

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF STATE
Bureau of International Security and Nonproliferation, Office of Cooperative Threat
Reduction (ISN/CTR)
Notice of Funding Opportunity

Funding Opportunity Title: Counter Russian Malign Influence
Funding Opportunity Number: SFOP0008425
Deadline for Applications: January 31, 2022 11:59PM EST
CFDA Number: 19.033
Total Amount Available: \$ 4,000,000

A. PROGRAM DESCRIPTION

The Department of State's Bureau of International Security and Nonproliferation, Office of Cooperative Threat Reduction (ISN/CTR) is pleased to announce an open competition for assistance awards through this Notice of Funding Opportunity (NOFO). ISN/CTR sponsors foreign assistance activities funded by the Nonproliferation, Antiterrorism, Demining and Related Programs (NADR) account, and focuses on mitigating weapons of mass destruction (WMD), related delivery systems, and advanced conventional weapons proliferation and security threats from proliferator states and non-state actors.

Within ISN/CTR, the Special Projects (SP) Team raises foreign partner capacity to identify and respond to the Russian Government's active measures attacks that seek to undermine longstanding nonproliferation norms. The Russian Federation has a particularly notorious history of using WMD agents to target adversaries for assassination. This includes attempts to assassinate opposition politicians and defectors abroad. Additionally, Russia and Russian linked groups have conducted well-publicized malign cyber activities around the world, including attempts against international nonproliferation entities.

The assassination attempt against Sergei Skripal in Salisbury, U.K. in 2018 was particularly notable, because it involved the first known use of a Novichok nerve agent. Since then, the United States has concluded that FSB agents poisoned Aleksey Navalny using a Novichok group of agents, and only Russia has researched, developed, and used such chemical weapons. Recently, the United States and 44 other countries submitted questions to the Russian Federation regarding the poisoning of Mr. Aleksey Navalny on Russian soil last year. Addressing such threats are a significant international security priority, and vital to reinforcing longstanding nonproliferation norms.

The Russian Federation also engages in active measures campaigns that are designed to turn cooperative activities (especially in the public health fields) in partner countries into arenas of dispute among strategic competitors. During the COVID-19 pandemic, the Russian Government has expanded active measures efforts designed to undermine, politicize, and disrupt national WMD detection and analysis infrastructure, and nonproliferation norms.

Program Objectives: ISN/CTR seeks proposals that work with partner countries to counter Russian malign influence by:

- Building a fact-based, credible, and effective baseline of WMD detection and reporting;
- Increasing partner countries' ability to identify and respond to Russian Government active measures, including Russia's use of hard-to-detect WMD materials and incapacitating agents in targeted assassinations;
- Enhancing international awareness of the multitude and coordinated use of Russian Government active measures against nonproliferation entities;
- Enhancing partner capacity to strengthen nonproliferation norms and implement cybersecurity best practices in a hostile information environment;
- Strengthening public health infrastructure, nonproliferation cooperation, and regimes to respond to active measures campaigns; and
- Strengthening nonproliferation norms and developing an international community of experts to provide a cooperative response against Russian Government nonproliferation-related malign influence.

ISN/CTR Areas of Focus Related to Counter RMI:

1. **Counter WMD Assassination Training:** This area of focus will seek to enhance partner Government capacity to identify and respond to the Russian Government's use of WMD materials in assassinations – especially in a hostile information environment where disinformation attacks seek to undermine investigative efforts. ISN/CTR will raise the technical abilities of local law enforcement, scientific, laboratory, medical first responder, strategic messaging, and national security stakeholders in key frontline states to identify and respond to Russian Government assassination attempts where it is suspected that WMD material or incapacitating agents have been used. ISN/CTR will support efforts to develop and strengthen law enforcement and medical first responder standard operating procedures (SOPs) including symptom identification and medical countermeasures, to biomedical sample collection and evidence preservation. ISN/CTR will support efforts to test these SOPs through field and table-top training exercises (FTX and TTX) that address the full spectrum of the WMD assassination attack cycle, to include the use of disinformation and Information Communication Technology attacks to disrupt response efforts. Some of these interactive exercises will be aimed at the strategic and political decision makers, while others will be focused on supporting frontline law enforcement, security services, emergency management, and scientists who can disseminate factual and technical information. ISN/CTR's FY22 projects will:

- Sensitize first responder, public health, laboratory, security, and policy stakeholders to the growing threat of state-sponsored dissemination of hard-to-detect WMD agents in targeted assassination attempts by the Russian Government;
- Provide technical capabilities, including tactical exercises, TTX, and FTX, to first responders to identify potentially suspicious assassination attempts and to permit safe and secure sample collection in a potentially contaminated WMD environment;
- Develop and strengthen SOPs for law enforcement and security services to identify, respond, and investigate the use of WMD materials or incapacitating agents in assassinations by the Russian Government;
- Promote multi-disciplinary and inter-ministerial planning efforts to respond to a WMD assassination attempt by the Russian Government;

- Sensitize policymakers, law enforcement, Chemical Biological, Radiological and Nuclear (CBRN) defense, and private and public sector cyber security specialists on potential pre-attack indicators by the Russian Government, to include movement of persons, potential transportation and containerization methods, and cyber incursions to disrupt key systems;
- Train foreign partners to identify and respond effectively to potential disinformation campaigns and malicious cyber activity by the Russian Government seeking to undermine partner response efforts after a suspected WMD attack; and
- Promote regional and international coordination to ensure authoritative and robust response to future WMD attacks by the Russian Government.

Engagement countries: Bulgaria, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Estonia, Georgia, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Latvia, Lithuania, Montenegro, Romania, Serbia, Slovakia Slovenia, Turkey, Ukraine, Philippines, and Thailand.

2. Laboratory Capacity Building and Hardening: ISN/CTR will build and strengthen foreign scientific capacity to support law enforcement, first responders, and larger efforts to identify the dissemination of hard-to-detect and advanced WMD material by the Russian Government. ISN/CTR's FY22 efforts will:

- Support efforts by scientists from OPCW-designated laboratories, and other national scientific and investigative infrastructure, to increase the ability of partner laboratories in key frontline states to detect and report on WMD materials;
- Strengthen partner capabilities to understand the processes involved in seeking international assistance after a suspected WMD attack, to include training on methods to ensure sample preparation, preservation, and transfer to an OPCW technical assistance team;
- Host international workshops and perform individual laboratories engagements to raise awareness of Russian Government active measures and to adopt best practices and improve their physical, procedural, personnel, and cyber security;
- Provide expert advice, assistance in gap analysis, exercises, and capabilities that will allow partner laboratories and ministries to respond to Russian Government efforts to undermine the credibility of these laboratories; and
- Work with key laboratories and oversight officials in partner health, scientific, and interior ministries (e.g. the chemical and biological investigation infrastructure) to develop strong cyber incident response plans and strategic communication plans that identify and mitigate the impacts of Russian Government-backed hack-and-leak activities – which includes the timely dissemination of accurate information and reporting.

Engagement Countries: Armenia, Bulgaria, Estonia, Georgia, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Romania, Turkey, and Ukraine.

3. Strengthening Nonproliferation Norms: ISN/CTR will increase foreign Government and private sector support for nonproliferation norms, as well as the adoption of cybersecurity best practices. Previous programs engaged public health professionals on

COVID-19 disinformation and engaged chemical and biological security stakeholders on state actor use of chemical weapons. ISN/CTR's FY22 efforts will:

- Sensitize partner Government experts, think tanks, journalists, and professional societies to the current threats to nonproliferation norms and regimes and their potential impacts;
- Train partners to recognize and respond to disinformation campaigns and malign cyber activities that undermine nonproliferation regimes and norms;
- Engage international audiences through a variety of communications tools including publication micro grants, academic conferences, remote engagements, and others;
- Support detailed, tailored SOP development for frontline partners to identify and respond to Russian active measures campaigns;
- Partner with local organizations to sensitize partners to the human costs of previous Soviet WMD proliferation and current challenges within the Russian Federation; and
- Engage key global audiences with timely and accurate scientific information on WMD and nonproliferation threats.

Engagement Regions: Armenia, Bulgaria, Estonia, Georgia, Latvia, Lithuania, Ukraine, Indonesia, Malaysia, Philippines, Thailand, Vietnam, Kazakhstan, India, Pakistan, the Middle East and North Africa, Sub-Saharan Africa.

B. FEDERAL AWARD INFORMATION

Length of performance period: Twelve (12) Months

Award amounts: awards should range between \$50,000 to a maximum of \$500,000 per project

Total available funding: \$4,000,000

Type of Funding: FY22 Nonproliferation, Anti-Terrorism, Demining and Related Activities Funds under the Foreign Assistance Act.

Anticipated project start date: October 1, 2022

Funding Instrument Type: Cooperative agreement. Cooperative agreements are different from grants in that bureau staff are more actively involved in the grant implementation. The CTR office will play an active role in developing and shaping the materials developed and implemented during this award.

Project Performance Period: Proposed projects should be completed in 12 months or less.

This notice is subject to availability of funding.

C. ELIGIBILITY INFORMATION

1. Eligible Applicants

The following organizations are eligible to apply (both domestic and international):

- Not-for-profit organizations
- Public and private educational institutions
- For-profit organizations

- Federally funded research and development centers
- Public International Organizations

2. Cost Sharing or Matching

This program does not require cost sharing, however proposals that demonstrate cost sharing will be welcomed.

The recipient is required to maintain written records to support all allowable costs that are claimed as its contribution to cost share, as well as costs to be paid by the Federal Government . Such records are subject to audit. In the event the recipient does not meet the minimum amount of cost-sharing as stipulated in the recipient's budget, the Bureau's contribution may be reduced in proportion to the recipient's contribution.

3. Other Eligibility Requirements

In order to be eligible to receive an award, all organizations must have a unique entity identifier (Data Universal Numbering System/DUNS number from Dun & Bradstreet), as well as a valid registration on www.SAM.gov. Please see Section D.3 for information on how to obtain these registrations. Individuals are not required to have a unique entity identifier or be registered in SAM.gov.

Applicants are only allowed to submit one proposal per organization. If more than one proposal is submitted from an organization, all proposals from that institution will be considered ineligible for funding.

D. APPLICATION AND SUBMISSION INFORMATION

1. Address to Request Application Package

Application forms required below are available at grants.gov

Please follow all instructions below carefully. Proposals that do not meet the requirements of this announcement or fail to comply with the stated requirements will be ineligible.

2. Content of Application

Please ensure:

- The proposal clearly addresses the goals and objectives of this funding opportunity
- All documents are in English
- All budgets are in U.S. dollars
- All pages are numbered
- All documents are formatted to 8 ½ x 11 paper, and
- All Microsoft Word documents are single-spaced, 12 point Times New Roman font, with a minimum of 1-inch margins.

The following documents are **required**:

Section 1 - Application for Federal Assistance (SF-424):

This form is part of the NOFO proposal package.

Section 2 – Project Proposal(s):

Using the provided template, the applicant must provide a completed project proposal. The proposal form must be completed in its entirety and clearly specify the proposed scope, deliverables, and timeline. Applicants must specify a point of contact for each project that is proposed.

Section 3 - Budget:

Also using the provided project proposal template, applicants must provide a budget for each project. The budget must identify the total amount of funding requested, with a breakdown of amounts to be spent in the following budget categories:

Application Submission Process: Applicants should submit project proposals electronically using Grants.gov. Thorough instructions on the Grants.gov application process are available at <http://www.grants.gov>. For questions relating to Grants.gov, please call the Grants.gov Contact Center at 1-800-518-4726.

3. Required Registrations:

Any applicant listed on the Excluded Parties List System (EPLS) in the System for Award Management (SAM) is not eligible to apply for an assistance award in accordance with the OMB guidelines at 2 CFR 180 that implement Executive Orders 12549 (3 CFR, 1986 Comp., p. 189) and 12689 (3 CFR, 1989 Comp., p. 235), “Debarment and Suspension.” Additionally, no entity listed on the EPLS can participate in any activities under an award. All applicants are strongly encouraged to review the EPLS in SAM to ensure that no ineligible entity is included.

All organizations applying for grants (except individuals) must obtain these registrations. All are free of charge:

- Unique entity identifier from Dun & Bradstreet (DUNS number)
- NCAGE/CAGE code
- www.SAM.gov registration

Step 1: Apply for a DUNS number and an NCAGE number (these can be completed simultaneously)

DUNS application: Organizations must have a Data Universal Numbering System (DUNS) number from Dun & Bradstreet. If your organization does not have one already, you may obtain one by calling 1-866-705-5711 or visiting <http://fedgov.dnb.com/webform>

NCAGE application: Application page here:

<https://eportal.nspa.nato.int/AC135Public/scage/CageList.aspx>

Instructions for the NCAGE application process:

<https://eportal.nspa.nato.int/AC135Public/Docs/US%20Instructions%20for%20NSPA%20NCAGE.pdf>

For NCAGE help from within the U.S., call 1-888-227-2423

For NCAGE help from outside the U.S., call 1-269-961-7766
Email NCAGE@dliis.dla.mil for any problems in getting an NCAGE code.
Step 2: After receiving the NCAGE Code, proceed to register in SAM.gov by logging onto:
<https://www.sam.gov>. SAM registration must be renewed annually. Please note that your CCR registration must be annually renewed.

4. Submission Dates and Times

Applications must be submitted on or before January 31, 2022, 11:59 p.m. Eastern time. Applications submitted after 11:59 p.m. will be ineligible for consideration. Begin the application process early, as this will allow time to address any technical difficulties that may arise in advance of the deadline. There will be no exceptions to this application deadline.

5. Funding Restrictions

Of note, legal restrictions prevent ISN/CTR from providing assistance to Burma, China, Iran, North Korea, South Sudan, Sudan, and Syria.

6. Other Submission Requirements

All application materials must be submitted electronically through www.Grants.gov.

E. APPLICATION REVIEW INFORMATION

Applicants should note that the following criteria serve as a standard against which all project proposals will be evaluated and identify significant considerations that should be addressed in all proposals. ISN/CTR will award a cooperative agreement to the applicant(s) whose offer represents the best overall value to the Government from both a technical and cost perspective. ISN/CTR will evaluate proposals against the stated criteria. Criteria are listed in descending order of importance.

- **Proposed Activity or Activities:** Applicants should clearly describe what they propose to do and how they will do it. The proposed project(s) must directly relate to meeting the specified objectives and applicants should include specific information on how they will systematically meet ISN/CTR's global threat reduction mission. ISN/CTR will evaluate the project proposal in terms of how well it addresses the issues at hand, relevance and feasibility of the proposed activities, the timeline for completion, and the extent to which the impact of the project will continue beyond the conclusion of the period of performance.
- **Organizational Capability:** Applicants must demonstrate how their resources, capabilities, and experience will enable them to achieve the stated goals and objectives in an international technical context. The proposal(s) must identify all key partners and organizations that will be involved in implementation of this project including approaches to participant recruitment.

- **Budget:** Proposed costs will be evaluated for feasibility, fiscal control practices, and efficiency. ISN/CTR must be able to determine that proposed costs are reasonable, allowable, and allocable to the proposed project activities. ISN/CTR will evaluate the budget to determine if the overall costs are realistic for the work to be performed, if the costs reflect the applicant's understanding of the allowable cost principles established by 2CFR200, and if the costs are consistent with the program narrative.
- **Impactful and Measurable Engagements:** Although complex nonproliferation objectives demand persistent engagement with partner countries, discrete projects should individually advance progress toward a particular objective. Proposals should describe the end-state the project aims to achieve, along with specific, measurable, and realistic benchmarks by which to gauge progress toward that end-state. Compelling project proposals will establish milestones to be met during the training period, and describe observable progress in the adoption, implementation, or enhancement of nonproliferation or sanctions enforcement and compliance best practices
- **Diversity and Inclusion:** CTR values collaboration and promotes diversity, equity and inclusion with all stakeholders by creating an environment that is open to equal opportunities without regard to race, color, religion, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, national origin, protected veteran or disabled status. Implementers are welcome but not required to submit with their proposal a plan for how the implementer intends to further CTR's diversity, equity, inclusion, and accessibility (DEIA) objectives through their programming. Submitted plans will be evaluated separate to the overall evaluation of projects, to ensure that submissions with DEIA plans will not result in the higher evaluation of any proposal package over one that did not submit a DEIA plan.
- **Cyber Security:** Implementer shall be required to establish and follow policy and procedures for an effective implementation of security controls using NIST 800-53 (Rev. 4 or higher), System and Information Integrity Policy (SI-1) as follows:
 1. Identification and Authentication: Implement multifactor authentication for network access and local access.
 2. Access Controls: Implement security controls for information sharing, remote access and wireless access including:
 - a. Monitoring, controlling, and protecting remote and wireless access to information by auditing information systems components (e.g. workstations, notebook computers, smartphones, and tablets).
 3. Incident Handling: Monitor and report any and all security incidents including breaches to ISN/CTR directly within 48 hours of the incident and include a risk assessment of the security access controls.

F. FEDERAL AWARD ADMINISTRATION INFORMATION

1. Federal Award Notices

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

Anticipated Time to Award: Applicants should expect to be notified of the *recommended* concepts within 90 days after the submission deadline. Following this initial notification, **selected applicants will be expected to submit a full application within 30 days.** ISN/CTR staff will provide information at the point of notification about the requirements for the full application, which may include revisions to the activities. The full applications will not be subject to further competition, but must incorporate any suggested changes made by ISN/CTR. Issuance of this NOFO does not constitute an award commitment on the part of the Government, nor does it commit the Government to pay for costs incurred in the preparation and submission of proposals. Further, the Government reserves the right to reject any or all proposals received.

Project Implementation Meeting: The recipient should expect to have a pre-project implementation meeting with ISN/CTR within thirty days after the cooperative agreement is awarded and before any work is performed for the award.

2. Administrative and National Policy Requirements

Terms and Conditions: Before submitting an application, applicants should review all the terms and conditions and required certifications that will apply to this award, to ensure that they will be able to comply. These include: 2 CFR 200, 2 CFR 600, Certifications and Assurances, and the Department of State Standard Terms and Conditions.

3. Reporting

Reporting Requirements: As a cooperative agreement, reporting and deliverable requirements for this project exceed those of typical grants. Applicants should pay special attention to these enhanced reporting and deliverable requirements. Specifically:
Using a template provided by ISN/CTR, the Recipient shall submit quarterly progress reports to the designated Grants Officer Representative (GOR), program distribution list, and to the following email address ISN-CTR-BUDGET@state.gov detailing:

- Assistance activities conducted during the reporting period;

- Milestones and successes achieved to date;
- Key assistance activities remaining to be implemented with a projected timetable;
- Details of any problems encountered with proposed solutions; and
- Any other pertinent information requested by ISN/CTR.
- The Recipient shall provide the GOR with copies of all materials developed under this cooperative agreement.
- In addition to regular quarterly reports, the Recipient shall furnish the GOR with ad hoc reports as requested from time to time.
- In addition to the above, the Recipient shall submit quarterly financial reports throughout the project period. Financial reports are due 30 days after the reporting period. Final programmatic and financial reports are due 90 days after the close of the project period

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.

G. FEDERAL AWARDING AGENCY CONTACTS

If you have any programmatic questions about the grant application process, please contact:
CTRSpecialProjectsProposals@state.gov

For interagency agreement (IAA) submissions, directly submit application to the relevant program team and copy the budget team (ISN-CTR-BUDGET@state.gov).

Direct any NOFO submission (non-programmatic) questions to:
ISN-CTR-BUDGET@state.gov

H. OTHER INFORMATION

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 \$5,000 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 \$5,000 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.

Alcoholic Beverages: Please note that award funds cannot be used for alcoholic beverages.

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 10% of the modified total direct costs as defined in 2 CFR 200.68.

“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.