Notice of Funding Opportunity (NOFO)

Advancing Strategic Space Partnerships in the Middle East

Bureau of Near Eastern Affairs, Department of State

Opportunity number: DFOP0017462

Application deadline: August 25th, 2025

U.S. Department of State
Bureau of Near Eastern Affairs
Notice of Funding Opportunity

Funding Opportunity Title	Advancing Strategic Space Partnerships in the Middle East
Funding Opportunity Number	DFOP0017462
Announcement Type	New
Deadline for Applications	August 25
Deadline for Questions	August 7
Assistance Listing Number	19.600
Length of performance period	2 years
Number of awards anticipated	1
Award amounts	Up to $2,250,000
Total available funding	$2,250,000 pending availability of funds
Funding Instrument Type	Grant, Cooperative Agreement

Funding Opportunity Synopsis

The United States has a unique opportunity to drive select countries in the Middle East and North Africa firmly into the U.S. space ecosystem. Countries within the Middle East and North Africa region are increasingly eager to develop their space capabilities to both diversify their economies and expand their nation's expertise in science and technology. These countries are looking to cooperate with partners with advanced capabilities in space sciences, and this project aims to position the United States as the partner of choice by engaging and empowering a new generation of leaders in target countries with the necessary skills to harness the global space economy's vast opportunities.

This initiative seeks an implementing partner with demonstrated expertise in building capacity for shaping and navigating space policy, diplomatic and leadership skills, technical know-how, and business engagement. This approach ensures participants acquire practical skills for space sector advancement while reinforcing United States Government values of responsible technological practices, transparency, innovation, and security. Emphasizing technological interoperability among space partners will drive substantial commercial opportunities for U.S. private sector companies while building sustainable international cooperation frameworks aligned with American space governance principles.

Background Information:

NEA/AC offers assistance, training, and support to groups and individuals striving to create positive change by advancing U.S. foreign policy priorities in the Middle East and North Africa

region. NEA/AC works in 19 countries and territories, partnering with civil society organizations (CSOs), community leaders, youth and women advocates, private sector groups, and where appropriate, national, regional, and local governments to advance their efforts.

All applications must be submitted in English. Complete information on how applicants can submit proposals for this opportunity can be found in Section III below.

Applicants should read this NOFO in its entirety before writing their proposal and should refer to the full Evaluation Criteria provided in Section V while drafting all materials.

This notice is subject to availability of funding.

APPENDICES (Posted with NOFO)

APPENDIX 1— Budget Sample Template and Budget Narrative Guidance

APPENDIX 2— Logic Model Template

A. FUNDING OPPORTUNITY OVERVIEW

This program seeks to engage and empower a new generation of leaders in the Middle East and North Africa with the necessary skills to harness the global space economy's vast opportunities. The program aims to equip participants with interdisciplinary leadership skills and technical know-how while encouraging peaceful and collaborative space exploration and engagement at multilateral fora. The program will target space professionals in both public and private sectors from countries including Bahrain, Egypt, Jordan, and Oman to build up a contingent of local space expertise on technical issues, business and commercial opportunities, strategy, and space policy. The program will deepen connections with U.S. space institutions and private sector companies, build awareness of U.S.-sourced technology, and reinforce the values of transparency, innovation, and security that underpin U.S. Government objectives.

B. PROBLEM STATEMENT

The United States has an unparalleled opportunity to partner with countries in the Middle East and North Africa as they advance their space ambitions. Despite growing enthusiasm among Middle East and North African countries to advance national space capabilities, significant gaps persist in the technical workforce and interdisciplinary leadership necessary to fully leverage the global space economy. The United States is the global leader in space exploration and can offer a comprehensive model grounded in technological innovation, scientific transparency, and multidisciplinary excellence. By investing in tailored professional capacity development programs, the United States can equip the next generation of scientists, engineers, and policy leaders with the skills needed to thrive in the global space economy.

Beyond technical training, U.S. support brings a partnership framework highlighted by the Artemis Accords that focuses on jointly established principles of space exploration. Through programs that integrate leadership development, interdisciplinary STEM education, and exposure to U.S. institutions and private-sector expertise, the United States can position itself as the partner of choice for emerging space actors. This strategic investment builds goodwill, strengthens regional alliances, and cultivates a network of future leaders who see the United States not only as a source of opportunity but as a trusted advocate for shared success in space. Ultimately, this approach advances U.S. foreign policy objectives while fostering resilient ecosystems of innovation abroad.

C. ACHIEVABLE OBJECTIVES

A successful project will:

1. Promote the adoption of U.S. technologies and improve alignment with U.S. space infrastructure as the gold standard.

2. Strengthen space institutional capacity in Bahrain, Egypt, Jordan, and Oman through training on U.S. strategic priorities across space commerce, diplomacy, scientific innovation and research, and technological advancements.

3. Encourage private sector engagement through expanded bilateral trade and investment in companies operating in the space sector.

D. PROJECT DESIGN

The Department of State seeks to support a qualified implementing organization to design and deliver scalable, customizable training modules across four strategic pillars: space capacity building, space leadership, space diplomacy, and space commerce. The program will target professionals and emerging leaders in Bahrain, Egypt, Jordan, and Oman, with modules designed for adaptation to country-specific needs and regional expansion and in line with the three project objectives listed above.

The implementer is expected to conduct a comprehensive needs assessment for each target country to ensure that the curriculum reflects local priorities and capabilities. Not all pillars will apply universally; rather, content should be selectively delivered based on country-specific relevance. The training formats may vary, incorporating both in-person and virtual delivery methods to maximize accessibility and impact. Designed to be modular and scalable, these interdisciplinary programs aim to foster expertise that reflects U.S. values—transparency, peaceful space exploration, technological innovation, and scientific excellence.

The program's expected outcomes will be designed collaboratively to define specific changes in knowledge, skills, and behaviors expected from the program. The implementer will conduct a needs analysis to determine a baseline and establish clear, measurable objectives to track progress and success including qualitative, pre and post tests of skills, and participants feedback. The implementer will refine program delivery and methods based on the post-program review outcomes and provide a return on investment (ROI) of the program by comparing total program costs with total program benefits.

The implementer will be responsible for:

- Conducting strategic consultations with stakeholders including government officials, academia, research institutions, private sector actors, security agencies, and civil society in each target country to assess local needs and gaps. The implementer will consult with

an assigned Department of State point of contact in each country throughout the design and implementation.

- Engaging high level interlocutors across the U.S. space ecosystem such as DOS, NASA, DOC, private sector innovators, and academic experts to ensure that training modules reflect the United States Government's priorities and standards.

- Designing tailored, buildable educational modules and training programs, developed in response to country-specific assessments and designed for scalability and long-term sustainability.

- Delivering targeted trainings and providing documentation and reporting, including milestone tracking, detailed monitoring and evaluation, feedback from participants, and recommendations for ongoing engagement.

This initiative will engage a broad range of stakeholders across the target countries, as applicable, including:

- Senior officials and technical specialists within national space agencies and relevant ministries
- Diplomats and multilateral representatives involved in international space forums
- University students, professors, and researchers leading space-related R&D
- Private-sector actors and entrepreneurs in the space economy
- Legal experts focused on space law and international agreements
- Policy advisors and civil society leaders engaged in space governance and advocacy

By investing in people, partnerships, and principles, this project will help position the U.S. as the partner of choice for space workforce development, fostering long-term alignment with American leadership in science, innovation, and responsible global engagement.

The following activities and costs are **NOT ALLOWED** under this announcement:

- Travel costs for U.S. Government employees or contractors;
- Social welfare projects;
- Paying to complete activities begun with other funds;
- Activities that appear partisan or that support individual or party electoral campaigns;
- Academic or analytical research (if not necessary as part of a larger project);
- One-time events, such as stand-alone conferences and one-off round tables;
- Medical and psychological research and clinical studies;
- Projects of a commercial or profit-making nature;
- Cultural presentations, cultural research, cultural clubs, or festivals, etc.; and

- Entertainment costs (e.g., receptions, social activities, ceremonies, alcoholic beverages, guided tours).

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

E. SUBSTANTIAL INVOLVEMENT

Applicants submitting proposals should be aware that if their application results in an award, NEA/AC will be involved in the project and management performance of the grant in the form of a cooperative agreement, which allows NEA consultation and technical collaboration rights on specified project activities.

F. NEA/AC RESPONSIBILITIES

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

- Collaboration in refining problem statement, needs, or gaps to be addressed by the project;
- Collaboration in establishing project objectives and approval of work plan, training modules, and other key deliverables;
- Collaboration in assessing progress and identifying issues that might affect the success of the project;
- Approval of key personnel and any subsequent changes in the positions during the life of the award; and
- Collaboration in the creation of any training materials.

G. MEASUREMENT OF RESULTS

Applicants shall provide a Logic Model and a Theory of Change (ToC)/Program Logic statement to demonstrate how the proposed project (including activities, the project design, and the surrounding context) will achieve the stated objectives, with particular attention to how your approach will reach individuals of diverse backgrounds relevant to your specific context.

The Logic Model and Theory of Change statements can be generated using the template in Appendix 2. Applicants shall also provide an illustrative Results Monitoring Plan (RMP) to describe how the proposed project will capture and measure data that demonstrates progress toward achieving the specific objectives of the proposed project. This includes any disaggregation of indicators relevant to the target audience you intend to serve. The RMP may also include project-specific sub-objectives. Please see Appendix 3 for the RMP template. Please see Section III below for more information.

Successful applicants will work with the NEA/AC program and Monitoring, Evaluation & Learning (MEL) teams to finalize a Results Monitoring Plan (RMP) based on the proposed Logic Model and ToC to measure qualitative and quantitative indicators as part of the award negotiations process.

The successful applicants will be responsible for timely collection of data against these indicators – which will be monitored throughout the period of performance of the award to gauge necessary modifications to the project's design – and assess the results of the project's success in meeting expected outcomes.

II.   ELIGIBILITY INFORMATION

All applications will be screened by the Office of Assistance Coordination to determine whether they meet all the project eligibility requirements detailed below.

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

A.   ELIGIBLE APPLICANTS

All applicants must be legally registered or incorporated entities prior to submitting an application under this announcement. Applicants who receive this announcement are free to propose partnerships, sub-grants, or consortia with other entities to enhance the quality of their application.

Applicants and partners, subcontractors, or consortium members, include, but are not necessarily limited to, registered U.S. and non-U.S. non-profit organizations; for-profit organizations and small businesses; private voluntary organizations; foundations; private institutions of higher education, public or state institutions of higher education; and faith-based and community institutions. **All applicants must be legally registered organizations prior to applying to this announcement.**

The following organizations are eligible to apply:
- Not-for-profit organizations, including think tanks and civil society/non-governmental organizations
- Public and private educational institutions
- For-profit organizations

- Public International Organizations and Governmental institutions

I) Cost Sharing or Matching

Cost sharing or matching is not required as part of this program.

II) Prime Applicants

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

- Have demonstrable previous experience working in the MENA region and with the space sector in the U.S. and globally. This should be addressed within the project narrative section of your application.

- Meet ALL of the registration requirements listed below.

- Meet any requirements listed as MANDATORY in Additional Eligibility Considerations, below.

III) Local Partners

Applicants are strongly encouraged to submit projects that include partnerships with local organizations that would work together on specific programmatic objectives or priorities and that utilize local expertise. In particular, NEA/AC strongly encourages applicants not based in the MENA region to partner with local organizations

B. ELIGIBILITY REQUIREMENTS

To apply for NEA/AC (Federal) funding, organizations, whether based in or outside the U.S., must have an active account with the System for Award Management (SAM). Applicants who do not meet all registration requirements are NOT eligible for funding under the opportunity.

I) Unique entity identifier and System for Award Management (SAM.gov)

All organizations, whether based in the United States or in another country, must have a Unique Entity Identifier (UEI) and an active registration in SAM.gov. A 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. An applicant must maintain an active registration while it has a proposal under review by the Department and must continue to keep the registration active for

the entire duration of the period of performance of any Federal award that results from this NOFO.

The 2 CFR 200 requires subrecipients to obtain a UEI. Please note the UEI for subrecipients is not required at the time of application but will be required before an award is processed and/or directed to a subrecipient.

Note: The process of obtaining or renewing a SAM.gov registration may take anywhere from 4-8 weeks. Please begin your registration as early as possible.

- Organizations **based in the United States** or that pay employees within the United States will need an Employer Identification Number (EIN) from the Internal Revenue Service (IRS) and a UEI prior to registering in SAM.gov.

- Organizations **based outside of the United States** and that do not pay employees within the United States do not need an EIN from the IRS but do need a UEI prior to registering in SAM.gov.

- **Organizations based outside of the United States that do not intend to apply for U.S. Department of Defense (DoD) awards are no longer required to have a NATO Commercial and Government Entity (NCAGE) code to apply for non-DoD foreign assistance funding opportunities.** If an applicant organization is mid-registration and wishes to remove an NCAGE code from their SAM.gov registration, the applicant should submit a help desk ticket ("incident") with the Federal Service Desk (FSD) online at www.fsd.gov using the following language: "I do not intend to seek financial assistance from the Department of Defense. I do not wish to obtain an NCAGE code. I understand that I will need to submit my registration after this incident is resolved in order to have my registration activated."

Organizations based outside of the United States and that DO NOT plan to do business with the DoD should follow the below instructions:

Step 1: Proceed to SAM.gov to obtain a UEI and complete the SAM.gov registration process. SAM.gov registration must be renewed annually.

Organizations based outside of the United States and that DO plan to do business with the DoD in addition to Department of State should follow the below instructions:

Step 1: Apply for an NCAGE code by following the instructions on the NSPA NATO website linked below:

NCAGE Homepage:
https://eportal.nspa.nato.int/AC135Public/sc/CageList.aspx
NCAGE Code Request Tool (NCRT):

NCAGE Code Request Tool (nato.int)

Exemptions

An exemption from the UEI and sam.gov registration requirements may be permitted on a case-by-case basis. See 2 CFR 25.110 for a full list of exemptions.

Organizations requesting exemption from UEI or SAM.gov requirements must email the point of contact listed in the NOFO at least two weeks prior to the deadline in the NOFO providing a justification of their request. Approval for a SAM.gov exemption must come from the warranted Grants Officer before the application can be deemed eligible for review.

A. APPLICATION DOCUMENTS

All applications must include the application components detailed below. **All application documents must be submitted in English.** Applicants may submit only one application. Please refer to the subsections below for additional submissions guidance and requirements. **NOTE: Applications that do not include all the required documentation described in Section I below will not advance past the Technical Eligibility Review stage.** Further, applications that exceed the allowable page limits will not be reviewed by the review panel. Applicants may not add any materials to an application once it has been submitted and the competition deadline has passed.

I) **Required Documents**

Federal Assistance Application Forms (SF-424 and SF424a)
Applicants must complete each of these forms online to be considered for funding.

Project Narrative
The Project Narrative describes the efforts the applicant will undertake to address the priorities and goals of this announcement. It may be no longer than 15 pages.

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.

- **Proposal Summary:** Short narrative that outlines the proposed project, including project 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 State Department 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
- **Project 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.
- **Project Activities**: Describe the program activities and how they will help achieve the objectives.
- **Project 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. See Appendix 2.
- **Proposed Project 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?
- **Project Partners:** List the names and type of involvement of key partner organizations and sub-awardees.
- **Project 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.

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

There is no page limit for this section of an application. All budgets must be in US Dollars. A sample fillable template can be found in Appendix 1.

This budget template includes three tabs: The first tab includes written guidance on preparing the Budget Narrative. Applicants are strongly encouraged to create their Budget Narrative in Word and submit as either a Word Doc or PDF file. Please note that the Budget Narrative should include designations of who is considered Key Personnel for this project. As defined in the Department of State Standard Terms and Conditions (for assistance awards, Key Personnel means, "…key professional and supervisory personnel; i.e., the members of the professional staff in a program supervisory position engaged for or assigned to duties under the award." The second tab has the template for the Summary Budget. This tab will auto-fill as you complete the Detailed Line Item Budget, which can be found on the third tab. The third tab is where you can fill in the template for the Detailed Line Item Budget as stated above. **NOTE: Applicants are strongly encouraged to use the same format as provided in the template, and to submit summary and detailed line item budgets in Excel form, and the Budget Narrative as**

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

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 $10,000 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 $10,000 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 15% of Modified Total Direct Costs as defined in 2 CFR 200.1.

"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.

Attachments

· 1-page Curriculum Vitae (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, include your latest NICRA as a PDF file.
· Official permission letters, if required for program activities.

Optional Documents

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

1. **Letters of Agreement or Letters of Intent:** Applicants proposing partner organizations and/or government bodies should include Letters of Intent or Letters of Agreement from their proposed partners.
2. **Organizational Chart:** The organizational chart outlines the clear lines of responsibility and authority in the applicant organization to include budgeted level of effort listed by each person.
3. **Sustainability Plan:** The sustainability plan outlines how the proposed project will be sustained beyond the initial award period. **Sustainability Plans may not exceed 2 pages.**
4. **Security, Risk Mitigation, & Contingency Planning Summary:** This item should provide detail regarding the applicant's intended due diligence to assess and mitigate risks, and put in place adequate security measures to ensure the safety and well-being of project staff, participants, and partners, if applicable. This should include specific actions by the applicant to ensure risks are adequately and routinely assessed, and that security measures are commensurate with operational concerns specific to the locale. The applicant should also include a contingency plan that highlights potential challenges and limitations to project implementation in the operating environment and propose contingency plans should program activities be impacted. Please note that this section should not be limited to physical security and risk but should cover any applicable factors relevant to the given operating environment. **This section may not exceed 5 pages.**

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

II)   Application Formatting Requirements

The required font is 12-point, Calibri. All application documents must be single spaced, with all margins (left, right, top, and bottom) of at least one inch each. **These settings do not apply if using provided templates.** Applicants should ensure all pages in the application package are numbered consecutively and meet the page limit requirements outlined above.

The Standard Forms 424 (SF-424 and SF-424a) are excluded from the page numbering.
It is strongly recommended that applicants submit grant applications using Microsoft Office. If applicants do not have access to Microsoft Office products, Adobe PDF files may be submitted. Adhering to the standards outlined above will help to ensure the accurate submission of the document. **Applications that <u>do not meet</u> the formatting requirements will not advance to the Technical Review stage.**

B. QUESTION PERIOD

Potential applicants will have until August 7th, (15 days following the posting of this NOFO) to send questions to NEA-Grants@state.gov. Once all questions are received, the NEA/AC team will compile all questions and answers in a document thar will be uploaded to Grants.gov on August 5th with the other application materials. After this date, no questions beyond technical difficulties will be answered.

C. APPLICATION SUBMISSION

Applicants must submit their application through the MyGrants portal, linked in the Grants.gov application.

D. SUBMISSION DATES AND TIMES

Applications must be timestamped before **16:00 Eastern Daylight Time (EDT) on August 25, 2025**. **There will be no grace period, and any application not received by the deadline will not be considered.**

Applicants are encouraged to submit their proposals in advance of the deadline. Each applicant is encouraged to submit an application far enough in advance of the deadline so that the applicant can alert NEA/AC (nea-grants@state.gov) of any technical difficulties and allow sufficient time to resolve difficulties before the deadline. **NEA/AC will not grant exceptions to the submission requirements outlined in this announcement for any reason, technical or otherwise.**

If you have any questions about the grant application process, please contact: NEA-Grants@state.gov.

IV.   FUNDING LIMITATIONS, RESTRICTIONS, AND OTHER CONSIDERATIONS

A. AWARDS TO COMMERCIAL FIRMS OR FOR-PROFIT ORGANIZATIONS

The Department of State prohibits profit under its assistance awards to commercial organizations. No funds will be paid as profit to any recipient that is a commercial organization. Profit is defined as any amount in excess of allowable direct and indirect costs. The allowability of costs incurred by commercial organizations is determined in accordance with the provisions of the Federal Acquisition Regulation (FAR) at 48 CFR Part 31. Program income earned by the recipient may be:

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

B. AUDIT REQUIREMENTS

Domestic and foreign organizations that expend $1,000,000 or more in a fiscal year in federal assistance must perform an independent, recipient-contracted Single Audit or Program Specific Audit. (Program-specific Audit means an audit of one Federal award program. Single Audit means an audit which includes both the entity's financial statements and the Federal Awards to be conducted in accordance with Generally Accepted Government Auditing Standards (GAGAS). The audits must be independently and professionally executed in accordance with GAGAS either prescribed by a government's Supreme Audit Institution with auditing standards approved by the Comptroller General of the United States, or the host country's laws or adopted by the host country's public accountants or associations of public accountants, together with generally accepted international auditing standards. However, foreign entity audits consistent with International Standards for Auditing or other auditing standards are acceptable with the Grants Officer's approval.

For sub-non-Federal entities expending $1,000,000 or more in Department of State award funding during their fiscal year, Department of State standard audit provisions require that Prime non-Federal entities certify that audits of sub-non-Federal entities are performed annually and according to the standards described above. The cost of audits required under this policy may be charged either as an allowable direct cost to the award OR included in the organizations established indirect costs in the award's detailed budget.

Compliance with Applicable Federal Funding Regulations and DOS Terms and Conditions

Payment of funds awarded under this Notice of Funding Opportunity will not be disbursed until the DOS has been assured that the Recipient's financial management system will provide effective control over and accountability for all Federal funds in accordance with 2 CFR 200 and

2 CFR 600 as applicable. Awards issued under this NOFO are subject to the Department of State Standard Terms and Conditions (https://www.state.gov/wp-content/uploads/2020/10/U.S.-Department-of-State-Standard-Terms-and-Conditions-10-21-2020-508.pdf) and 2 CFR 200 and 2 CFR 600 as applicable.

Other Funding Restrictions

    i.   Funding Restrictions for the United Nations Relief and Works Agency (UNRWA)

    None of the funds awarded resulting from this Notice of Funding Opportunity may be made available for subawards, direct financial support, or otherwise used to provide any payment or transfer to United Nations Relief and Works Agency (UNRWA).

    ii.   Certification Regarding Compliance with applicable Federal anti-discrimination laws

    If the place of performance or delivery of any award made under this NOFO will be **within the United States**, applicants are advised that they will be required to certify the following at the time of award:

1) Its compliance in all respects with all applicable Federal anti-discrimination laws is material to the government's payment decisions for purposes of section 3729(b)(4) of title 31, United States Code and;

2) It does not operate any programs promoting Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion that violate any applicable Federal anti-discrimination laws. A program promoting Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion means a program whose purpose is to promote preferences based on race, color religion, sex, or national origins, such as in training or hiring.

    iii.   Certification Regarding Compliance with 20 U.S.C. 1011f and any other applicable foreign funding disclosure requirements

    Applicants are advised that IHEs must certify the following at the time of award, and that this certification requirement must be included in any subaward agreements to IHEs:

1) Its compliance in all respects with section 1011f of title 20, United States Code, and any other applicable foreign funding disclosure requirements is material for purposes of section 3729 of title 31, United States Code, and for receipt of appropriate Federal grant funds.

V.   REVIEW AND SELECTION PROCESS

A. APPLICATION EVALUATION CRITERIA

Achievable Objectives (30 points)

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

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

Project Design (40 points)

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

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

- Contingency Plan: The applicant articulates programming assumptions and potential challenges to project implementation and proposes contingency plans.
- Division of Labor: The application describes the division of labor among the applicant and any partners.
- Logic Model and Theory of Change/Program Logic Statement: The applicant details how the proposed Logic Model and Theory of Change/Program Logic statement clearly links project activities, outputs, and outcomes to objectives. If applicable, findings from the Gender and Inclusion Analysis are clearly addressed within the program design.
- Results Monitoring Plan (RMP): The applicant details how they intend to monitor project progress towards outputs, outcomes, and objectives. Indicators include relevant disaggregations to monitor program implementation for diverse populations.
- Program Logic: Is it theoretically sound? Do all elements of the logic model fit together showing plausible pathways to achieving project outcomes? Have all the key assumptions been identified and their potential influences described? Are the risks to implementation (external factors) fully accounted for and described?

Organizational Capacity (20 points)

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

Staff and Position Specifications (10 points)

- Pre-identified key staff members, including volunteers, demonstrate experience working in the country/territory/region proposed, in the proposed content area, and with participants from that area (e.g., language skills, cultural understanding).
- A description of the roles of each person or position on the project – whether staff, partner, consultant, or volunteer – demonstrating that the project will be sufficiently staffed but will avoid redundancy or duplication of effort.
- A job description, including hiring criteria, is provided for each open key position.
- Applicant and/or partner staff have relevant language competencies.
- Budget & Budget Narrative (Acceptable or Not Acceptable)
- The costs proposed are reasonable in relation to the proposed activities and anticipated results, which are clearly explained in the budget narrative.

- The budget provides details of calculations, including estimation methods, quantities, unit costs, and other similar quantitative detail sufficient for the calculation to be duplicated.
- The preponderance of the budget is spent on supporting the project participants/activities in country.
- The budget includes costs dedicated to management, monitoring, and evaluation, and any costs needed for further gender analysis and for addressing gender gaps.
- Adequate travel costs are proposed.
- Additional sources (cost-share or matching) for project funding are proposed, as well as an explanation of how those additional sources will be used.
- The budget demonstrates a reasonable cost per participant.
- The budget accounts for monitoring and evaluation costs.

B. REVIEW AND SELECTION PROCESS

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

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

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

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

i.   Risk factors

Under the merit review as required by 2 CFR 200.206, prior to making a Federal Award the Department will review and consider the following risk factors:

a. Financial stability
b. Management systems and standards
c. History of performance
d. Audit reports and findings

e. Ability to effectively implement requirements

VI.   ADMINISTRATION INFORMATION

A. AWARD NOTICES

Final awards cannot be made until funds have been appropriated by Congress, allocated and committed through internal bureau procedures. NEA/AC reserves the right to award funding to applicants under this announcement for a period of up to two years after the announcement's close date.

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

B. REPORTING REQUIREMENTS

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

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

Recipients must report *immediately* when a program faces unplanned delays in implementation, fails to meet program targets or milestones, or costs increase. Any changes or revisions to the approved budget require prior approval from the NEA/AC Grants Officer.

Recipients are required to report program and beneficiary achievements on a quarterly basis (or provide written confirmation that there is no related news for the given quarter) beginning with second quarter's program report.

Foreign Assistance Data Review: As required by Congress, the Department of State must make progress in its efforts to improve tracking and reporting of foreign assistance data through the Foreign Assistance Data Review (FADR). The FADR requires tracking of foreign assistance activity data from budgeting, planning, and allocation through obligation and disbursement. Successful applicants will be required to report and draw down federal funding based on the appropriate FADR Data Elements, indicated within their award documentation. In cases of more than one FADR Data Element, typically program or sector and/or regions or country, the successful applicant will be required to maintain separate accounting records.

Applicants should be aware of the post award reporting requirements reflected in 2 CFR 200 Appendix XII—Award Term and Condition for Recipient Integrity and Performance Matters.

C. TRAVEL NOTIFICATIONS

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

E. SPECIAL PROVISION FOR PERFORMANCE IN A DESIGNATED COMBAT AREA (SPOT) REQUIREMENTS

N/A

F. BRANDING AND MARKING REQUIREMENTS FOR GRANTEES

Grantees awarded under this announcement will be **required** to make all materials produced under the award with the standard U.S. flag in a size and prominence equal to (or greater than) any other logo or identity. Materials are defined as but not limited to: training materials, materials for recipients, or materials to communicate or promote with foreign audiences a program, event, project, or some other activity under this award, including but not limited to invitations to events, press materials, event backdrops, podium signs, etc. In addition, sub-recipients or sub-awardees are subject to the marking requirements and the grantee shall

include a provision in the sub-recipient or sub-awardee's agreement indicating that the standard, rectangular U.S. flag is a requirement. Further information can be found at brand.america.gov. Exceptions to this requirement can be discussed with NEA/AC when negotiating an award.

G. UEI NUMBER REQUIREMENT FOR SUB AWARDEES

All sub-awardees are required to have a UEI number. For information on obtaining a UEI number, please see Section II. B. Proposed sub-awardees are not required to have a UEI number prior to the submission of an application but must have one prior to a sub-award being issued.

H. SUB AWARDEE REPORTING REQUIREMENT

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

I. SENSITIVITY AND CONFIDENTIALITY OF INFORMATION RELATED TO THIS AWARD

In all public communications, Recipients will be held accountable for appropriate protocol and decorum during the term of an award, given that Recipients of federal funding are associated with the Government of the United States.

J. RESPONSIBILITY/QUALIFICATION INFORMATION IN SAM.GOV

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 U.S. government designated integrity and performance system accessible through SAM.gov (see 41 U.S.C. 2313)

An applicant can review and comment on any information in the responsibility/qualification records available in SAM.gov.

Before making decisions in the risk review required by 2 CFR 200.206, the Department will consider any comments by the applicant, along with information available in the responsibility/qualification records in SAM.gov.

K. LEAHY VETTING REQUIREMENTS

Funds provided under this award are subject to Section 620M of the Foreign Assistance Act of 1961, as amended, a provision titled "Limitation on Assistance to Security Forces" (the "Leahy Amendment"). Subsection (a) of that provision states: "(a) In General.—No assistance shall be furnished under this Act [the Foreign Assistance Act] or the Arms Export Control Act to any unit of the security forces of a foreign country if the Secretary of State has credible information that such unit has committed a gross violations of human rights." In signing this award, the Recipient agrees to exercise due diligence to ensure compliance with the Leahy Amendment provision and Department of State policy, and to cooperate with the Department of State in implementation of the requirement.

The Department of State implements the Leahy Amendment requirement by vetting units or individuals proposed for training or other assistance. Vetting information should be submitted to the U.S. embassy in the country where the award will be implemented in order to initiate Leahy vetting procedures. This includes both civilian and military employees of security forces participating in any activities funded under this award, including training, workshops or meetings, conferences, or other activities.

The Recipient must collaborate with the relevant U.S. embassy on a case-by-case basis to determine if the Leahy requirement applies to specific activities or proposed participants. Individuals who are not members of the security forces but who participate in activities under the award (e.g., politicians, academics, etc.) generally do not need to be vetted.

The Recipient agrees that it will not include any security forces candidate in training or other activities funded under this award until the Department of State advises that the candidate has cleared Leahy vetting and is approved for participation.

VII.   POST-AWARD REQUIREMENTS AND ADMINISTRATION

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:

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](#) (2 CFR), as updated in the Federal Register's 89 FR 30046 on April 22, 2024, particularly on:
  - Selecting recipients most likely to be successful in delivering results based on the program objectives through an impartial process of evaluating Federal award applications (2 CFR part 200.205),
  - 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 pursuant to the U.S. Department of State Standard Terms and Conditions, including, to the greatest extent authorized by law, if an award no longer effectuates the program goals or agency priorities (2 CFR part 200.340).

- [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](#)

VIII.   AGENCY CONTACTS

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

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

ILMS Help Desk

(888) 313-ILMS (4567)

https://afsitsm.servicenowservices.com/ilms/

IX.   DISCLAIMER

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