002 - Shared Values Program NOFO

Questions & Answers

1. **Question:** If successful, will you transfer funds to our Afghanistan Bank

   Answer: We will transfer funds electronically to the bank the selected applicant designates as their operating bank of choice, including banks in Afghanistan.

2. **Question:** It is unclear to us whether proposals should be limited ONLY to '*virtually displaying of Afghan cultural heritage...* (page 3) or whether the mounting of a permanent physical exhibition (for example, in an historic monument) that is open to the public would be considered, in addition to material to be made available online.

   Answer: Proposals that include physical exhibitions will be considered. However, in calling for *virtual displays of Afghan cultural heritage*, we hope to expand audience access to include Afghan communities both within and outside of Afghanistan

3. **Question:** Can you let me know if we would be eligible to apply for funding, particularly the *'Preserving Afghan Culture, Empowering Women, and Reinforcing Shared Values'* grant as a UK-based NGO operating in Afghanistan?

   Proposed Answer: Yes, UK-based NGOs may apply. Please refer to Section C (beginning on page 6) of the NOFO for more details regarding eligibility.

4. **Question:** What would be the grant period?

   Answer: See page 5 of the NOFO. The duration of the award is for 18 months. Anticipated start date is sometime in July 2022 pending final selection of the grantee.

5. **Question:** Can the US Embassy please confirm that only employees, sub-recipient personnel and contract personnel are required to be vetted? Page 7 states that: Applicants are advised that individuals proposed to participate in an award resulting from this NOFO (recipient employees, contractors, beneficiaries, etc.) are subject to vetting for involvement in corrupt practices, illicit narcotics production or trafficking, and violation of human rights. Successful passing of this vetting is a precondition to any award under his NOFO. However, page 20 states that: Awardees are required to comply with the following **Special Provision for Performance in a Designated Combat Area:** The Recipient must report and account for all employees, subrecipient personnel, and contract personnel working under grants or cooperative agreements working in contingency operations outside the United States that involve combat operations.

   Answer: Correct, employees, sub-recipient personnel, and contract personnel are required to be vetted. However, the Embassy reserves the right to vet others, including beneficiaries of the award, as needed.

6. **Question:** Can the US Embassy confirm that applicants may use a third party vendor application which we already use for vetting? Page 20 states that: The database to collect this [vetting] information, called the Synchronized Pre-Deployment Operational Tracker (SPOT), is managed by the Department of Defense. In coordination with the Grants

Officer and Grants Officer Representative, the Recipient generally provides this information to the Department of State SPOT Program Manager (AQMops@state.gov). The Department SPOT Program Manager enters information provided by the Recipient directly into the SPOT system.
Answer: For SPOT reporting mentioned on page 20 of the NOFO, PDS Kabul uses a specific template which will be shared with the selected applicant at the time of post-award reporting.

7. **Question:** Can the US Embassy confirm that grantees may use their regular means of paying salaries? Page 19 states that: The recipient may be required to pay all salaries supported by the grant via electronic funds transfer.

   Answer: The selected applicant must pay all salaries supported by the grant via electronic funds transfer (EFT).

8. **Question:** Can we apply if we're non-US-based?

   Answer: Please see Section C (beginning on page 6) of the NOFO for details regarding eligibility. Non-US based organizations may apply should they meet the other eligibility criteria.

9. **Question:** If our outputs will take place in the UK and Europe (ie we will connect with Afghan audiences outside Afghanistan and can use digital to connect with Afghans in Afghanistan), will our proposal be considered?

   Answer: We will consider proposals that take place outside of Afghanistan.

10. **Question:** I am filling out the SF424_4_0-V4 document and am not seeing a clear answer for Question 13 - Competition ID Number and Title. The instructions indicate that this will be auto populated from the Cover Sheet of the NOFO - which I am not seeing. Could you please help me find that number?

    Answer: The Competition ID is SCAKAB-22-GR-002-SCA-03032022; Title: Preserving Afghan Culture, Empowering Women, and Reinforcing Shared Values

11. **Question:** We do not have an Applicant Identifier or Federal Entity or Federal Award Identifiers that I am aware of (despite having up to date DUNS and SAMs numbers). Is it fine to leave these fields blank?

    Answer: An UEI number is automatically generated when you register in SAM.gov. Please see page 6 of the NOFO for more details. Note the NOFO narrative document was updated on March 22, 2022 with updated information regarding DUNS/UEI/SAM.gov. Please review the latest version.

12. **Question:** For US-based 501c3 organizations with collaborating local NGO partners in Afghanistan, can we work with the NGO directly to implement in-country components of the project, or do we need to do this through a sub-grant? Our in-country Afghanistan partners are hesitant to receive US government funding directly through a sub-grant because of the attention it could bring.

Answer: If you are partnering with another entity and plan to use the award funds from this NOFO to cover costs incurred by the entity for project implementation it must be done through a subaward.

13. **Question:** The project/program has to take place in Afghanistan?

    Answer: We will consider projects taking place within and/or outside of Afghanistan.

14. **Question:** Want to confirm whether there are any restrictions on the location of the organization applying for the NOFO—can it be an organization based in the U.S. or Afghanistan?

    Answer: They organization may be based in the U.S. or in Afghanistan or elsewhere. However, please refer to the eligibility information found in Section C (beginning on page 6) of the NOFO.

15. **Question:** Projects in Afghanistan are considered high risk and that the recipient may be required to pay all salaries supported by the grant via electronic funds transfer. Are there any other restrictions or guidance about paying Afghans still residing in Afghanistan?

    Proposed Answer: At this time, funds under this NOFO are allowable to cover costs including paying Afghans still residing in Afghanistan, however, the applicant should do its own research to ensure they are able to pay employees or project partners still residing in Afghanistan.

16. **Question:** If we are focused on areas 2 and 3 (two of the four areas) do you recommend we apply for not more than $250,000? That would only be about $11,000 per month after indirect and M/E.

    Answer: The award ceiling is capped at $500,000. There is no limit to how many proposals a grantee may submit. Therefore, you may want to consider submitting two proposals: one for area 2 and one for area 3 separately if your proposed costs exceed $500,000 per project proposed.

17. **Question:** What do you recommend for security plan cost allocation? Daily rate of $2000 or more?

    Answer: It is up to the applicant to propose reasonable costs associated with their security plan for consideration. However, costs generally do not exceed 5% of the budget.

18. **Question:** Do you have any vetted private security companies that you can recommend?

    Answer: We do not have any recommendations at this time.

19. **Question:** Can you provide a sample security plan?

Answer: We cannot, however, we strongly recommend you customize your security plan to meet your anticipated needs.

20. **Question:** Any specific risk management areas to consider such as cybersecurity, document retention, etc.

    Answer: In your proposal narrative we strongly recommend you address the areas of risk you foresee as challenges to project implementation and how you intend to mitigate those challenges.

21. **Question:** Do you vet in-country partners or subcontractors no matter where located?

    Proposed Answer: Yes, however, please refer to the vetting requirements in the NOFO for more details.

22. **Question:** Do you need resumes or profiles of potential in-country partners or subcontractors?

    Proposed Answer: We strongly recommend that you include as much detail regarding potential in-country partners and/or subcontractors as available at the time of your application that would support your proposal.