

**U.S. DEPARTMENT OF STATE  
NOTICE OF FUNDING OPPORTUNITY**

**CENTRAL ASIA ENERGY FELLOWS PROGRAM**

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**U.S. DEPARTMENT OF STATE  
NOTICE OF FUNDING OPPORTUNITY (NOFO)  
CENTRAL ASIA ENERGY FELLOWS PROGRAM**

**Section A. Funding Opportunity Description**

<b>Announcement Type:</b>	New
<b>Funding Title:</b>	Central Asia Energy Fellows Program
<b>Assistance Instrument type:</b>	Cooperative Agreement
<b>Funding Opportunity Number:</b>	SFOP0008963
<b>Funding Type:</b>	Discretionary
<b>Assistance Listing Number:</b>	19.027
<b>Funding Amount:</b>	\$296,296
<b>Funding Authority:</b>	Foreign Assistance Act of 1961
<b>Source of Funding:</b>	ESF Funds
<b>Funding Activity Category:</b>	Energy
<b>Cost-Sharing Requirement:</b>	Not Required
<b>Number of Awards:</b>	One award
<b>Project Duration:</b>	24 months
<b>Key Dates:</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. Application must be submitted by <b>11:59 P.M. Eastern Standard Time (EDT) on June 24, 2022.</b></li><li>2. Questions must be submitted by <b>11:59 P.M. Eastern Standard Time (EDT) on June 10, 2022.</b></li><li>3. Notification of winning proposal expected by the end of July/or early August, 2022</li></ol>
<b>Application Submission:</b>	Application must be submitted through <a href="http://www.grants.gov">www.grants.gov</a>
<b>Electronic Requirement:</b>	Yes
<b>Eligibility Category:</b>	<p>U.S. non-profit/nongovernmental organizations subject to section 501 (c) (3) of the U. S. tax code, U.S. not-for-profit/nongovernmental organizations, associations, and U.S. higher educational institutions.</p> <p>Eligible applicants must provide proof of their 501(c) (3) eligibility status, as determined by the Internal Revenue Service.</p> <p>Pursuant to 2 CFR 200.400, it is a U.S. Department of State policy <b>not</b> to award profit under federal assistance instruments.</p>
<b>Type of Applicant:</b>	Organizations only. Individuals are not eligible to apply.
<b>Number of Applications:</b>	One (1) per applicant organization

## **Executive Summary:**

The Bureau of Energy Resources (“ENR”) of the U.S. Department of State (“DOS”) announces this Notice of Funding Opportunity (“NOFO”) for the Central Asia Energy Fellows Program. A cooperative agreement for up to \$296,296 U.S. dollars of Economic Support Funds (ESF) will be awarded, pending availability of funds, for work that will support programmatic, financial and administrative activities for the Central Asia Energy Fellows Program to include outreach, facilitating and assisting in the selection of fellows, tracking and monitoring of fellows, maintaining databases and statistics related to the program, program and financial reporting requirements, financial disbursements, travel, lodging, and logistical arrangements. The Implementer will designate dedicated staff to serve as liaisons with ENR on all aspects of these programs. The Implementer will need to be attentive and responsive to the needs of the fellows and those of the Department of State. The Implementer will need to demonstrate dedication and commitment in pursuing the goals of the programs.

This funding opportunity is posted on [www.grants.gov](http://www.grants.gov) and may be amended. Answers to questions from eligible interested organizations will be posted as attachments to this NOFO. Applicants should regularly check the [www.grants.gov](http://www.grants.gov) website for the most recent information pertaining to this funding opportunity.

It is the responsibility of the applicant to ensure that the application package has been received by [www.grants.gov](http://www.grants.gov) in its **entirety**; there are steps that you should take immediately in order to make your submissions by the deadline. Incomplete applications will be considered **ineligible**. Applicants are urged to begin the application process well before the submission deadline. No exceptions will be made for organizations that have not completed the necessary steps.

**Department of State bears no responsibility for data errors resulting from transmission or conversion processes associated with electronic submissions via [www.grants.gov](http://www.grants.gov). Incomplete application packages will not be considered.**

The Federal award will be signed by the Department of State Grants Officer. The Grants Officer is a U.S. Government official delegated the authority by the Department of State Procurement Executive to award and administer the award. The award Agreement is the only authorizing document and will be issued electronically through the State Assistance Management System (SAMS Domestic).

## **A1. Background**

In 2020, ENR launched the Clean EDGE Asia Fellows Program to cultivate and strengthen the next generation of energy specialists in the Indo-Pacific Region. Now in its third year, this year-long nonresident program has successfully supported the professional development of ten fellows who participated in policy discussions, research, and publications. The success of the Clean EDGE Asia Fellows Program led ENR to expand programming to the Central Asia region. The Central Asia Energy Fellows program will provide mid-career professionals in Central Asia with a non-resident, one-year fellowship and stipend (amount to be determined) to contribute towards research on clean and renewable energy and energy efficiency in the region and support the fellows’ professional development. **The program will select five (5) fellows, at least one from each Central Asian country** to parallel the C5+1 framework (Kazakhstan, Kyrgyz Republic, Turkmenistan, Tajikistan, Uzbekistan), who are policy practitioners or energy experts working professionally in the clean or renewable energy fields. The fellows will participate in training sessions on key environmental and energy issues in the region, along with monthly virtual webinars, or events organized by the Implementer with renewable energy experts and policymakers to increase technical capacity and knowledge. In addition, fellows would correspond

regularly with a virtual professional exchange partner in the United States renewable energy sector to share ideas and professional expertise. Fellows will also participate in virtual or in-person site visits to clean energy projects in Central Asia. At the end of the program, fellows will participate in a virtual event(s) where they will present their research and recommendations to an audience of policymakers and fellow researchers from the region and the United States.

## **A2. Program Goals and Objectives**

Effective management of the Central Asia Energy Fellows Program is fundamental to its overall success. DOS is fully invested in this program and seeks to maintain its integrity and high quality. The overall goal of this cooperative agreement (CA), funded by the U.S. Department of State's Bureau of Energy Resources, is to provide a convening forum to support U.S. allies and partner countries in the Central Asia region to strengthen regional energy security for economic growth, through a range of capacity-building, advisory, and technical exchange activities related to renewable energy development, power sector governance, enhanced grid reliability, incentivizing investment, optimizing power markets, improving energy efficiency, and deploying advanced, modern power market technologies.

The Central Asia Energy Fellows program would help promote renewable energy, decarbonization, and conservation expertise in the region. The program aligns with the Biden Administration's focus and prioritization of decarbonization and clean energy transition, and supports C5+1 (The five countries in Central Asia plus the United States) regional connectivity, energy, and environment priorities. The objectives of the fellowship are to:

- Strengthen people-to-people ties between and among future energy leaders in Central Asia and experts in the United States;
- Cultivate expertise and experience for the next generation of renewable energy and energy efficiency specialists in Central Asia by increasing fellows' knowledge of and exposure to the relevant technical, economic, legal, and/or regulatory concepts that benefit domestic and regional energy security policy goals;
- Demonstrate USG commitment to fostering energy efficiency, clean and renewable energy development, and clean energy transitions in the region;
- Expand and strengthen USG Central Asia energy contacts; and
- Contribute to the U.S. knowledge base on clean and renewable energy and efficiency in Central Asia through fellows' individual final research reports.

## **A3. Expected Results**

The Fellows will gain increased knowledge of a range of energy market and policy issues, including greater exposure to relevant technical, economic, legal, and regulatory concepts that can benefit domestic and regional energy security policy goals. Based on the goals and objectives of the program, expected results include, but are not limited to the following:

- Increased collaboration and synergies among stakeholders in Kazakhstan, Kyrgyz Republic, Turkmenistan, Tajikistan, and Uzbekistan and regionally to streamline efforts to tackle power market reform, renewable energy development, and governance issues.
- Improved institutional capacity of each country's government in understanding and applying power sector technical, economic, legal, and regulatory concepts to inform policies that incentivizes renewable energy development and capacity.
- Development, adoption, and/or implementation of focused power market reform, renewable energy development, and governance policies as a result of this project.

The Implementer will survey fellows one year after the conclusion of the fellowship to assess fellows' professional progress and accomplishments.

## **A4. Main Activities**

### **Program Description**

The Implementer will be expected to convene experts and hold events, such as technical workshops, trainings, and policy roundtables, to share experiences, advice, and best practices in power sector development and governance. These events should be thematic (see assistance topics below) and encourage the embedding of international best practices in laws, regulations, and administrative procedures related to power sector management. Activities should also address technical, environmental, and fiscal issues related to energy resources management and development through workshops and technical discussions. The events should convene academics, practitioners, and industry experts with government officials and other relevant stakeholders in the region- to be determined by ENR - to establish and strengthen working relationships at the technical and policy levels, both with the United States and between participant countries.

ENR will assist in convening stakeholders from partner country governments. The Recipient/Implementer will be expected to harness a comprehensive existing network of experts on energy in the region.

### Capabilities/Assistance Topics addressed in activities

Activities should address the creation of reliable and affordable power sectors in Central Asia with relevant government ministries, regulators, and power system operators.

Technical power sector topics may include, but not limited to:

- Optimal generation and transmission expansion
- Enhancing electricity system and utility resilience
- Renewable energy integration
- Dispatch optimization and load forecasting
- Contingency analysis and planning
- Stability and reactive power compensation
- Transmission capacity analysis
- Enhancing regional power trade
- Integrated resource planning and grid modernization
- Transportation electrification

Commercial and regulatory power sector topics may include:

- Market monitoring and surveillance
- Competitive and transparent procurement processes
- Power market regulations and procedures, including contractual frameworks and reliability standards
- Regulations incentivizing renewables development
- Financing models, credit enhancement mechanisms, and business development
- Tariff rate review and design
- Grid code best practices

### **Participants and Audiences:**

Fellows are ENR counterparts from government, academia, utility, grid operator, regulator, and associations with roles in energy sector management in the five countries in Central Asia. Participation will be subject to ENR concurrence and approval.

### **Programmatic Responsibilities**

The Implementer must identify dedicated staff to serve as liaisons with ENR on all aspects of this program.

### **The Implementer's responsibilities will include but are not limited to:**

#### **I. Outreach and Recruitment**

The Implementer will identify and attract outstanding mid-level energy professionals in Central Asia. DOS recognizes the importance of promoting and reinforcing diversity, equity, inclusion, and accessibility in the workplace as well as in DOS-funded assistance programs. Therefore, the Implementer is strongly encouraged to select qualified female or underrepresented minority professionals to participate in the program.

Qualified fellows will:

- Have 8-15 years of work experience or a PhD in a relevant discipline;
- Be a specialist or researcher at a think tank, academic institution, government ministries, regulator, utility, grid operator, associations, relevant energy state-owned entity (SOE), or other established research institution from the following countries: Kazakhstan, Kyrgyz Republic, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, and Uzbekistan;
- Demonstrate strong professional and academic potential for development on topics related to renewable and clean energy, as well as interest in contributing to strengthening ties between Central Asian countries and opportunities for regional collaboration;

#### **II. Screening and Selection**

In collaboration with ENR, the Implementer will organize the screening and selection process and will be responsible for the following selection tasks in collaboration with ENR:

- Conducting initial screening of potential fellows applications for adherence to eligibility criteria and completeness.
- Selecting panelists with relevant expertise and providing them electronic access to semi-finalists' applications for selection of finalists. Copying and distributing hard copies of application packets if asked.
- Contacting all finalists prior to final selection.
- Coordinating administrative functions associated with the selection process, to include but not limited to:
  - Notifying in writing those finalists selected for the fellowship, securing written acceptances from selected fellows, and forwarding final list of fellows to ENR.
  - Notifying in writing those applicants not selected.

#### **III. Tracking and Monitoring**

- Maintain information on fellows for monitoring and tracking purposes: a) current contact information b) successful completion of program requirements, c) successful completion of

program obligations, d) withdrawals/dismissals from the fellows program prior to completion, and e) other relevant information.

#### **IV. Administrative**

##### **a. Disbursement of Funds**

- Make timely stipend payments to the five fellows up to the established cap limit. Prior to disbursement of any funds (stipends), Implementer coordinates with ENR to ensure the fellow has met all necessary requirements.

##### **b. Record Keeping**

- Monitoring fellows' progress ensuring adherence to terms of program participation agreement.
- Maintaining document file for each fellow with all written correspondence, agreement(s), payments, and other pertinent data.

##### **c. Grantor/Implementer Meetings**

- Implementer will consent to weekly or bi-weekly meetings as requested, with the Grants Officer Representative, and/or ENR and SCA leadership, to review program status.

##### **d. Program Evaluation**

- Implementer will develop and conduct a survey of the fellows to elicit opinions on effectiveness of program components and program administration.
- Implementer will submit a report, which also includes the survey, to ENR by the end of the period of performance under this award.

##### **e. Milestone Schedule**

The Implementer will submit to ENR in draft, for review and final approval, a milestone schedule for the Central Asia Energy Fellows Program. Key activities to be identified in the milestone schedule should include, but are not limited to:

- Opening and closing dates for fellowship application
- Completion, delivery, and posting dates for promotional materials
- A separate travel plan to include dates, location, and purpose of site visit(s)
- Dates associated with the selection process
- Dates of virtual trainings, webinars, events, visits, and closing session
- Stipend payment date
- Frequency of social media postings/online recruitment events with description of content

#### **A5. Performance Indicators**

The Implementer should monitor and report on performance indicators that are specific, measurable, achievable, reasonable, and time-bound (SMART) Performance targets for each expected result should be established and details should be included on what sources of data will be used to document performance. Indicators should be relevant to the goals or objectives of the program.

The Implementer will be responsible for quarterly reporting on each performance indicator included in the cooperative agreement as well as analysis of progress or impediments to reach indicator targets.

Indicators will be chosen carefully to reflect the key outcomes or outputs that reflect project performance. DOS, per policy, assesses the quality of data reported by the Implementer as part of the award activities, therefore applicants should be aware that the Implementer will be engaged in data quality assessments.

Indicators and their disaggregates will be selected after discussion with the selected Implementer.

## **A6. Substantial Involvement**

ENR anticipates awarding a cooperative agreement as a result of this NOFO. A cooperative agreement provides for substantial involvement between the Federal awarding agency and the non-Federal entity in carrying out the activity. A successful applicant will be expected to coordinate closely with the Washington DC-based awarding bureau, ENR. Substantial involvement will include but is not limited to:

- Approval of the Implementer's implementation plans;
- Agency and Implementer collaboration or joint participation including but not limited to;
  - Concurrence on the provisions of sub-awards, if applicable.
  - Approval of the Implementer's monitoring and evaluation plans.
  - Advising and reviewing case studies, toolkits, and other resources.

## **Section B. Federal Award Information**

### **B1. Available Funding**

This notice is subject to availability of funding.

The Department of State reserves the right to fund any or none of the proposals submitted and reserves the right to reduce, revise, or increase the budget in accordance with the needs of the project and the availability of funds.

The Department of State may consider continuing the program funded under this award beyond the initial period of performance on a non-competitive basis subject to availability of funds, satisfactory progress of the program, and a determination that continued funding would be in the best interest of the United States. Department of State and the United States Government (USG). Pending successful implementation of these programs and the availability of funds in subsequent fiscal years, the Department of State may renew the cooperative agreement for a period of two additional fiscal years before openly competing the program again. As each year adds new fellows to the program, applicants will need to demonstrate the ability to handle multiple years of cohorts.

### **B2. Award Management**

The successful applicant awarded under this NOFO will need to routinely collaborate with ENR.

The successful applicant must ensure that all funds are used in a manner consistent with any applicable restrictions on funding. See D5 below for funding restrictions.

#### **Pre-Award Costs**

Not Applicable

## **Section C. Eligibility Information**

### **C1. Eligible Applicants**

See page 1, Eligibility Category.

Preference will be given to organizations with at least three years of experience in administering fellowship programs.

Technically eligible submissions are those which: 1) arrive electronically to [www.grants.gov](http://www.grants.gov) by the designated deadline; 2) have heeded all instructions contained in the NOFO, including registrations, length and completeness of submission; and 3) do not violate any of the guidelines stated in this document and the Proposal Submission Instructions (PSI)

## **C2. Cost Share**

Not required. Providing cost sharing, matching, or cost participation is not an eligibility requirement for this NOFO and will not be factored in during the merit review process.

Note: If cost-share is included in the budget, the award Implementer must maintain written records to support all allowable costs that are claimed as its contribution to cost-share, as well as costs to be paid by the Federal government. Such records are subject to audit. In the event the Implementer does not meet the minimum amount of cost-sharing as stipulated in the Implementer's budget, DOS contribution may be reduced in proportion to the Implementer's contribution.

## **C3. Other Eligibility Criteria**

To be eligible to receive an award, all organizations must have a unique entity identifier (UEI), as well as a valid registration on [www.SAM.gov](http://www.SAM.gov). Please see Section D.3 for information on how to obtain these registrations.

Applicants, including U.S. affiliates of international organizations must provide a valid Unique Entity Identification (UEI), and **completed** [www.sam.gov](http://www.sam.gov) registration when submitting application on [www.grants.gov](http://www.grants.gov) in response to this NOFO. **Applicants that do not have a valid UEI and completed [www.sam.gov](http://www.sam.gov) registration will NOT be eligible for consideration. Implementing partners/sub-implementer organizations are required to have a valid UEI number.**

Applicants listed on the Excluded Parties List System (EPLS) in the System for Award Management (SAM) are 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.

Organizations must have a commitment to equal opportunity employment practices and to non-discrimination practices with regard to beneficiaries, without regard to race, religion, ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, or political affiliation.

Organizations may only submit one application per organization. If more than one application is submitted by an organization, only the first application received will be reviewed for eligibility and funding.

## **Section D. Application and Submission Information**

## **D1. Address to request Application Package**

Applicants can find application forms on [www.grants.gov](http://www.grants.gov) under the announcement title and funding opportunity number provided above.

Please refer to the **Proposal Submission Instructions (PSI)** for additional application submission instructions, including information on required documents and format. Please follow both, the PSI and the NOFO, to ensure that the proposal package submission is in full compliance with the requirements. Proposal submissions that do not meet all of the requirements outlined in this NOFO and the associated PSI will **not** be considered.

Once the NOFO deadline has passed, DOS may not discuss this competition with any applicant until the proposal review process has been completed.

## **D2. Content and Form of Application Submission**

Please follow the guidelines in the attached Proposal Submission Instructions (PSI). Any prospective applicant who has questions concerning the contents of this NOFO should submit them **by email** to the contacts listed in Section G. Please refer to the funding opportunity number and title. Responses to applicant questions will be posted on [www.grants.gov](http://www.grants.gov) within 24-48 hours from the date of the receipt of questions.

## **D3. Unique Entity Identifier (UEI) and System for Award Management (SAM)**

### **Required Registrations:**

The Unique Entity Identifier (UEI) is one of the data elements mandated by Public Law 109-282, the Federal Funding Accountability and Transparency Act (FFATA), for all Federal awards. SAM.gov is the Federal government's primary database for complying with FFATA reporting requirements. OMB designated SAM.gov as the central repository to facilitate applicant and Implementer use of a single public website that consolidates data on all federal financial assistance. Under the law, it is mandatory to obtain a UEI number and register in [www.sam.gov](http://www.sam.gov)

Any applicant listed on the Excluded Parties List System (EPLS) in the System for Award Management (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 [www.SAM.gov](http://www.SAM.gov) to ensure that no ineligible entity is included.

Starting April 2022, DUNS has been replaced by UEI which will be assigned by [www.sam.gov](http://www.sam.gov). UEIs will be assigned to organizations that will have to register for/or renew it this year. As a reminder, [www.sam.gov](http://www.sam.gov) needs to be renewed yearly. <https://sam.gov/content/home>

CAGE is assigned domestically to U.S. organizations when they register in [www.sam.gov](http://www.sam.gov). CAGE must be renewed every 5 years. Site for CAGE : <https://cage.dla.mil/Home/UsageAgree>  
NCAGE is assigned to overseas organizations and has to be renewed every 5 years.

Site for NCAGE: <https://eportal.nspa.nato.int/AC135Public/CageTool/home>

It is in the organization's best interest to check if their CAGE/or NCAGE codes are active. Organizations are required to register/or renew their CAGE or NCAGE codes **prior** to registering or renewing [www.sam.gov](http://www.sam.gov). Both registration and renewals for both CAGE and NCAGE can take up to 10 days. Organization's legal address in NCAGE/CAGE must mirror [www.sam.gov](http://www.sam.gov). [www.sam.gov](http://www.sam.gov) requires all entities to renew their registration once a year in order to maintain an active registration status in SAM.gov. It is the responsibility of the applicant to ensure it has an active registration in [www.sam.gov](http://www.sam.gov)

If an organization plans to sub-contract or sub-award any of the funds under an award, those sub-implementers must also have a unique entity identifier (UEI number).

If an organization does not have an active registration in SAM.gov prior to submitting an application, the application will be deemed **ineligible**. All organizations applying for federal assistance awards (except individuals) must obtain these registrations, the latter are free of charge.

Note: The process of obtaining a [www.sam.gov](http://www.sam.gov) registration may take anywhere from 2-8 weeks. Please begin your registration as early as possible. Numerous errors require correction such as an address mismatch and can delay final registration. After 90 days of original registration/or renewal submission, if the application is not corrected it will be deleted and the organization will need to re-start the process. All organizations applying for grants (except individuals) must obtain these registrations. All are free of charge.

## **D4. Submission Dates and Times**

Applicants are urged to begin the application process well before the **submission deadline as stated on page 3**. No exceptions will be made for organizations that have not completed the necessary steps. Applications received after the deadline will not be considered.

SAMS Domestic and Grants.gov automatically log the date and time an application submission is made, and the Department of State will use this information to determine whether an application has been submitted on time. Late applications are neither reviewed nor considered.

If ultimately provided with a notification of intent to make a Federal award, applicants typically have two to three weeks to provide additional information and documents requested in the notification of intent. The deadlines may vary in each notification of intent and applicants must adhere to the stated deadline in the notification of intent.

## **D5. Funding Restrictions**

The following activities and costs are not covered under this announcement (this list is NOT exhaustive):

- Construction or renovations is not an allowable activity under this award;
- Expenses made prior to the approval of a proposal or unreasonable expenditures will not be reimbursed;
- Projects intended primarily for the growth or institutional development of the organization;
- Projects seeking funds for personal use;
- Projects that require a participation fee;
- Administration of a project that will make a profit;

- Expenses incurred before or after the specified dates of award period of performance (unless prior written approval is received);
- Projects designed to advocate policy views or positions of foreign governments or views of a particular political faction;
- Alcoholic beverages;
- Costs of entertainment, including amusement, diversion, and social activities, and any associated costs, are unallowable, except where specific costs that might otherwise be considered entertainment have a programmatic purpose and are authorized either in the approved budget for the federal award or with prior written approval of the Grants Officer.

Representation by Organization Regarding a Delinquent Tax Liability or a Felony Criminal Conviction: In accordance with section 7073 of Division K of the Consolidated Appropriations Act, 2014 (Public Law 113-76) none of the funds made available by that Act may be used to enter into an assistance award with any organization that –

- (1) Was “convicted of a felony criminal violation under any Federal law within the preceding 24 months, where the awarding agency has direct knowledge of the conviction, unless the agency has considered, in accordance with its procedures, that this further action is not necessary to protect the interests of the Government”; or
- (2) Has any “unpaid Federal tax liability that has been assessed for which all judicial and administrative remedies have been exhausted or have lapsed, and that is not being paid in a timely manner pursuant to an agreement with the authority responsible for collecting the tax liability, unless the Federal agency has considered, in accordance with its procedures, that this further action is not necessary to protect the interests of the Government.”

For the purposes of Section 7073, it is the Department of State’s policy that no award may be made to any organization covered by (1) or (2) above, unless the Procurement Executive has made a written determination that suspension or debarment is not necessary to protect the interests of the Government.

## **D6. Other Submission Requirements**

It is the responsibility of the applicant to ensure that it has an active registration in Grants.gov and that an application has been received by the system in its entirety. DOS bears no responsibility for disqualification that results from applicants not being registered before the due date or for data errors resulting from transmission or conversion processes. Additionally, you must save a screen shot of the checklist showing all documents submitted in case any document fails to upload successfully.

## **Section E. Application Review Information**

### **E1. Criteria**

The Department of State will issue an award to the applicant whose proposal represents the best value to the USG on the basis of technical merit, efficient use of USG funds, and satisfactory organizational capacity. In addition, the organization must demonstrate adequate financial management capability to be measured by a responsibility determination.

Applications should contain the applicants’ best terms from both cost and technical standpoints. The implementing partners (sub-Implementers) of the primary Implementer will be subject to Department of State approval.

Eligible applications will be evaluated by an independent review panel consisting of subject matter experts from other DOS bureaus/or offices, U.S. Embassies, and/or other U.S. Government agencies. Final approval resides with the DOS Grants Officer.

The following criteria will serve as a standard which all eligible applications will be evaluated against. Each eligible application will be evaluated and scored on the review criteria using a 100-point scale.

The review panel will apply the following criteria when rating proposals:

**1. Quality and Feasibility of the Program Idea – 25- points:**

- Demonstrated understanding and appreciation for the goals and objectives of the Central Asia Energy Fellows Program and demonstrated ability to achieve the goals and objectives described in section A2;
- The program idea is well developed, including detailed fellow recruitment methodology, and well thought-out program activity plan;
- The proposal includes a reasonable implementation timeline; and
- Demonstrated ability to access technical expertise in clean and renewable energy issues with preferred focus in the specific priority regions and country-specific economic and political subject matters.

**2. Organizational Capacity and Record on Previous Grants – 25 points:** The organization has qualified personnel required for the development of the program and expertise in the renewable development field. The organization has the internal controls in place to manage federal funds.

- The proposal provides a description of the applicant organization – including its general purpose, goals, annual budget (including funding sources), and major past and current activities and projects undertaken.
- Demonstrated experience with environmental, renewable energy, and/or sustainable development studies, including:
  - Experience conducting energy sector technical, policy, and/or academic support in a foreign country.
  - Experience with assessing energy sector policies and plans and providing actionable recommendations for improvement; and/or
  - Experience working in countries in which the applicant organization intends to implement activities;
  - Clearly outlined roles and responsibilities of the project implementation team (prime applicant and key partners/sub-implementers/consultants); and
  - Demonstrated capacity for responsible fiscal management.

**3. 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; and
- The proposal outlines the expected and achievable results for the project.

#### 4. **Financial Capacity/Cost Effectiveness – 10 points:**

- Proposal budget, including salaries and honoraria, are explained and justified for the work involved; and
- Proposed costs are reasonable, necessary, linked to program objectives, and demonstrate efficient use of U.S. Government funds.

Note: Budgets that either significantly over-estimated or underestimated line-item amounts will not be viewed as cost-effective. Cost-share is voluntary and will **not** be used as a factor to evaluate the proposal.

5. **Monitoring and evaluation plan – 15 points:** Applicant demonstrates ability to measure program success against key indicators and provides milestones to indicate progress toward goals outlined in the proposal.
6. **Sustainability – 10 points:** Proposal provides an outline of how program activities will continue to have positive impact after the end of the program.

#### **Cost Review**

Costs will be reviewed for **reasonableness, allowability, allocability**, and cost-effectiveness of the use of USG funds. The review of cost-effectiveness will include an examination of the application's budget detail to ensure it is a realistic financial expression of the proposed project and does not contain estimated costs that are not **allocable, reasonable, or allowable**. Applications that have more efficient operational systems that reduce operation costs will be favorably considered on that factor. Final approval of the budget resides with the Grants Officer.

Applications that maximize direct activity costs and minimize administrative costs are encouraged. Other considerations are the completeness of the application, adequacy of budget detail, and consistency with elements of the technical application. In addition, the organization must demonstrate adequate financial management capability to be measured by a responsibility determination.

## **E2. Review and Selection Process**

Applications will first be reviewed to determine technical eligibility.

All technically eligible applications will move forward to the merit review panel. Applications will be reviewed against the same criteria, listed above. Applications will be evaluated based on the strengths and weaknesses of the afore-mentioned categories and for consistency with the program goals and key areas of interest as contained in this NOFO.

Both the Merit Review Panel and the awarding bureau (ENR) may provide conditions and recommendations on applications to enhance the proposed project, which must be addressed by the recommended applicant before further consideration of the award. To ensure effective use of US Government funds, conditions or recommendations may include requests to increase, decrease, clarify, and/or justify costs and project activities.

## **E3. Federal Awardee Performance & Integrity Information System (FAPIIS)**

The Department of State, 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).

The 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.

The Department of State 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 §200.205 Federal awarding agency review of risk posed by applicants.

## **Section F. Federal Award Administration Information**

### **F1. Federal Award Notices**

The successful applicant will be notified via email. This email may include a request for the applicant to respond to panel conditions and recommendations. This notification is not an authorization to begin activities and does not constitute formal approval or a funding commitment.

Additional information that the successful applicant may be required to submit after notification of intent to make a federal award, but prior to issuance of a federal award, may include:

- Written responses and any revised application documents addressing any conditions or recommendations from the Review Panel and awarding bureau;
- Completion of the DOS's Financial Management Survey, if receiving ENR funding for the first time or requested by the Grants Officer;
- Submission of required documents to register in the Payment Management System (PMS) managed by the DOS of Health and Human Services if receiving ENR funding for the first time;
- Other requested information or documents included in the notification of intent to make a federal award or subsequent communications prior to issuance of a federal award.

Final approval is also contingent on Congressional Notification requirements being met and final review and approval by the DOS's warranted Grants Officer.

The award shall be written, signed, awarded, and administered by the Grants Officer subsequent to the panel review and selection of proposals. The Grants Officer is the Government official delegated the authority by the U.S. Department of State Procurement Executive to write, award, and administer grants and cooperative agreements. The assistance award agreement is the sole authorizing document, and it will be provided to the Implementer electronically through SAMS Domestic. Organizations whose applications will not be funded will also be notified in writing.

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

## F2. 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](#)
- [2 CFR 170 - REPORTING SUBAWARD AND EXECUTIVE COMPENSATION INFORMATION](#)
- [2 CFR 175 - AWARD TERM FOR TRAFFICKING IN PERSONS](#)
- [2 CFR 182 - GOVERNMENTWIDE REQUIREMENTS FOR DRUG-FREE WORKPLACE \(FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE\)](#)
- [2 CFR 183 - NEVER CONTRACT WITH THE ENEMY](#)
- [2 CFR 600 – DEPARTMENT OF STATE REQUIREMENTS](#)
- [U.S. DEPARTMENT OF STATE STANDARD TERMS AND CONDITIONS](#)

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:

- The President’s September 2, 2020, memorandum, entitled *Memorandum on Reviewing Funding to DOS and Local Government Implementers of Federal Funds that Are Permitting Anarchy, Violence, and Destruction in American Cities*;
- *Executive Order on Protecting American Monuments, Memorials, and Statues and Combating Recent Criminal Violence* (E.O. 13933); and
- [Guidance for Grants and Agreements in Title 2 of the Code of Federal Regulations](#) (2 CFR), as updated in the Federal Register’s 85 FR 49506 on August 13, 2020, particularly on:
  - Selecting Implementers 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).

Applicants should plan to coordinate with ENR throughout the course of the agreement to ensure assistance is provided only to eligible participants.

## **F3. Reporting**

### **Financial Reports**

The Implementer will be required to submit quarterly financial reports (unless stipulated otherwise in the final Agreement) throughout the project period, using Form FFR SF-425, the Federal Financial Report form. If payment is made through the Payment Management System, all financial reports must be submitted electronically through the Payment Management System. The Implementer is also required to upload to SAMS Domestic a pdf version of all financial reports (Federal Financial report) they have submitted in the Payment Management System. Form FFR (SF-425) can be found here: <https://www.grants.gov/web/grants/forms/post-award-reporting-forms.html#sortBy=1>

### **Progress Reporting**

The Implementer will be required to submit quarterly progress reports (unless stipulated otherwise in the final Agreement) throughout the project period; the frequency will be determined by DOS prior to award. The awardee will be required to upload all progress reports to the award file in SAMS Domestic. Progress reports should also reflect the awardee's continued focus on measuring the project's impact on the overarching goals or problems the project set out to address. An assessment of the overall project impact, as appropriate, should be included in each quarterly project report.

### **Final Report**

Both final summary FFR and summary progress reports will be due no later than 120 days after the end date of the award or termination of all project activities. The Final Report shall include the following elements: executive summary, successes, outcomes, best practices, how the project addresses gender issues and marginalized communities, how the project will be sustained, and a final financial report. Additional guidance may be provided prior to the award end date.

Please note: Delays in reporting may result in delays of payment approvals and failure to provide required reports may jeopardize the Implementers' ability to receive future U.S. government funds. ENR reserves the right to request any additional programmatic and/or financial project information during the award period of performance.

## **Section G. Federal Awarding Agency Contact**

### **G1. Agency Contacts**

Aine Shiozaki  
Program Manager  
Power Sector Program  
Bureau of Energy Resources  
[shiozakia@state.gov](mailto:shiozakia@state.gov)

Kristy Bibb  
Program Manager  
Power Sector Program  
Bureau of Energy Resources  
[bibbk@state.gov](mailto:bibbk@state.gov)

## **G2. Questions**

Any prospective applicant who has questions concerning the contents of this NOFO **must email** them to the contacts listed above with the subject “[Applicant Name] [NOFO title and Funding Opportunity number].” To maintain fairness and transparency in competition, ENR will not answer questions via email. Questions and answers will be posted to the announcement page as described below.

All questions must be submitted via email to contacts listed above by deadline stated on page 3. ENR will periodically create a document of submitted questions with answers and upload it to the announcement page in grants.gov within 24-48 hours from the question submission date. Prospective applicants are advised to review the announcement page in grants.gov for any updates. Note that once the NOFO deadline has passed, DOS staff in Washington, D.C. may not discuss this completion with applicants until the review process has been completed.

With the exception of technical submission questions, during the solicitation period U.S. Department of State staff in Washington and overseas shall not discuss this competition with applicants until the entire proposal review process has been completed and an award has been made.

**The information in this NOFO is binding and may not be modified by any awarding bureau representative.** Explanatory information provided by awarding bureau that contradicts this language will not be binding.

## **Section H. Other Information**

### **H1. Conflict of Interest**

In accordance with applicable Federal awarding agency policy, applicants must disclose in writing any potential conflict of interest to the Federal awarding agency or pass-through entity.

### **H2. Applicant Vetting**

N/A

### **H3. Marking Policy**

Applicants are advised that Implementers and sub-Implementers/implementing partners of Federal assistance awards are subject to DOS’s Marking Policy. More information on this policy can be found in Section N of the Department of State’s Standard Terms and Conditions:

<https://www.state.gov/wp-content/uploads/2020/10/U.S.-State-of-State-Standard-Terms-and-Conditions-10-21-2020-508.pdf>

### **H4. Evaluation Policy**

Implementer will be expected to develop and conduct an annual survey of the cohort to elicit opinions on effectiveness of program components and program administration.

Applicants are advised that Implementers and sub-Implementers of Federal assistance awards are subject to the Department of State Evaluation Policy. More information on this policy can be found here: <https://www.state.gov/guidance-for-the-design-monitoring-and-evaluation-policy-at-the-State-of-state/>

## **H5. Monitoring Site Visits**

A monitoring site visit, at least once during the lifetime of a grant, may be conducted by Department of State personnel. The site visit is conducted to gather additional information on the Implementer's ability to properly implement the project, manage DOS funds, and share substantiating document for programmatic and financial reporting. Specifically, the site visit may involve the review of the programmatic progress (progress on activities, sub-Implementer/consultant work, etc.) as well as administrative and financial management and controls.

## **H6. Privacy Disclosure**

DOS understands that some information contained in applications may be considered sensitive or proprietary and will make appropriate efforts to protect such information. However, applicants are advised that DOS cannot guarantee that such information will not be disclosed, including pursuant to the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) or other similar statutes.