivering results based on the program objectives through an objective process of evaluating Federal award applications (2 CFR part 200.205),
	+ Prohibiting the purchase of certain telecommunication and video surveillance services or equipment in alignment with section 889 of the National Defense Authorization Act of 2019 (Pub. L. No. 115—232) (2 CFR part 200.216),
	+ Promoting the freedom of speech and religious liberty in alignment with *Promoting Free Speech and Religious Liberty* (E.O. 13798) and *Improving Free Inquiry, Transparency, and Accountability at Colleges and Universities* (E.O. 13864) (§§ 200.300, 200.303, 200.339, and 200.341),
	+ Providing a preference, to the extent permitted by law, to maximize use of goods, products, and materials produced in the United States (2 CFR part 200.322), and
	+ Terminating agreements in whole or in part to the greatest extent authorized by law, if an award no longer effectuates the program goals or agency priorities (2 CFR part 200.340).
	1. Reporting

**Reporting Requirements:** Recipients will be required to submit financial reports and program reports. The award document will specify how often these reports must be submitted, in consultation with the final award recipient(s) based anticipate program cost timing.

**H. OTHER INFORMATION**

**Guidelines for Budget Justification**

Personnel and Fringe Benefits: Describe the wages, salaries, and benefits of temporary or permanent staff who will be working directly for the applicant on the program, and the percentage of their time that will be spent on the program.

Travel: Estimate the costs of travel and per diem for this program, for program staff, consultants or speakers, and participants/beneficiaries. If the program involves international travel, include a brief statement of justification for that travel.

Equipment: Describe any machinery, furniture, or other personal property that is required for the program, which has a useful life of more than one year (or a life longer than the duration of the program), and costs at least $5,000 per unit.

Supplies: List and describe all the items and materials, including any computer devices, that are needed for the program. If an item costs more than $5,000 per unit, then put it in the budget under Equipment.

Contractual: Describe goods and services that the applicant plans to acquire through a contract with a vendor. Also describe any sub-awards to non-profit partners that will help carry out the program activities.

Other Direct Costs: Describe other costs directly associated with the program, which do not fit in the other categories. For example, shipping costs for materials and equipment or applicable taxes. All “Other” or “Miscellaneous” expenses must be itemized and explained.

Indirect Costs: These are costs that cannot be linked directly to the program activities, such as overhead costs needed to help keep the organization operating. If your organization has a Negotiated Indirect Cost Rate (NICRA) and includes NICRA charges in the budget, attach a copy of your latest NICRA. Organizations that have never had a NICRA may request indirect costs of 10% of the modified total direct costs as defined in 2 CFR 200.68.

“Cost Sharing” refers to contributions from the organization or other entities other than the U.S. Embassy. It also includes in-kind contributions such as volunteers’ time and donated venues.

Alcoholic Beverages:  Please note that award funds cannot be used for alcoholic beverages.

1. **One Health** is a collaborative, multisectoral, and transdisciplinary approach—working at the local, regional, national, and global levels—with the goal of achieving optimal health outcomes recognizing the interconnection between people, animals, plants, and their shared environment. (<https://www.cdc.gov/onehealth/index.html>) [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. **Agricultural STEM:** The fundamental idea behind STEM education is to help students understand the application and interrelationship of the four components rather than viewing them in isolation as they have been taught for decades. Agriculture, like the health sciences, is an ideal platform for completely integrating all four components of STEM, allowing students to observe how each component interacts with and is essential to the others. (<https://portal.nifa.usda.gov/web/crisprojectpages/1003902-the-impact-of-agricultural-education-programs-on-student-achievement-attitude-and-career-aspirations-in-the-stem-areas.html>) [↑](#footnote-ref-2)