UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF STATE
UNITED STATES EMBASSY ACCRA, GHANA
NOTICE OF FUNDING OPPORTUNITY (NOFO)

DOS-ACC-NOFO-2023-07
Training and Education to Increase Capacity for Peacebuilding and Conflict Resolution

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS 1-25
28 JUL 2023

Question 1: We are interested in exploring the possibility of our company's eligibility to apply. We are a private company XX. We strongly believe in the importance of promoting peacebuilding and conflict resolution, and we are eager to apply for your proposal. Given that the Training and Education program aligns closely with our mission and objectives, we kindly request your assistance in informing us if private companies in XX are eligible for this proposal?

Answer 1: For profit companies are not eligible under this Notice of Funding Opportunity. See Section **C.1 Eligible Applicants**.

Question 2: I am wondering about access to internet that 500 trainees will have in target communities of coastal West Africa. Will they have a way of viewing the menu of courses online? Via computer? Phone?

Answer 2: Per Section A. Project Description, "The online/hybrid course on conflict resolution will include 500 young community leaders with at least half from Ghana and the remainder from the other four countries specified. Recruitment should target regions and communities most vulnerable to conflict and instability but may include geographically diverse participants. The courses will be followed by interactive conversations via chat or social media platforms to form a network of similarly-minded individuals willing to develop activities or policies integrating course principles in their own institutions or communities. "

See **D.2.1 Application Requirements**, Section **5 Proposal Narrative** specifically **Project Activities** for guidance on inputs and ***2023 SOW - Ghana SPCPS*** as well as Tab 1 of ***Budget Guidance and Template for New Awards (FY2023)***, both provided as attachments to the NOFO, for more information.

Question 3: We are having difficulty downloading an application form. Please send us an application form by email.

Answer 3: You may also download the forms at https://gh.usembassy.gov/education-culture/public-affairs-small-grants/nofo-training-and-education-to-increase-capacity-for-peacebuilding-and-conflict-resolution/

Question 4: We want to know how many projects have been financed in each country, in particular Benin, within the framework of this financing opportunity?

Answer 4: This is a new project in this region. No projects have yet been approved. We anticipate making one award under this Notice of Funding Opportunity. **See Section 1. Project Description.**

Question 5: What is the minimum amount to be financed per project? And the maximum amount per project?

Answer 5: We anticipate making one award for up to $444,375. **See Section 1. Project Description:** "The U.S. Embassy in Accra, Ghana, through this Notice of Funding Opportunity (NOFO), announces an open competition for organizations to submit applications to carry out virtual and in-person peacebuilding and conflict resolution education programs in Benin, Cote d'Ivoire, Ghana, Guinea, and Togo. This program is in support of the U.S. Strategy to Prevent Conflict and Promote Stability, authorized by the Global Fragility Act. Overall, grant-making authority for this project is contained in the Foreign Assistance Act of 1961, as amended.

This program will engage early and mid-career professionals by offering a menu of virtual courses in English and French that include information adaptable to the range of countries and contexts. Central topics will include social cohesion, conflict resolution, media literacy and misinformation, engaging government from local to national level, and inclusivity. The online/hybrid course on conflict resolution will include 500 young community leaders with at least half from Ghana and the remainder from the other four countries specified. Recruitment should target regions and communities most vulnerable to conflict and instability but may include geographically diverse participants."

Question 6: how many beneficiaries does the project support per country apart from Ghana?

Answer 6: See Section 1. Project Description: "The online/hybrid course on conflict resolution will include 500 young community leaders with at least half from Ghana and the remainder from the other four countries specified."

Question 7: Is the reference to "early and mid-career professionals" in the NOFO limited to people who work for organizations or individuals directly involved in peacebuilding and conflict resolution, or can it also include people who have an interest in these fields but are not associated with any organization?

Answer 7: Yes. Participation would be open to youth, community leaders, and young professionals.

See Section A.2 Goals. Projects should reduce the risk of extremist violence by increasing capacity for youth, community leaders, and young professionals to resolve and de-escalate

community conflict through virtual and hybrid training and develop strategic plans and programs to support those aims.

Projects should be designed to achieve the following:

U.S. Embassy Policy/Program Objective: Enable Citizens to Reinforce Peaceful Communities. Provide peacebuilding and conflict resolution training to a minimum of 500 youth, community leaders, and young professionals, such that at least one-quarter of participants launch their own peacebuilding small-scale projects within a 12-month time period following the training.

Question 8: With respect to the goal to have at least one-quarter of participants launch their own peacebuilding small-scale projects within a year after the training, will these peacebuilding projects be implemented under a new award, and does DoS have any particular priorities for these projects that we should take into account when designing the training?

Answer 8: Funding for small-scale projects is not part of this NOFO. Small-scale projects should complement the content of the training.

Question 9: Regarding the distribution of participants from Ghana and the other specified countries, is it required to include representatives from each of the remaining countries (Benin, Cote d'Ivoire, Guinea, and Togo) as part of the other half of participants, or is it left to the discretion of the applicant to determine the composition of participants from these countries?

Answer 9: Fifty percent of participants should come from Ghana with the remainder from the four countries specified. There are no per-country requirements beyond this but all countries should be represented. **See Section 1. Project Description.**

Question 10: Is there a specific requirement about where the in-person training should take place? Should it be in one of the countries mentioned in the NOFO (Benin, Cote d'Ivoire, Ghana, Guinea, or Togo) or do we have the flexibility to consider other locations, such as the United States?

Answer 10: Yes. All training is intended to take place in the five target countries, whether delivered online or in person.

Question 11: Given the very busy summer proposal season, would it be possible to extend the deadline by one week?

Answer 11: We are not able to extend the published deadline.

Question 12: The NOFO provides competing guidance regarding possession of a UEI. Are we correct to assume the prime should hold a UEI at the time of submission but that local sub-grantees are not required to hold a UEI in order to be included in the application?

Answer 13: Applicants that do not have a valid UEI and SAM.gov registration will not be eligible for consideration. Sub-recipients must have a valid UEI number in order to receive a sub-award. See C.3 Other Eligibility Criteria. Please also see *D.3.1 Exemptions.*

Questions 13: Would an extension to submit by 11:59pm EST August 6, 2023 be possible to allow work over the weekend if necessary?

Answer 13: We are not able to extend the published deadline.

Question 14: The NOFO refers to a "menu of virtual courses." A menu implies that students/learners will have choices. Do you envision a core course on conflict resolution tools and skills that is required of all 500 community leaders, with another suite of courses in which they will choose, say, 2 or 3? Or do you envision that all students/learners will be required to engage with the same course content?

Answer 14: The menu of virtual courses and modules would be adaptable to countries and contexts. We do not have a requirement that all participants complete every module. **See Section 1. Project Description.**

Question 15: The central topics that you envision—social cohesion, media literacy and misinformation, engaging government from local to national level, and inclusivity—are critical themes that are to be infused in the courses but are not expected to be separate courses or even separate modules. Is that correct?

Answer 15: These are central topics that should be included in the content. We do not have specific requirements to dedicate a course or module to each topic. **See Section 1. Project Description**: Central topics will include social cohesion, conflict resolution, media literacy and misinformation, engaging government from local to national level, and inclusivity.

Question 16: What are your expectations for the "hybrid" components of the course? For 500 students, we envision the possibility of "live" webinars with guest presenters and/or panel discussions.

Answer 16: We envision that some elements may be delivered in-person, some completely online, or a hybrid setup. We do not have a specific requirement for each method of delivery.

Question 17: Is it your expectation that the courses will be used as a means to assess which 60 of the 500 participants will be asked to join the training and networking opportunity? It is our intention to create a few different means of student evaluation in order to make such a determination.

Answer 17: Yes, course participation should be an element of the selection. See Section A.3 Expected Results: 60 high-performing participants are selected for further in-person engagement, education, and practical training.

Question 18: How do you envision the delivery of the content in both English and French? Do you expect the content to be the same for each language, or could the two versions vary slightly from each other? Will translations of video clips or subtitles be acceptable?

Answer 18: We expect the content to be available in English and French. Small content variations between languages would be acceptable.

Question 19: Do you have a preferred length (in terms of time for completion) for the on-line course content?

Answer 19: We do not have a preferred length. All courses would need to be completed before the end of the performance period, 12-18 months.

Question 20: The NOFO refers to the target students/participants as "early and mid-career professionals" and then as "500 young community leaders"? How much emphasis are you putting on "mid-career professionals?" What kind of balance between youth (considered to be under 35) and those with more experience do you envision? At another point, there seems to be a distinction between "youth, community leaders, and young professionals." If so, what do you envision as the proper balance between "community leaders" and "young professionals?"

See Answer 7 above. Participation would be open to youth, community leaders, and young professionals.

Questions 21: In addition, what kind of professions would you like to include? It is our experience that those who are engaged in professions beyond what is normally considered the "peace and conflict" field have much to contribute to the learning process and to the other students. And, they often can make a difference in their respective professions by bringing a peace and conflict lens to their work.

Answer 21: Participation would be open to youth, community leaders, and young professionals. There is no stated preference for their individual professions.

Question 22: Will the US Embassy in Ghana want to be engaged in the selection process either for the initial cohort of 500 or the 60 to be chosen for the training and networking; and will the American embassies in the other 4 target countries want to contribute to the recruitment/selection process?

Answer 22: As the award instrument is expected to be a Cooperative Agreement, the Embassies in each country would be involved in the selection process.

Question 23: At the beginning of the initial recruitment process, do you wish to publicize from the beginning the fact that some students/participants will then be asked to be part of an in-person training

and networking opportunity? The benefit of doing so would be to incentivize participation and engagement with the curriculum and course content; the drawback would be that it could make the learning process competitive and less collaborative.

Answer 23: As the award instrument is expected to be a Cooperative Agreement, U.S. Embassy will collaborate with the selected implementer.

Question 24: The need for contingency plans and the risk analysis seems fairly straightforward, as is the IT and communications security concerns. What are your expectations of a plan with respect to "in-person events and recruitment for said events?" Is a plan that demonstrates awareness and analysis of potential risks and proposes ways to mitigate the risks sufficient, or do you expect a plan that discusses the provision of actual security measures in order to ensure the physical safety of participants?

Answer 24: See D.2.1 Application Requirements, Section # 16 Security Plan. Address any issues involving in-person events and recruitment for said events, and safety for any online programs or communications, including independent IT security audits (to include a vulnerability assessment) of any proposed web application or platform.

Question 25: Do you also need a plan for how we and local partners will vet potential recruitees in order to ensure that undesirable elements cannot access the course and networks or is it sufficient to acknowledge that we will work with existing vetting mechanisms (terrorist watch list, Leahy vetting, etc.) in the recruitment process?

Answer 25: The NOFO does not require that for the application process.