

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: FY21 Global Biosecurity Engagement Activities
Announcement Type: Cooperative Agreement – Initial
Funding Opportunity Number: SFOP0007376
Deadline for Applications: January 29, 2021
CFDA 19.033
Total Amount Available: \$14,000,000

A. PROGRAM DESCRIPTION

The Office of Cooperative Threat Reduction (CTR), part of the U.S. Department of State’s Bureau of International Security and Nonproliferation (ISN), sponsors foreign assistance activities funded by the Nonproliferation, Anti-terrorism, 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.

ISN/CTR administers the Biosecurity Engagement Program (BEP) as part of the Global Threat Reduction (GTR) portfolio. BEP’s national security mission is to mitigate global biological threats by minimizing the access of proliferator states and non-state actors to biological expertise, materials (e.g., high consequence pathogens (HCP), pathogens and toxins included on control lists such as the [U.S. Select Agent List](#), etc.), and dual-use equipment that could be misused to conduct biological weapons (BW) attacks against the United States, U.S. allies, or U.S. interests abroad. BEP’s efforts align with and help implement U.S. national security strategies, including the [U.S. National Security Strategy](#), the [U.S. National Biodefense Strategy](#), the [U.S. National Strategy for Countering WMD Terrorism](#), and the [U.S. Global Health Security Strategy](#), among others. An underlying aim of all of BEP’s efforts is long-term sustainability by which it can maximize programmatic impact while minimizing the need for foreign partners to rely on outside financial or technical assistance.

BEP programs along two major pillars to advance its biosecurity and nonproliferation goals that are distinguished primarily by the category of nefarious threat actor or concern against which projects and activities are designed and implemented. Pillar 1 focuses on the broad range of non-state actor threats, to include terrorists and other violent extremist organizations; “lone wolves,” disgruntled employees, or other unaffiliated actors (including hobbyists, do-it-yourself biologists, etc.); as well as accidental release or natural outbreaks of high consequence pathogens (HCP). Pillar 2 focuses on a more limited range of state actor threats, to include proliferator nation states.

Pillar 1: Denying Non-State Actors the Expertise, Materials, and Equipment Necessary to Conduct Biological Attacks, and Preventing and Mitigating Accidental and Natural Outbreaks of High Consequence Pathogens

In carrying out its counter non-state actor mission, BEP works to prevent illicit acquisition of weaponizable biological materials, such as HCPs or related equipment; detect and disrupt potential BW attack plots, with a focus on agents with the potential to cause mass casualties and readily manufactured crude or “low-effort” agents (e.g., ricin and other simple toxins); secure life science institutions and HCPs from insider or outsider threats; reduce the risk that scientists with dual-use expertise will misuse HCPs; and promote adoption of, and compliance with, international frameworks that advance U.S. biological nonproliferation objectives, including United Nations Security Council Resolution (UNSCR) 1540, the Biological and Toxins Weapons Convention (BWC), and the World Health Organization’s International Health Regulations, among others.

For fiscal year 2021, BEP’s Pillar 1 will support projects in three priority lines of effort:

- Countering Threats of Illicit Access to Weaponizable Biological Materials, Expertise, and Dual-Use Technology;
- Enhancing Safe and Secure Detection and Mitigation of Outbreaks Caused by Potentially Weaponizable and other High Consequence Pathogens; and
- Identifying and Disrupting Low-Effort Biological Attacks.

Pillar 2: Thwarting State Actors from Developing and/or Advancing BW Efforts by Safeguarding Advanced Bioscience Research Facilities and Preventing Access to BW-Applicable Knowledge, Materials, and Equipment

State actors may seek to acquire and leverage dual-use scientific expertise and a range of dangerous biological samples, including pathogenic agents, biotoxins, and related data, for BW purposes. Researchers and institutes of former state BW programs retain dual-use, BW-applicable expertise and tacit knowledge of HCPs and potentially weaponizable pathogens of interest to malign actors with potential BW aspirations. In addition, advanced government, academic, private, pharmaceutical, and biotechnology research entities conducting sophisticated and/or novel research with biological pathogens and/or biotoxins have expertise and access to BW-applicable research materials (e.g., sample collections) and information. These scientists and their research facilities are vulnerable to illicit or licit exploitation. Research data and samples may be acquired by insiders with legitimate access to facilities, through research collaboration including burden-sharing agreements, or through sample or data-sharing agreements. In addition to more established means of acquisition, state actors may seek to develop or leverage strategic investments or partnerships to subvert international biological treaties and norms, and exploit cybersecurity vulnerabilities which increase the exposure of digitized biological data (e.g., genetic information, etc.) and operating parameters to cyberattack.

For fiscal year 2021, BEP’s Pillar 2 will support projects in four priority lines of effort:

- Preventing state actors’ from recruiting or establishing research relationships with scientists who have BW-applicable biosciences expertise and/or access to relevant research samples or information;

- Securing research facilities, including high containment laboratories, toxin research facilities, and pharmacology institutes, including by countering cybersecurity information technology (IT)/operational technology (OT) threats;
- Building risk awareness and risk mitigation techniques related to bioscience-related partnerships with malign actors, including receiving laboratory infrastructure and other forms of biological capacity building assistance;
- Developing regional frameworks to strengthen safeguards and instill best practices for dual-use tacit knowledge and sample sharing and, as appropriate, equipment procurement.

Combined BEP Program Objectives

By the end of the award's period of performance, the recipient will have successfully developed and implemented a project or projects to advance BEP's mission by accomplishing at least one or more of the following goals:

- Preventing non-state or state actor acquisition of HCPs and other weaponizable biological materials, dual-use equipment, and/or scientific expertise;
- Securing life science institutions and HCPs from both insider and outsider threats;
- Assessing and disrupting emerging proliferation pathways related to biological material, dual-use equipment, or WMD-relevant expertise;
- Improving the detection, disruption, and attribution of biological attack plots, emphasizing those using crude or "low effort" agents such as toxins (e.g., ricin);
- Training foreign partners to identify and deter the use of clandestine BW laboratories by proliferator state and non-state actors;
- Enhancing partner capacity to safely and securely identify, control, and attribute outbreaks caused by HCPs;
- Partnering with non-scientific interlocutors such as policymakers, law enforcement, military, and diplomatic audiences to prevent biological attacks;
- Promoting the adoption of and compliance with international frameworks that advance U.S. biological nonproliferation objectives; and
- Identifying and/or disrupting efforts by proliferator states to subvert or evade international biological science treaties/norms through strategic investments or partnerships.

Combined BEP Program Funding Priorities

While global in scope, ISN/CTR focuses its resources in countries facing the greatest threats from proliferator states and non-state actors with the reasonable potential (e.g., absorptive capacity, diplomatic willingness, etc.) to successfully implement WMD and related delivery systems threat reduction activities. For fiscal year 2021, BEP's priority countries lie in the following geographic regions, as defined by the U.S. Department of State: [East Asia and Pacific \(EAP\)](#), [South and Central Asia \(SCA\)](#), [Sub-Saharan Africa \(AF\)](#), [Near East \(NEA\)](#), and [Europe and Eurasia \(EUR\)](#). Other countries or regions, such as the [Western Hemisphere \(WHA\)](#), will be considered provided a strong non-proliferation and threat reduction justification is supplied. Importantly, with extremely limited exceptions BEP will not provide foreign assistance to

[developed or high-income countries](#). BEP encourages applicants to submit proposals that advance the priority BEP pillars described above, and to explicitly note which specific line(s) of effort a proposed project seeks to advance. Projects engaging multiple countries through a regional approach, or are designed as a phased (not to exceed one calendar year) or iterative activity, are encouraged but not required. Recipients shall leverage relevant subject matter experts within the submitting organization or in partnership with other applicants to create, develop, and implement projects that advance the BEP mission.

B. FEDERAL AWARD INFORMATION

Length of performance period: 12 months

Number of awards anticipated: TBD (dependent on amounts)

Award amounts: ISN/CTR prefers projects that cost less than \$300,000 though awards may involve multiple projects that cumulatively exceed \$500,000. ISN/CTR will prioritize proposals that efficiently meet NOFO and programmatic goals at the lowest technically acceptable cost.

Total available funding: \$14,000,000

Type of Funding: FY21/22 Nonproliferation, Anti-Terrorism, Demining and Related Activities Funds under the Foreign Assistance Act

Anticipated project start date: October 1, 2021

Funding Instrument Type: Cooperative agreement. Cooperative agreements are different from grants in that bureau staff are more actively involved in the grant implementation.

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

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@dlis.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 29, 2020, 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.
- **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:** ISN/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.
- **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)), 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

For programmatic questions about this solicitation, contact:

Dr. Sapana Vora, Deputy Team Chief
Office of Cooperative Threat Reduction
U.S. Department of State
Email: VoraSR@state.gov
Phone: (202) 736-7216

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:

Office of Cooperative Threat Reduction Management & Special Projects Team
U.S. Department of State
Email: 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.

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.

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

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