# DFOP0018819: Egypt Annual Program Statement

# Frequently Asked Questions

**Notice:**

**This will be the final FAQ document posted ahead of the August 31, 2026 deadline for this round of proposals.**

**As noted in the APS, proposals may continue to be submitted after this date and will be reviewed on a rolling basis, subject to the availability of funding. Questions may continue to be submitted to NEA-Grants@state.gov and will be addressed in subsequent FAQs.**

**Q: How do I upload the required application forms and documents and submit my proposal in MyGrants?** A: The required forms can be downloaded from the "Additional Documents to be Submitted" section in your proposal in MyGrants. Then, navigate to the "Application Uploaded Docs" tab and upload each required document by selecting "Additional Document to be Submitted" from the "File Type" dropdown. Once all required documents have been uploaded, you may submit your application. The SF 424 tab in MyGrants can be disregarded as the SF 424 forms will be uploaded alongside all other documentation.

If you experience technical issues with MyGrants, please contact the ILMS Help Desk, as the Department is unable to provide technical or back-end system support.

**Q: The RMP references a list of indicators in an annex that is not included, "see Program Indicator List Annex from the announcement." Can this list of indicators be shared with the applicants?** A: This list of indicators refers to the F standard indicators, available here: Foreign Assistance Resource Library - United States Department of State.

**Q: Appendix 2 (page 5) requires proposals to use one standard indicator per project and to include definitions of indicators in our Results Monitoring Plan. Appendix 2 also provides a useful link to the Foreign Assistance Standard Indicators. However, the link takes users to a list that does not include definitions. Can the Department of State provide a link to the definitions for Foreign Assistance Standard indicators or provide guidance on whether or not these standard indicators require definitions?** A: F standard indicator definitions, which the Department sets, are undergoing their annual review and NEA/AC cannot provide up-to-date definitions at this time. In the "Definition" field of the RMP at this stage, applicants should enter "See F standard indicator definition. Content will be revised with update of F definitions." for F standard indicators. Should NEA/AC select the proposal for further negotiation, an NEA/AC

MEL specialist will assist the applicant with refining the RMP and applying standard indicator definitions to the project. During implementation, RMPs should be updated when the Department revises standard indicator definitions.

**Q: Please confirm that detailed sub-awardee budgets are not requested to submit. Instead, it is satisfactory to include the total budget figure for the sub as a line item in the overall prime budget.** A: Detailed subawardee budgets are not required as part of the proposal submission. However, once a detailed subawardee budget has been developed, it should be provided to the Grants Officer should the proposal be selected.

**Q: Per the APS page 23, "If two or more applications receive equivalent scores based on the evaluation criteria outlined in this NOFO, preference will be given to the applicant with the lower indirect cost rate, as consistent with Executive Order 14332, Section 4(b)(iii). This preference will only be applied as a tie-breaking mechanism and does not supersede the primary evaluation criteria." Most applicants with NICRAs have multiple indirect cost rates, with different bases of application for each, such that a determination based on "the applicant with the lower indirect cost rate" is not feasible. We would like to propose instead, a cost-benefit assessment calculated based on the following: total amount of indirect costs of the prime applicant divided by the total amount of the award, which consists of both the federal share and amount of cost share proposed by the applicant. That would allow a uniform basis of comparison across all applicants.** A: The methodology described in the APS is consistent with the requirements of Executive Order 14332, Improving Oversight of Federal Grantmaking, and cannot be modified or adjusted for this funding opportunity. For additional information on Executive Order 14332, please refer to the official text published on www.WhiteHouse.gov.

**Q: Please confirm that we can use a font other than Times New Roman in graphics as long as we maintain the 10-point font size or higher?** A: We request that proposal adhere to all style guidelines. Any graphics that do not have Times New Roman as the font will be accepted but must be in an alternative legible font type.

**Q: Will DOS accept a table of contents and an acronym list that is not counted against the 10-page limit? Or will DOS accept a table of contents and an acronym list as additional attachments that do not count against the limit of four attachments?** A: Either option will be allowed, we request applicants limit any content tables and/or acronym list to one page.

**Q: Section 5 (Indirect Costs) of the APS permits an applicant without a current NICRA to elect a 15% de minimis rate of Modified Total Direct Costs, without distinguishing between for-profit and non-profit applicants. A previously published Q&A for this solicitation, however, states that the de minimis rate does not apply to for-profit entities, consistent with 2 CFR 600.101(b), which extends only Subparts A–D (not Subpart E, Cost Principles) of 2 CFR 200 to for-profit entities. Please confirm whether a for-profit applicant, may elect the**

**15% de minimis rate, or whether our indirect costs must instead be structured as direct, cost-allocated line items.** A: The 15% de minimis indirect cost rate established under 2 CFR 200.414(f) does not apply to for-profit entities. A for-profit applicant that has a formally established overhead or General and Administrative (G&A) rate should use that rate when proposing indirect costs. If a for-profit applicant does not have a formally established overhead or G&A rate, indirect costs should be allocated to the appropriate direct cost categories in accordance with applicable Department of State guidance. For-profit applicants may not elect the 15% de minimis indirect cost rate.

**Q: The APS defines Key Personnel as individuals who contribute to the programmatic development or execution of the project in a substantive, measurable way, whether or not they receive salary or other compensation under the grant. Please confirm whether there is a minimum level of effort (LOE) threshold an individual must dedicate to the project to qualify as Key Personnel, or whether this determination is left to applicant judgment and must simply be substantiated in the proposal.** A: There is no minimum Level of Effort (LOE) threshold required for someone to qualify as Key Personnel. The designation is based on the substantive nature of their contribution, not a specific percentage of time. Key Personnel are generally defined as individuals who contribute to the programmatic development or execution of a project in a substantive, measurable way, regardless of whether they receive salary or other compensation under the award. Applicants have discretion to identify Key Personnel based on the materiality of their role, provided this determination is substantiated in the proposal narrative and budget justification.

**Q: Please confirm whether the advance payment mechanism is available to for-profit recipients under grants or cooperative agreements issued through this APS, or whether for-profit recipients are limited to reimbursement-based payment.** A: Advance payments may be issued to any recipient type at the discretion of the Grants Officer. Any advance payment must be determined to be reasonable, allowable, and allocable to the award and will be made in accordance with the terms and conditions of the award and applicable federal requirements.

**Q: Can a company submit a proposal as a prime and also be a sub recipient in another proposal under the same APS program area?** A: An organization may submit a proposal as a prime applicant and also participate as a subrecipient on another proposal under the same APS program area, provided it meets all applicable eligibility requirements and each proposal is independently responsive to the requirements of the APS.

**Q: We intend to upload our documents to the designated portal (MyGrants) and to maintain them there until an award decision is issued. We would appreciate your confirmation that this is the correct approach.** A: Yes, you should upload your application and all required supporting documents through MyGrants.

**Q: We understand that we are required to establish a new SAM.gov account, and that, in our case, this first necessitates the deletion/deactivation of the existing account before the new account can be created. We would be grateful if you could confirm that this understanding is accurate.** A: If your previous SAM.gov registration has expired, you do not need to deactivate or delete your existing account. You should renew your existing registration.

**Q: While the APS identifies critical minerals as a priority sector, there does not appear to be a dedicated program area for mining or mineral extraction. Our team is considering crafting a proposal in collaboration with a mining company as an industry partner. Would a proposal of this nature be considered responsive to the APS, and if so, should it also align with one or more of stated program focus areas?** A: Yes, we will consider proposals in the critical minerals sector that focus on U.S. technology deployment and workforce development in Egypt.

**Q: Does NEA/AC intend to select recipients based on the complete applications submitted under the APS, subject to ordinary pre-award clarification and negotiation? Alternatively, does NEA/AC intend to shortlist applicants based on their initial submissions and then conduct a co-design process before requesting final program descriptions, results frameworks, implementation plans, milestones, and budgets? If the initial submission is intended primarily for shortlisting, must applicants nevertheless submit the complete detailed budget and budget narrative required by Section D?** A: NEA intends to select recipients based on their initial submission under the APS subject to pre-award negotiations, requirements, and if applicable, conditions. NEA/AC reserves the right to request budget, framework, milestone and/ or scope revisions prior to award issuance. If necessary, revisions will occur during negotiations. Therefore, all applicable documentation must be submitted during the initial application submission.

**Q: Does NEA/AC anticipate making- cost-type grants, cost-type cooperative agreements, fixed amount awards, fixed-amount cooperative agreements, or any of these, depending on the proposed project and anticipated level of Government involvement? At what point will the award type be determined, and what criteria will NEA/AC use to make that determination? Should the applicant propose the award type?** A: Awards may be issued as a Grant, Fixed Amount Award (FAA), or Cooperative Agreement. Cooperative Agreements include substantial involvement by the Bureau or Embassy in the implementation of the project. An FAA may also include substantial involvement. Examples of substantial involvement are provided in Section C of the APS.

The award mechanism utilized for each award will be determined at the discretion of the Grants Officer after an applicant is selected. Applicants should not propose or request a specific award mechanism in their application.

**Q: The program-area award ceilings range from $10 million to $25 million. However, current Department of State guidance in 4 FAM 617 states that fixed amount awards cannot exceed $250,000. Does the $250,000 limit apply to fixed amount awards issued under this APS? If not, please identify the applicable maximum.** A: The award mechanism will be determined at the discretion of the Grants Officer after an applicant is selected and the mechanism selection will follow applicable Department of State regulations.

**Q: Is the detailed budget submitted with the initial application intended to serve as the basis for award, subject to pre-award negotiation? Alternatively, is it an initial planning budget that may be materially revised during co-design? If material revisions are expected following selection or co-design, must applicants nevertheless submit the complete detailed budget and budget narrative at the initial application stage?** A: Applicants must submit a complete detailed budget, along with a budget narrative, as part of their initial application. The proposed budget will be evaluated as part of the application review process.

If an application is selected to move forward, the proposed budget may be subject to negotiation and revision between the applicant and the Department of State prior to award. The final approved budget will be reflected in the executed award document.

**Q: Should an applicant affirmatively request consideration for a fixed amount award, or will NEA/AC determine the appropriate award instrument and payment structure after evaluating or selecting the application?** A: The award mechanism utilized for each award will be determined at the discretion of the Grants Officer after an applicant is selected. Applicants should not propose or request a specific award mechanism in their application.

**Q: If an applicant wishes to be considered for an FAA, must it propose payment milestones in the initial application? If so, please specify where applicants should present- each milestone or deliverable, the objective completion and acceptance criteria, the means of verification, the planned completion date, and the fixed amount associated with the milestone. Alternatively, will NEA/AC develop and price FAA milestones with selected applicants during pre-award negotiation or co-design?** A: The award mechanism utilized for each award will be determined at the discretion of the Grants Officer after an applicant is selected. Applicants should not propose or request a specific award mechanism in their application.

**Q: Must all applicants submit only the required SF-424A/OMB cost-category budget and detailed line-item budget, or must applicants also submit an activity-based or milestone-based budget? If an additional milestone budget is required only for a prospective FAA, should it be included with the initial application or submitted later at NEA/AC's request?** A: Applicants must submit the required forms and budget documentation described in the APS, including the applicable SF-424 forms, detailed line-item budget, and budget narrative.

Additional or alternate budget formats, including activity-based or milestone-based budgets, should not be submitted.

**Q: Does the general PMS/SF-270 advance-or-reimbursement language on page 24 apply to fixed amount awards? If so, how will that process operate in conjunction with fixed milestones or deliverables?** A: The award mechanism utilized for each award will be determined at the discretion of the Grants Officer after an applicant is selected. Details on the method of payment will be shared with successful applicants.

**Q: The APS states that cost sharing is voluntary but will be favorably considered during merit review. Please clarify how voluntary cost sharing or leveraged resources will affect an application's score, if applicants propose a fixed amount award (FAA). Under 2 CFR 200.201(b)(2), a fixed amount award may not be used for a program that requires mandatory cost sharing or matching. Moreover, because an FAA is based primarily on performance rather than reimbursement of actual costs, it is unclear how voluntary cost sharing would be valued, verified, monitored, and enforced under an FAA when cost monitoring is not permitted. If applicants must identify their proposed award type, please confirm that an applicant seeking an FAA will not be evaluated less favorably for declining to propose cost sharing than an applicant seeking a cost-type award with cost share. If applicants are not required to identify a proposed award type, please explain how cost sharing will be considered during merit review. In particular, will the favorable consideration of cost sharing apply only when comparing applications being considered for cost-type awards, and not when comparing those applications with applications being considered for FAAs? Can an application receive the full available score without proposing cost sharing?** A: Voluntary cost sharing or leveraged resources will be viewed favorably as part of the holistic evaluation of a proposal. However, because cost sharing is not required, the absence of cost sharing will not count against an application or preclude it from receiving the highest possible evaluation.

Applicants should not propose an award mechanism in their proposals. The award mechanism utilized for each award will be determined at the discretion of the Grants Officer after an applicant has been selected for award. As a result, the anticipated award mechanism is not considered during the merit review of proposals. Applicants should refer to Section F.1, Application Review Information, of the APS for additional information regarding the evaluation criteria.

**Q: Is October 1, 2026 a realistic anticipated start date for applications submitted by August 31, given the APS's statement that the review-to-award process may take several months?** A: October 1, 2026, is the earliest date on which an award may begin. The actual award start date is subject to the completion of negotiations and the availability of funding.

**Q: Section D, beginning on page 13, introduces the listed application documents as required but identifies the Summary Page as optional. Please confirm that omission of the Summary Page will not affect an application's technical eligibility.** A: Applications will be reviewed in accordance with the requirements and review criteria set forth in the APS. The absence of optional supplemental documentation, including the Summary Page, will not affect an application's eligibility or evaluation. Please refer to Section F.1, Application Review Information, of the APS for additional information regarding the evaluation criteria.

**Q: Under Section D, Item 3.vi on page 14 states that the proposal should include a logic model "as appropriate." Item 8 on page 16, however, requires a separate logic model and establishes a two-page limit. Please clarify whether the logic model is mandatory in all cases and whether it must be submitted only as the separate document required under Item 8 or must also be included within the ten-page proposal. If only the separate document is required, may the proposal briefly summarize and cross-reference it?** A: Applicants must submit a logic model as a separate document per Section D, Item 8. The applicant decides how best to give a "description of how the program is expected to work to solve the stated problem and achieve the goal" under Section D, Item 3.vi. Applicants may decide to use the logic model itself in the proposal, a written or graphical summary of it, or another method of providing the desired information.

**Q: Section D, Item 3.x on page 14 requires a Project Monitoring and Evaluation Plan within the ten-page proposal. Item 7 on pages 15–16 separately requires an RMP addressing methods, indicators, outputs, outcomes, definitions, targets, and the measurement of progress. What information must be included in the Monitoring and Evaluation section of the ten-page proposal, and what information may be provided exclusively in the separate RMP? May the proposal summarize and cross-reference the more detailed RMP?** A: The Project Monitoring and Evaluation Plan of Section D, Item 3.x must cover how the activities will be monitored to ensure they are happening in a timely manner, and how the program will be evaluated to make sure it is meeting the goals of the grant. The RMP describes how the project will assess progress towards objectives and summarizes performance indicators. The proposal may summarize and cross-reference the RMP, but the RMP might not include all information the applicant deems important to answer Section D, Item 3.x.

**Q: The APS states on page 16 that applicants developing or relying on digital tools must budget for an independent security audit or be prepared to demonstrate that one recently occurred. Page 17 subsequently states that applicants proposing to use existing or new web-based applications must budget for an independent IT security audit. May an applicant rely on a recent independent security audit of an existing platform instead of budgeting for a new audit? If so, what standards apply regarding the audit's recency, scope, independence, and required documentation?** A: The APS allows applicants to demonstrate that an audit "has recently occurred" instead of budgeting for a new one. For existing platforms, applicants should include "an assessment of their current security features, a discussion of anticipated enhancements, and a discussion of how security updates and patches will be managed" within the Security Plan. The APS does not specify fixed standards for recency, scope, or independence, applicants should use judgment to demonstrate the audit remains current and relevant.

**Q: Section D, page 12. As with tables and charts, please confirm that textboxes can use 10-point font.** A: As noted in Section D, diagrams, conceptual frameworks, and other visual representations may be treated as charts and are therefore acceptable for the 10-point format element. If the textboxes fall within the above noted categories, then these may be accepted under the 10-point font exception. However, if these are not for visual representation purposes then they must fall under the 12-point Times New Roman font requirement.

**Q: The APS requires applicants to share "information on all previous grants from the U.S. Embassy and/or U.S. government agencies" in the Introduction to the Organization or Individual applying section. As an organization with decades of experience implementing U.S. government programs, a comprehensive list of all previous grants/cooperative agreements would require a significant allocation of the 10-page limit. May applicants instead focus on the most relevant examples of grants in this section of the proposal?** A: Applicants are not required to list every previous U.S. Government award received in detail. An overview of previous funding and experience is sufficient, particularly where it demonstrates the organization's capacity to successfully implement the proposed program and its experience managing federal awards. Applicants should use their judgment to present this information within the page limitations established in the APS.

**Q: We have an SBA Economic Injury Disaster Loan (EIDL), and I would be grateful if you could clarify whether having an SBA EIDL would have any impact on eligibility for this funding opportunity.** A: Having a loan from the U.S. Government does not preclude an applicant from receiving an award under this APS. However, applicants with a current delinquent debt owed to the U.S. Government that renders them ineligible under 2 CFR Part 180 are not eligible to receive an award under this funding opportunity. Applicants are responsible for ensuring they meet all applicable eligibility requirements at the time of application and award.

**Q: Can we scale down the budget to request a smaller, more manageable grant amount rather than the full $25M cap?** A: The funding ceilings identified in the APS represent the maximum amount of funding available for each program area. Applicants may propose a budget that reflects their organizational capacity and project needs, provided the requested amount does not exceed the applicable funding ceiling. Applicants should refer to the APS for additional information regarding the applicable funding floors and ceilings.

**Q: Can implementation extend beyond formal schools to include refugee Community Learning Centers to ensure we reach the most vulnerable, crisis-affected learners?** A: While proposals may include components related to Egyptian communities hosting refugee populations, all proposals must address how Egypt and Egyptians will benefit from projects supported by U.S. economic assistance.

**Q: Can Egyptian ed-tech businesses be part of the consortium/project or does it have to be only American businesses?** A: Egyptian ed-tech businesses are eligible to apply as long as all noted eligibility criteria is met. However, proposals should prioritize U.S.-origin technology, platforms, and standards, and clearly demonstrate how the project advances U.S. commercial interests, consistent with the APS's overall preference for U.S. businesses and products.

**Q: The APS identifies Governmental Institutions as eligible applicants. Could you please confirm whether Egyptian government ministries and agencies may serve as implementing partners/sub-recipients under another US lead organization?** A: Yes, Egyptian government entities are eligible to serve as implementing partners and sub-recipients under a US prime recipient.

**Q: For projects involving partnerships between Egyptian government entities, private-sector organizations, and Egyptian stakeholders, are there any preferred consortium structures or eligibility considerations that applicants should be aware of?** A: The APS does not prescribe a specific consortium structure, applicants may design their own partnership model, provided it is clearly described under "Project Partners" (listing partner organizations, sub-awardees, and their roles) all partners: government, private sector, or civil society, must meet the same core eligibility and vetting requirements.

**Q: The APS notes that cost sharing is not required but may be favorably considered. Could you please clarify whether in-kind contributions from Egyptian government entities (e.g., staff time, facilities, data access, pilot sites, equipment, or technical resources) may be counted as allowable cost share, and whether there are any limitations applicable to governmental partners?** A: Applicants should distinguish between leveraging existing resources and partnerships and making a formal cost-sharing commitment under a Federal award. Leveraging existing resources, partnerships, facilities, expertise, or other organizational capabilities may demonstrate an organization's capacity to successfully implement the proposed project and may be viewed favorably as part of the holistic review described in Section F.1, Application Review Information, of the APS. These resources do not need to be proposed as formal cost share.

If an applicant chooses to propose formal cost sharing, whether in the form of cash or allowable third-party in-kind contributions, the proposed cost share becomes part of the award and is subject to the applicable Federal requirements for allowability, valuation, documentation, and monitoring. Requirements for cost sharing and matching are set forth in 2 CFR § 200.306 “Cost

Sharing or Matching." Applicants proposing formal cost sharing are responsible for ensuring that all proposed contributions meet these regulatory requirements.

**Q: For proposals under the Water Security program areas, would pilot implementation activities and demonstration sites associated with applied research and technology deployment be considered allowable components when combined with capacity building and institutional strengthening activities? The proposed project focuses on strategic water replenishment partnership for water sustainability projects in Egypt.** A: Yes, the Water Security program areas explicitly list pilot deployments and capacity building as illustrative activities, including "pilot deployments in partnership with Egyptian technical agencies, academic institutions, or private-sector partners to test and refine tools in real-world operational contexts" and "capacity building to support institutional uptake." Applicants should ensure their proposal clearly ties these activities to the applied research and technology deployment focus of the relevant program area.

**Q: Can we have other tabs in the Excel budget apart from the 2 specifically mentioned i.e., Summary and Detailed Budget? The other tabs will include the sub-award budgets and other supporting schedules. Please confirm.** A: Applicants may include additional tabs within the Excel budget workbook, such as subaward budgets or other supporting schedules, as appropriate. At a minimum, the workbook must include the required Summary and Detailed Budget worksheets described in the APS.

**Q: Section D.9 states that the Security Plan will "constitute part of the technical evaluation criteria," but the six scored categories in Section F.1 (Quality/Feasibility, Organizational Capacity, Program Planning, Budget, M&E, Sustainability) don't list security separately. Which scoring category does the Security Plan fall under, or is it scored independently?** A: The Security Plan is not scored as a separate, standalone category. It may fall primarily under "Quality and Feasibility of the Program Idea," given its focus on how activities will be safely and reliably carried out, but elements of the Security Plan may also be considered across multiple evaluation criteria at the reviewer's discretion.

**Q: Section I of the APS defines Equipment as property costing at least $10,000 per unit. Appendix 1's Detailed Budget Template labels Equipment as "> $5,000 per unit" and Supplies as "< $5,000 per unit." Could you confirm which threshold applies for this APS – $5,000 or $10,000 – so we classify line items consistently?** A: The applicable threshold for equipment is $10,000 per unit. Equipment is tangible personal property having a useful life of more than one year and a per-unit acquisition cost of $10,000 or more, consistent with the current definition of equipment in 2 CFR § 200.1. Items with a per-unit acquisition cost below $10,000 should be budgeted under the appropriate category, such as Supplies, as applicable.

**Q: We have a few questions regarding the application process, specifically how interagency applicants may proceed. We would also appreciate the opportunity to meet briefly with**

**NEA counterparts working on Egypt to discuss our initial ideas and confirm they align with NEA's interests for this APS.** A: All questions regarding the APS must be submitted to NEA-Grants@state.gov. Responses to applicant questions will be provided through publicly posted Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ) documents in order to provide all applicants with the same information.

**Q: Considering that "audit reports and findings" is part of the Risk Review, are applicants required to submit a copy of their most recent organizational audit? Or budgeting for it as mentioned on page 15 of the APS is all that is required.** A: Submission of an organization's most recent audit is not required as part of the proposal. Applicants should submit the required application materials described in the APS. The Department of State will request audit reports or other documentation related to audits and findings during award negotiations, prior to issuance of an award, for successful applicants.

**Q: As our team prepares an application for DFOP0018819, a question popped up regarding demonstrating collaboration efforts. In the NOFO, there are no mentions of Letters of Collaboration or Support from partners. Are these types of letters allowed?** A: Yes. While not required, applicants may include Letters of Collaboration or Support as an attachment to help demonstrate existing partnerships. These letters should supplement, not replace, the required "Project Partners" description in the proposal narrative.

**Q: What should applicants enter in the Federal Entity Identifier field on the SF-424 if they do not have a Federal Entity Identifier?** A: If you do not have a Federal Entity Identifier, you may leave this field blank.

**Q: What should applicants enter in the Federal Award Identifier field on the SF-424 for a new application if no previous Federal award has been issued?** A: Applicants may leave the Federal Award Identifier field blank if no previous Federal award has been issued.

**Q: If an application is submitted jointly with another organization, should the application and SF-424 identify both organizations or only the lead applicant?** A: The prime applicant should complete and submit the SF-424 and serve as the applicant/recipient. Any subrecipients or partners should be identified and described within the proposal, including their roles and responsibilities in implementing the proposed project. The prime applicant will be responsible for overall award management and compliance requirements if selected for an award.

**Q: May an Egyptian government agency serve as the principal Egyptian institutional partner and local implementing organization for a proposal led by a U.S. public university?** A: Yes. Egyptian government agencies are listed among eligible applicants/partners ("Public International Organizations and Governmental institutions") as principal institutional partners and local implementing organization. Please ensure to clearly describe the proposed partnership model under "Project Partners". All partners: government, private sector, or civil society, must meet the same core eligibility and vetting requirements.

**Q: May an Egyptian government agency participate as a subrecipient, implementing partner, or other formal project partner under the award?** A: Yes. Egyptian government agencies may participate in any of these roles, subject to standard eligibility screening (e.g., SAM.gov Excluded Parties List, vetting, etc). Please ensure to clearly describe the proposed partnership model under "Project Partners". All partners: government, private sector, or civil society, must meet the same core eligibility requirements.

**Q: Is an Egyptian university partner required, or could the proposal proceed with an Egyptian government agency as the primary or sole Egyptian institutional partner?** A: The type of partners will be dependent on the concept to which the applicant is responding. Higher Education activities, the Water Innovation Partnership, and the HPC Partnership's flagship tech hub all require an accredited academic institution partner. For other program areas, no university partner is required, and an Egyptian government agency may serve as the primary institutional partner.

**Q: Would partnership with a legally established Egyptian government agency help satisfy the requirement that the applicant be able to operate legally in Egypt, assuming the agency has the authority to conduct and support the proposed activities?** A: Partnership with an Egyptian government agency or entity may help demonstrate an applicant's ability to operate legally in Egypt, provided that the government agency has the appropriate authority to conduct and support the proposed activities. Applicants are responsible for ensuring compliance with all applicable local laws, regulations, and requirements related to implementation of the proposed project.

**Q: On pages 13 and 14, the NOFO lists the items in order (i. to xi.) to be included in the proposal. But the review criteria and points for each section found on pages 22 and 23 are not aligned with the order or content of NOFO items i. to ix. For example, on page 12, "ii. Introduction to the Organization" is listed after "i. Proposal Summary," whereas on page 22 in the review criteria "Organizational Capacity and Record on Previous Grants – 20 points" is listed after the "Quality and Feasibility of the Program Idea". Likewise, on page 14, "viii. Key Personnel" is not included as a review criterion unless it should be included as part of "Organizational Capacity and Record on Previous Grants – 20 points". Could you please help us reconcile these apparent misalignments?** A: The order in which proposal components are listed (Section D) does not need to match the order of the review criteria (Section F). Applicants should ensure all required components are addressed clearly and coherently; reviewers will apply the scoring criteria regardless of the sequence in which topics appear in the narrative.

**Q: Is a local entity required?** A: The APS does not require applicants to have or partner with a local Egyptian entity. However, all applicants, whether foreign or domestic, must be able to operate legally in Egypt to carry out proposed activities. Partnership with Egyptian entities can demonstrative ability to carry out programming.

**Q: How many partners are there for each award?** A: The APS does not set a fixed number of partners per award. The appropriate number and structure of partners depends on the specific project design, scope, and available funding, and should be determined by the applicant based on what is needed to achieve the proposed objectives.

**Q: There's an estimated award ceiling for each award. Is it for the whole duration of the program (12-36 months)? And are we sharing with other partners if there are more than one being awarded?** A: The estimated award ceiling listed under each program area represents the maximum amount available for a single award covering the full proposed period of performance (12–36 months). It is not an annual figure. Final award amounts will depend on availability of funding and the specific scope proposed. Each proposal is evaluated independently, and applicants should propose a budget and timeline that reflects the scope and needs of their own project.

**Q: For the K-12 education component, are applicants expected to independently identify and establish partnerships with Egyptian schools, education authorities, and relevant institutions, or will NEA/AC provide support in facilitating introductions to potential local partners?** A: Applicants are expected to independently identify and propose their own strategy for establishing partnerships with Egyptian schools, education authorities, and relevant institutions. Formal partnerships do not need to be secured prior to submission, but proposals should demonstrate existing relationships, networks, or a credible plan for building them. NEA/AC does not facilitate introductions to local partners during the application stage but may identify specific government partners during the award implementation or negotiation phase.

**Q: The APS emphasizes the use of U.S.-origin technologies and standards. Could you please clarify whether technology companies or platforms involved in the program are expected to be U.S.-registered or U.S.-origin companies, or whether there is flexibility to work with non-U.S. technology providers as long as the solutions align with U.S. standards and objectives?** A: There is no strict requirement that every technology company or platform be U.S.-registered. The key consideration is how the proposed technology advances U.S. commercial and strategic interests as described in the APS and per Executive Order 14320, including expanding U.S. exports, positioning U.S. businesses as preferred partners, and promoting U.S. technology standards. Applicants should clearly articulate the U.S. benefit of their proposed technology approach.

**Q: The APS refers to aligning with U.S. technologies, standards, and objectives. Could NEA/AC provide further guidance on how these terms should be interpreted or evaluated? For example, are there specific U.S. technical standards, cybersecurity frameworks, technology principles, or policy objectives that applicants should prioritize?** A: NEA/AC does not prescribe a specific list of technical standards or frameworks. Applicants are expected to bring their own technical expertise and propose the standards, platforms, and approaches best suited to achieving the concept's objectives, while clearly explaining how their approach benefits both Egypt and U.S. commercial and strategic interests.

**Q: The program emphasizes that participating startups should be built on U.S.-aligned technology platforms, standards, and technical practices. Could NEA/AC provide more guidance on how "U.S.-aligned" should be defined and evaluated?** A: NEA/AC does not prescribe a fixed definition or checklist for "U.S.-alignment." Applicants should propose the platforms and technical practices they consider most appropriate and clearly explain how their approach reflects U.S. technology standards and advances U.S. commercial interests, as this will be assessed as part of the merit review.

**Q: Regarding the target beneficiaries, should the program primarily focus on university spin-offs and research-based startups, or should it include broader early-stage Egyptian technology startups regardless of their origin?** A: The program area is not limited to university spin-offs or research-based startups. It targets "early-stage Egyptian technology startups" broadly. University collaboration is one illustrative activity, not a requirement that narrows the beneficiary pool.

**Q: The APS mentions collaboration with Egyptian universities and research institutions. Does NEA/AC expect applicants to establish these partnerships independently, or will there be recommended universities/research institutions that applicants can engage with?** A: Applicants are expected to independently identify and propose their own strategy for establishing partnerships with Egyptian schools, education authorities, and relevant institutions. Formal partnerships do not need to be secured prior to submission, but proposals should demonstrate existing relationships, networks, or a credible plan for building them. NEA/AC does not facilitate introductions to local partners during the application stage but may identify specific government partners during the award implementation or negotiation phase.

**Q: Regarding in-country registration, if awarded, may we start activities through locally registered partners while our registration process is completed?** A: Applicants are not required to have completed their own local registration prior to submission but must obtain all necessary registrations and legal authorizations before commencing project activities. Working through a locally registered Egyptian partner while your own registration is finalized may be a viable structure, however final determination for this approach will need to be approved by the Grants Officer prior to starting project activities.

**Q: On the SF-424, Field 18 "Estimated Funding", should the "Federal" amount entered here reflect the Year 1 requested amount only, or should it reflect the Grand Total/Lifetime Estimated Amount for the full 3-year project?** A: You should enter the amount requested, or to be contributed during the first funding/budget period by each contributor. Value of in-kind contributions should be included on appropriate lines, as applicable.

**Q: On the SF-424A, Section B “Budget Categories”, should the object class categories (Rows 6a–6k) reflect the Year 1 budget only, or should they reflect the Cumulative 3-Year Total?** A: The object class categories should reflect the total cost being requested for the full proposal. The amount should be consistent with the total funding requested in the application and detailed budget.

**Q: On the SF-424A, Section A “Budget Summary”, should we list each year on a separate row (e.g., Row 1 for Year 1, Row 2 for Year 2, Row 3 for Year 3), or combine them into a single line entry?** A: For a single proposed project, applicants should enter the total amount of funding requested for the full proposed period of performance as a single line in Section A of the SF-424A. Applicants should not enter each project year as a separate row. Year-by-year budget amounts should be provided in the detailed budget.

**Q: Can a US based prime contractor “A” subcontract a US based subcontractor “B” and that US based subcontractor “B” or its Egyptian registered affiliate contracts an Egyptian based NGO to implement project activities and/or deliver project services?** A: Applicants may propose subawardees or other implementing partners as appropriate. All proposed project activities must be conducted in accordance with all applicable Egyptian laws, regulations, and requirements. It is the responsibility of the applicant to ensure that its proposed implementation structure, including any subawardees, subcontractors, affiliates, or local partners, complies with all applicable legal and regulatory requirements.

**Q: USG funds formerly funneled through USAID enjoyed a favorable bilateral agreement with the Ministry of International Cooperation that allowed USAID awarded projects to register with local labor offices to hire employees, and open bank accounts based on a To Whom It May Concern letter from the project’s governmental counterpart. Would this APS use the same/similar bilateral agreement or different one because Egyptian taxes on USAID projects are different than on US contractors locally registered in Egypt. In the former you get a special treatment as a temporary USAID project with various tax exemptions, while in the latter you are an Egyptian registered company that completely falls under typical local tax laws.** A: The Department will work with applicants whose proposals are selected to move forward and provide appropriate guidance regarding applicable requirements and tax arrangements during the award process.

**Q: Can changes be made to Appendix 2 – Results Monitoring Plan? For example, can the proposals include additional sections that describe a holistic monitoring approach outside of performance indicator reference sheets (PIRS)? And can the evaluation section come before the project indicators to have all the narrative up front?** A: The Results Monitoring Plan template is highly recommended. Applicants are required to provide all information requested in the RMP. Applicants may outline their holistic monitoring and evaluation approach in Section D, Item 3.x of the proposal, “Project Monitoring and Evaluation Plan.”

**Q: DoS has updated its list of its Standard F Indicators, but has not included the excel spreadsheets that previously stated the precise definitions. Can applicants include the precise definitions from 2024, with the understanding that these will be revised upon award and with guidance from DoS?** A: F standard indicator definitions, which the Department sets, are undergoing their annual review and NEA/AC cannot provide up-to-date definitions at this time. In the "Definition" field of the RMP at this stage, applicants should enter "See F standard indicator definition. Content will be revised with update of F definitions." for F standard indicators. Should NEA/AC select the proposal for further negotiation, an NEA/AC MEL specialist will assist the applicant with refining the RMP and applying standard indicator definitions to the project. During implementation, RMPs should be updated when the Department revises standard indicator definitions.

**Q: In response to the Building an AI Workforce and Introducing EdTech in K-12 Schools track. One of the deliverables is "Providing education technology and AI-enabled tools for K-12 classrooms, with emphasis on English language learning, digital literacy, and foundational STEM skills." Is it required to deliver programs related to digital literacy, and foundational STEM skills using the English language only or is it required to teach English language courses and programs as a language teaching deliverable that is not related to digital literacy or STEM skills?** A: The APS does not mandate that digital literacy and STEM content be delivered exclusively in English, nor does it require a standalone English-language course unrelated to digital literacy/STEM. Applicants have flexibility to determine how English language learning is incorporated, whether integrated into digital literacy/STEM instruction, offered as a complementary component, or both, provided the approach supports the concept's overall objectives.

**Q: When you mention "Providing education technology and AI-enabled tools for K-12 classrooms" do you mean digital tools only or is it required a full hardware transformation for the schools for example: providing schools classrooms with smart boards etc.?** A: The APS does not require a full hardware overhaul of classrooms. Applicants have flexibility to propose the specific technology and tools, digital, hardware, or a combination that best achieve the concept's objectives around digital literacy and STEM readiness.

**Q: We are planning to team with an Egyptian University on a water program area, not the EdTech program area. Other than having a valid UEI, are there any limitations on working with an Egyptian University?** A: No additional limitations beyond noted standard eligibility requirements apply. The Egyptian university partner must be able to operate legally in Egypt, obtain a UEI (required before award/subaward processing), and pass standard screening (e.g., SAM.gov Excluded Parties List).

**Q: Is there a requirement for having U.S. personnel physically working in Egypt? If there are no U.S. personnel physically working in Egypt, is there still a requirement to file to operate legally in Egypt?** A: There is no requirement for U.S. personnel to be physically present in Egypt. However, implementing entities must be able to operate legally in Egypt. This requirement applies to the recipient as well as any subrecipients.

**Q: For applicants who do not currently maintain an operating presence in Egypt, will the U.S. Embassy or the Department of State provide assistance during grant startup in establishing an in-country implementing presence, including guidance on local registration, tax and customs treatment, and any applicable duty-free importation of grant-funded equipment and technology?** A: Applicants should plan to independently establish their in-country implementing presence and manage operational and compliance requirements. NEA/AC and the Embassy may be able to offer limited guidance and/or confirm information regarding our partners' work with the Government of Egypt, but applicants should be prepared with knowledge of Egypt NGO laws and ensure staffing capacity to navigate these procedures independently.