



U.S. Mission Germany
Public Diplomacy

Transatlantic Partnership Program

Crafting Strong Proposals for Impactful Initiatives

1. Rapid Q&A
2. Key Components of a Strong Proposal
3. Monitoring
4. Application Essentials
5. Q&A

Key Components of a Strong Proposal

Priority Alignment



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- Understand U.S. policy priorities in Germany
 - Integrated Country Strategy
 - National Security Strategy
 - Annual Program Statement
- Determine the policy priority or issue area addressed by your project.
- Clearly define your organization's and project's contributions.
- Remember: our Mission is to engage **German** audiences on U.S. foreign policy priorities.

Key Components of a Strong Proposal

Problem Statement



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Analyze the operating environment

- Consider, as appropriate legal-, legislative-, political-, economic-, social-, cultural-, technological-, and geographical aspects.
- Consider your information sources and be realistic about your organizational capabilities and resources.

Describe the desired environment

- Visualize typical behaviors, statements, attitudes of people involved in this issue – what will they think, say, and do?
- Visualize changes to networks, relationships, and legal-, political-, social-, cultural- etc. aspects.
- Think about indicators that you could use to monitor these changes.

Key Components of a Strong Proposal

Problem Statement



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Draft the problem statement, ideally including all following elements:

- concise description of an issue to be addressed or a condition to be improved upon;
- identification of the gap between the current state and the desired state;
- analysis of the problem's significance and consequences;
- direction about your (organization's) role in defining and addressing the problem;
- hint at the audience's attitudes, beliefs, or behaviors representing the obstacle, opportunity, or challenge relevant to the larger situation.



Key Components of a Strong Proposal

Know your Target Audience



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Identify

- Who is most affected by the given issue?
- Who is influential on this issue?
- What institutions are involved in this issue and how?
- Where is conflict between stakeholders in the space?

Prioritize

- Which potential audience will be most affected by your intervention on the issue?
- Which potential audience will be most influential to make progress on moving to the desired future state?
- Whose awareness/attitude/behavior must change?
- How are potential audiences aligned with your objectives and how influential are they?

Segment

- Is the audience homogenous, differentiated, measurable, substantial, and accessible?
- Is this a section of your priority audience, that you can most effectively engage?

Key Components of a Strong Proposal

Problem Statement (Sample)



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“Germany faces growing disinformation campaigns undermining democratic institutions, particularly in the context of Russia’s aggression in Ukraine and broader geopolitical tensions. Vulnerable communities remain underserved by existing media literacy initiatives, leaving a gap in critical thinking skills necessary to counter misinformation effectively.

This gap risks deepening societal divisions, eroding trust in democracy, and weakening Germany’s ability to uphold transatlantic values. By addressing this issue, we can bolster societal cohesion and Germany’s leadership in defending the rules-based international order.

With funding from the U.S. Embassy Berlin, *Media Literacy e.V.* proposes to deliver 15 workshops, a public awareness campaign, and a media literacy toolkits tailored for underserved groups. This initiative will empower communities to critically assess information and build resilience against malign narratives.

However, engagement must account for skepticism toward institutional programs and low awareness of available resources. By emphasizing local concerns and co-creating solutions with community stakeholders, this initiative seeks to foster trust, inclusivity, and sustained impact.”

Current Environment

Future Environment

Your Contribution

Audience Information

Key Components of a Strong Proposal

Problem Statement (Negative Example)



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"The project will deliver a series of workshops and seminars on democracy for young people across Germany. Participants will learn about democratic values, civic engagement, and human rights through interactive sessions and discussions. The program will also create an online platform with educational resources and a social media campaign to attract participants.

The project will focus on schools and youth centers and reach as many participants as possible. By increasing awareness of democracy among youth, the program will contribute to strengthening democratic practices. Success will be measured by the number of attendees and online engagement metrics."

Program Centric

Policy Relevance only implied

Weak audience profiling

No logical flow

Key Components of a Strong Proposal

Hypothesis



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Draft a Hypothesis

- Make explicit the relationship between inputs (i.e. funding/staff hours), outputs (no. of workshops), outcomes (skill change), and impact (tangible changes in the audience or environment)
- Be realistic about the changes you can expect to achieve.
- You may find that your hypothesis turns out to be wrong, but learning from hypotheses that turn out to be unprovable or false is critical to refining and improving future hypotheses so that your efforts are more effective.
- Format: **If** [change in audience], **then** [impact/desired result].

Key Components of a Strong Proposal

SMART Objectives



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Specific: Have we defined our target audiences and desired outcomes?



Measurable: Is it measurable and can we measure it?



Achievable: Is the audience receptive or willing to engage in a specific behavior during this time?



Relevant: Will this lead to the desired results?



Time-bound: When will we accomplish this objective?

“By [date], the [target audience(s)] will [change in awareness, attitude, or behavior, skill, etc.], as evidenced by [indicator].”

Key Components of a Strong Proposal

Defining Outputs and Outcomes



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Short Term

Medium Term

Long Term

Context &
Relationship
Building

Raising
Awareness

Skill Building

Organizational
Partnership

Affecting
Attitudes

Affecting
Behavior

Key Components of a Strong Proposal

U.S. Elements



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- Showcase American Expertise and Perspectives
 - Speakers, organizations, cultural products; unique U.S. contributions to issue
- Leverage U.S. Cultural and Historical Connections
 - Use U.S. historical events, cultural icons, media as illustrative tools to engage audiences
 - Draw parallels between U.S. (historical) experiences and local challenges
- U.S.-Germany Ties
 - Highlight historical and ongoing U.S.-Germany collaborations (Marshall Plan, Fulbright, etc.)
- Mutual Learning and Exchange
 - Emphasize how the program fosters mutual understanding, drawing on American values and experiences while also learning from German perspectives.

Key Components of a Strong Proposal

Bottom Line



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Be explicit about:

- Which issue you are addressing;
- How you will address it;
- How you are expecting your intervention to work;
- How you intend to track program outcomes and progress;
- Why supporting this should be in the U.S.' interest.

Make these connections as clear as possible, and back claims up with empirical data wherever possible and feasible.

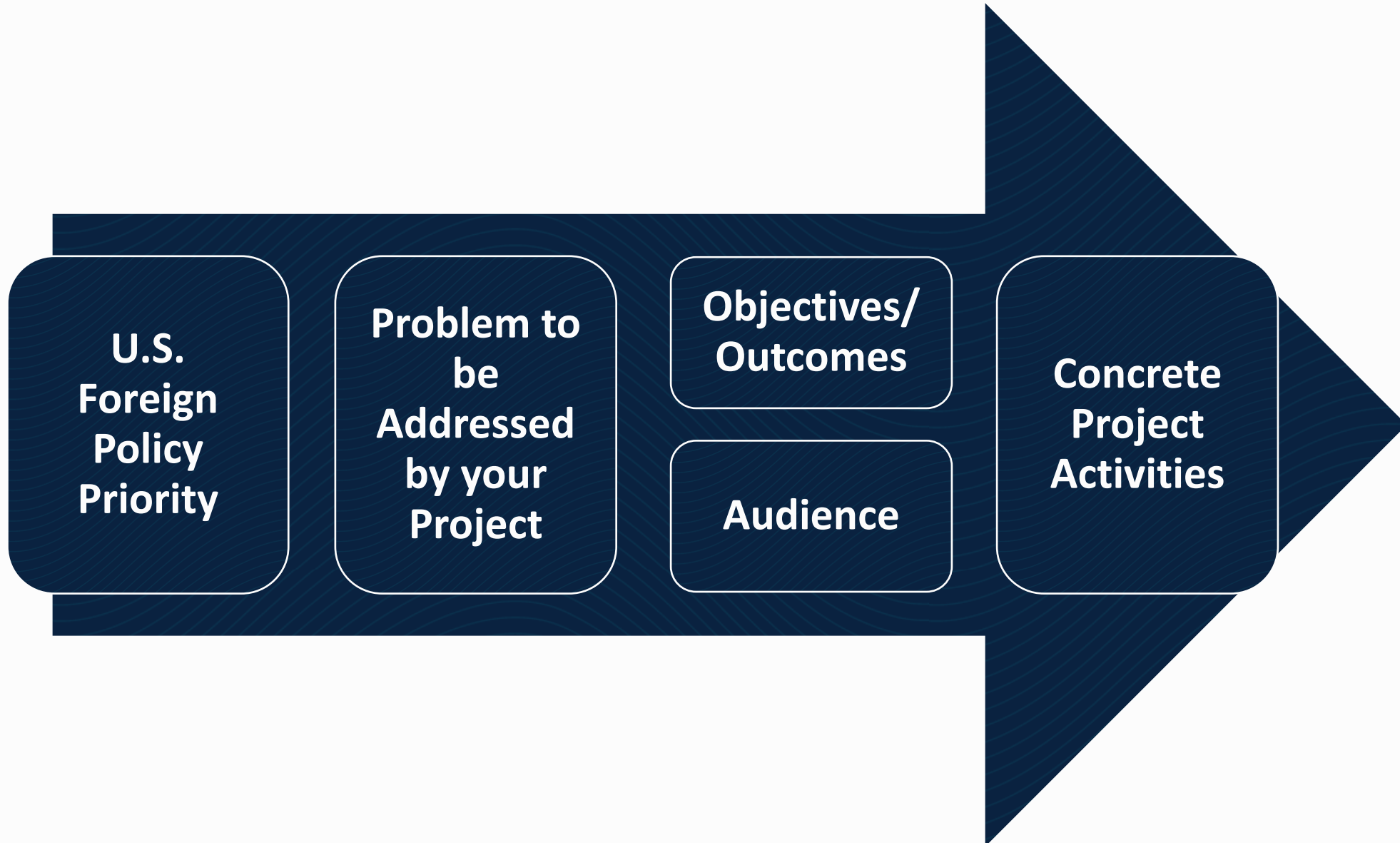
We are going to want to see that you engaged with these questions when designing your program, but you don't have to strictly follow this specific structure.

Key Components of a Strong Proposal

Bottom Line



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| Monitoring

If you have made explicit the relationships between inputs, activities, outputs, and outcomes in your planning, developing the monitoring plan will be straightforward.

In a monitoring plan, you articulate:

- Indicators
- Data Collection Tools
- Targets

The monitoring plan clearly defines what progress and success look like.

You fill in the actuals in the monitoring plan during program implementation.

Monitoring Plans



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Activity	Category	Output/ Outcome	Indicator	Data Collection Tool	Target	Actual
Activity, event, project, and digital or traditional media campaign.	Select one of the following: Output Outcome (short term) Outcome (long term)	Output Countable products or actions that come from a section activity or campaign activities. OR Outcome Observable change in attitude, belief, or behavior.	Output indicator OR outcome indicator which describes what progress looks like and how you will measure it.	The methods you will use to collect data on the indicator, e.g. Surveys Focus Groups Document Review Interviews Observations	Your estimations of how well or what level you expect the indicator to perform.	The actual result of the indicator after the activity takes place.

Monitoring Plans

Sample



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Activity	Category	Output/Outcome from Logic Model	Indicator	Data Source	Target	Actual
Organize cultural and professional visits	Output	# of cultural immersion events	# of cultural immersion events	Program Records	5	6
	Output	# of participants who attend cultural immersion event	# of participants who attend cultural immersion events	Program Records	30	30
	Short - term outcome	Participants improve attitudes towards the U.S.	% of participants with improved attitudes towards the U.S. after the exchange	Pre-post survey	50%	30%
	Long - term outcome	Participants sustained positive attitudes towards the U.S.	% of participants with positive attitudes towards the U.S. 6 months after the exchange	Annual alumni survey	50%	25%
Invite participants to join YA Network alumni network	Output	Participants join the YA Network alumni network	# of participants who join the YA Network Facebook page	Facebook page records	30	28
	Output	Participants join the YA Network alumni network	# of participants who join the YA Network email listserv	CRM	30	29
	Short - term outcome	Participants actively participate in YA Network online platforms	% of participants who report participating in YA Network online platforms	Post - program survey	75%	81%

Monitoring Plans

Indicator Catalogue



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PD Germany Standard Indicator Catalogue

Indicator Domain ▼↑	Indicator Type ▼	Program Type ▼	Level ▼	Indicator Title ▼	Explanation ▼
Activity	Output	Exchange	Any	Number of exchange participant-days in the United States.	Captures the total number of days exchange participants spend in the U.S. A useful indicator for understanding the scale of engagement and participant exposure during exchanges.
Activity	Output	Educational	Any	Number of schools visited [optional: by school type].	Measures the number of schools visited as part of educational outreach efforts. Categorizing by school type (e.g., public, private, vocational) provides additional insights into audience reach and diversity.
Activity	Output	Speaker	Initiative	Number of speaker programs on [issue].	Counts the number of speaker events focused on a particular issue.
Attitude	Outcome (Long)	Any	Program	Share of program participants who continue to hold [improved/decreased] attitudes towards [issue] 6 months after [program].	This indicator measures the proportion of program participants whose attitudes toward a specified issue remain positively or negatively changed six months after completing the program. It assesses the sustainability of the
Attitude	Outcome (Long)	Any	Program	Share of program participants who continue to hold positive attitudes towards the U.S. 6 months after [program].	This indicator measures the proportion of program participants who retain a favorable opinion of the United States six months after the program. It reflects the program's long-term effect on fostering positive attitudes toward the U.S.
Attitude	Outcome (Long)	Any	Program	Share of program participants who view the U.S.-German relationship positively 6 months after [program].	This indicator tracks the percentage of participants who maintain a favorable view of U.S.-German relations six months after participating in the program. It gauges whether the program has a lasting impact on participants'
Attitude	Outcome (Short)	Any	Program	Share of program participants who self-report [improved/decreased] attitudes towards [issue].	This indicator measures the proportion of participants who, in the short term, report positive or negative changes in their attitudes toward a specific issue after completing the program. It evaluates the program's immediate effect on
Attitude	Outcome (Short)	Any	Program	Share of program participants who self-report improved attitudes towards the U.S.	This indicator captures the percentage of participants who report having a more favorable view of the United States immediately following the program. It provides insight into the program's short-term impact on participants'
Attitude	Outcome (Short)	Any	Program	Share of program participants who view the U.S.-German relationship more positively.	This indicator identifies the percentage of participants who report an improvement in their perception of U.S.-German relations immediately following their participation in the program. It assesses the program's influence on attitudes
Audience	Outcome (Long)	Any	Engagement	Change of [applications/audience].	This indicator measures the year-on-year change in the number of program applications or audience size for a specific initiative or engagement. It tracks trends in audience growth or decline over fiscal years to evaluate the



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Application Essentials

Before you commit to applying, ask yourself:

- Is my proposed project explicitly aligned with priorities outlined in the Annual Program Statement or the Integrated Country Strategy?
- Am I going to be able to effectively engage German audiences?
- Can I convey my planning and capabilities to implement the project clearly?
- Will I be able to fulfill the administrative responsibilities (i.e. obtaining and maintaining a SAM.gov registration) and manage the grant effectively?

Formal requirements:

- Application must be in English
- Budgets must be in USD
- Pages must be numbered
- Compile all word documents into a single PDF. Budget must be an Excel file.
- Applicant must be a German entity/foreign entity with German partner with a valid SAM.gov registration.

Complete SF424B only if you are exempt from SAM.gov registrations (i.e. you are an individual).

Form SF424a must be accompanied by a line item budget (Template uploaded to Grants.gov) and a budget narrative.

Check [2 CFR 200](#) if proposed costs are allowable.

- We will identify and eliminate unallowable items in merit review without prejudice.
- U.S. citizens **must not** be engaged with funds provided by the Embassy.
- It is the Embassy's policy that food and catering expenses cannot be paid out of grant funds.

Complete [grants navigator](#) and submit to the e-mail address indicated at the end of the form.

You will receive a confirmation e-mail within 72h of submission.

If you do not receive a confirmation e-mail within a week, please submit a grants navigator inquiry.

Applications via grants.gov and MyGrants are not accepted. We need to filter out ineligible and unqualified applications to keep turnover times reasonable.

Application Essentials

Timeline



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January 1, 2025	Application deadline for round 1 of proposals
Beginning of January	Eligibility Review of Proposals
Third week of January	Embassy Merit Review Panel
End of January	Requests for revisions
Middle of February	Final funding decisions
End of February	Issuance of awards
Beginning of March	Earliest possible program start date
March 23, 2025	Application deadline for round 2 of proposals



| Questions?

All further questions must be submitted via grants navigator.

- The Embassy does not counsel prospective applicants individually for reasons of fairness and transparency.
- Topical and relevant questions will be addressed on our [grants FAQ](#) page.
- We will not respond to inquiries whether program/theme xyz is appropriate or permissible, please refer to the Annual Program Statement and the ICS for substantive guidance.
- If there are open questions after merit review, we will get back to you to clarify.

SAM.gov

- The Embassy cannot lend assistance with SAM.gov issues. Please consult our [guidance](#) and submit tickets to the FSD helpdesk if necessary.
- There is an extensive SAM.gov section at the end of the Annual Program Statement.
- Applications from entities without a valid registration at the time of submission will not be entertained.



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| Appendix

Terminology



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Term	Definition	Example
Output	Outputs are the products, goods, and services which result from activities.	Number of participants completing a workshop by the end of the period of performance Number of alumni network events held in one year Number of likes or shares on a social media post within 1 month of posting
Outcome	The result or effect that is caused by or attributable to program or activity. Outcomes may be short-term or long-term, intended or unintended, positive or negative, direct or indirect.	Quantitative: The percent of participants who report an increased awareness of disinformation sources in their country by the end of the workshop. Quantitative: The percent of participants who report that they plan on applying what they learned in the workshop to their news consumption routines. Qualitative: The type of disinformation resilience tactics participants learned by the end of the program.
Indicator	A particular characteristic or dimension used to measure intended changes. Indicators are used to observe progress and measure actual results compared to expected results (targets). Indicators answer “how” or “whether” a project is progressing toward associated objectives. Indicators should be expressed quantitatively and should be objective and measureable (e.g. numeric value, percentages, indices).	Percent change in knowledge about investigative journalism; % of participants who feel the training is relevant to their career; 100% of milestone 4 achieved.

Short-term outcome indicators	Capture and measure changes that occur immediately following an activity, often focusing on changes in the knowledge, awareness, or understanding of the activity’s participants.	percent of training participants who report increased awareness of credible, fact-based news sources percent of network members who report they built new connections at a conference
Long-term outcome indicators	Describe the ultimate results of the activity you hope to achieve, often focusing on changes in skills, behaviors, or attitudes. They can take weeks, months, or even years to realize and may be observed outside the time frame of your program, but the sequence is most important. Long-term outcomes simply happen after short-term outcomes.	percent of training participants who increase consumption of credible, fact-based news sources percent of network members who collaborate on a science or entrepreneurship project with fellow STEM network members.

Term	Definition	Example
Hypothesis	A hypothesis (or theory statement) explains how your proposed project activities link to your initiative objective. Why do you think the initiative will produce the desired outcomes?	The initiative “Networking 101” targets young Lakopian women who are university graduates and hold entry-level positions in the workforce, to increase their participation in mentoring programs by demonstrating the value of mentors and connecting them with established leaders in the public and private sectors in order to increase their social capital and potentially make them more competitive for promotions. This outcome supports the goals of strengthening the Lakopian economy and economic empowerment for all Lakopians by boosting workforce efficiency and measures of gender equality.
Problem Statement	A problem statement is a concise description of an issue you want to address or a condition you want to improve.	The ideal situation in Minaria is parity in women’s representation in corporate leadership; however, the reality is that only 10% of Minaria’s corporate leaders are women. One of the key obstacles in achieving parity is that women lack the social capital and mentoring opportunities that would make them more competitive. The consequence of this gap is that promising women are never considered for promotion into junior management jobs, meaning a path to high-level leadership is effectively foreclosed. This issue is important to the United States because countries with vibrant and inclusive economies are advantageous for trade relationships with the United States.

- You will need a Login.gov account. Setting up this account is only the first step.
 - You will need a phone or similar device for the login two-factor authentication (2FA).
 - For SAM registrations, do not use group emails.
- The registration has two steps: **entity validation** and **registration**.
 - The UEI is received after validation, but that does not mean that your entity has a valid registration yet.
 - You will need to provide several translated and certified documents for the validation process.
 - Remember that overseas applicants can self-translate and self-certify! No notaries necessary.
 - Translation dates should be within 30 days of submission.
- In the address/name matching process during entity validation, you should either pick the **exact** match or **no match**. You should not select a close match, as it will lead to problems with the validation.
- When registering, you must select **Financial Assistance**, not **All Awards** or else the registration process will be a lot more complex.
 - International Registrants applying for Financial Assistance only do **not** need to provide:
 - an NCAGE code
 - a Taxpayer ID Number (TIN)
 - EFT banking information

- You should check on the status of your submission every few days during validation and registration.
 - If validation takes more than 14 days, you should submit a helpdesk ticket at fsd.gov.
 - If the helpdesk reaches out for additional information, it is very important to be responsive.
 - Tickets are closed after five days of not replying.
- Registrations must be renewed every year. Renewals are free.
 - Active registrations are prioritized in tickets.
 - Renewals take up to ten days.
- You must [update information](#) if necessary as soon as possible, not upon renewal.
- When receiving correspondence related to SAM, you should always check the sender email - official correspondence will always be sent from a .gov address, never a .com or .net address. You should be cautious when encountering email addresses that are trying to look like Government email addresses, e.g. sam-registration-gov@gsasam.com. Opting out of public data view will prevent most of these spam emails.
- No government staff will call or message registrants requesting money to be eligible for an award

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Entity validation confirms an entity's existence, location, and uniqueness. The uniqueness of an entity is based on it being a separate legal entity with a separate physical address. Until April 2022, the U.S. government used the Dun and Bradstreet database (DUNS). The new entity validation process is via SAM directly, at the end of which the registrant obtains a Unique Entity Identifier (UEI).

Entity Validation is the process during which SAM.gov verifies that the organization registering is a valid organization. Entity validation is the first step of the SAM.gov registration process. If the organization's correct entity name and address do not match what is displayed in SAM.gov, or there is no address at all, the organization should select "Create Incident" on the SAM.gov page.

The entity should attach documents that identifies their information and fully describes that there was no match for the organization in the provided text box. SAM.gov will automatically create an entity validation ticket for the entity. This is the only way to create a ticket for entity matching issues. See these knowledge base article for follow steps:

- [Validation with no EXACT match](#)
- [Validation with no results](#)

[Which Documents do I need to validate my Entity?](#)

Your documents must show your entity information exactly as you entered it in the Enter Entity Information screen on SAM.gov. with an asterisk (*) must be 5 years old or less.

Self-Certification

Overseas registrants may self-translate and self-certify entity information documents. Please use the following language to self-certify:

Certification by Translator

I [insert typed name], certify that I am fluent (conversant) in the English and [insert foreign language] languages, and that the above/attached document is an accurate translation of the document attached entitled [insert translated document name].

[Signature]

[Typed Name]

[Address]

[Certification Date]

Entity registration is the process of providing information about the organization so the government can verify they are a legitimate entity that can apply for government contracts or assistance. SAM.gov verifies that individuals and organizations are not fraudulent and that they have a physical location where they live or conduct business.

The entity registration area of SAM.gov is where the federal government manages information on potential government business partners or federal financial assistance recipients. Registrants register their entity to do business with the U.S. federal government by completing the entity registration process at SAM.gov. Their active registration in SAM.gov provides the entity the ability to apply for federal grants or loans or bid on government contracts.

Entity Registration in SAM.gov is required by federal [procurement policy](#) and [financial assistance policy](#) if the entity is applying for, or has received, federal prime awards. Federal policy requires direct (i.e. first-tier) subcontractors and subrecipients to have a Unique Entity ID. Federal policy does not require those subcontractors or subrecipients to complete a SAM.gov entity registration.



- [Opportunity on Grants.gov](#)
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Contains templates for budget, monitoring plans, ICS, indicator catalogue
- [De.usembassy.gov/pd-grants](#)
Embassy grants website, contains FAQs and additional resources