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Bureau of Near Eastern Affairs
Office of Assistance Coordination
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Promoting Economic Opportunity in the Western Sahara
Opportunity Number: *SFOP0005099*

Key Information:

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Application Deadline:	7/3/2018
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Funding Opportunity Synopsis

The residents of the Western Sahara face economic challenges such as an undeveloped economy and limited opportunities for employment. The economy of the Western Sahara is largely dependent on the established sectors of agriculture, fisheries, and phosphate mining, leaving limited opportunities for private sector growth; meanwhile, the lack of resolution to the political situation has complicated the efforts of some exporters and foreign investors. The World Statistics Pocketbook cited vastly disproportionate labor participation rates between men and women in 2017. According to one official estimate, the unemployment rate in the Western Sahara was 16.5% in 2015. Despite these statistics, detailed and independent socioeconomic data on the Western Sahara is lacking or unavailable, limiting the ability to conduct targeted interventions and initiatives.

This funding opportunity aims to support activities to improve inclusive, locally-oriented economic and livelihood opportunities in the Western Sahara focused on women and youth. To do so, the activities will employ targeted economic development and job creation initiatives that are informed by the availability of improved socioeconomic data and policy analyses. Activities will focus on identifying existing opportunities within the local economy, including small and medium enterprises providing goods and services for local communities. Working in partnership with economic and local stakeholders, the activities will undertake the following: 1) conduct research, surveys, and data collection on constraints to local economic development in the Western Sahara; 2) complete an analysis of the data and needs assessment to identify gaps, opportunities, and recommendations for inclusive local private sector growth, including identifying sectors with existing or strong potential employment opportunities; and 3) implement a data-driven, action-oriented pilot project informed by the research that will address identified constraints to development and employment in one or more promising sectors.

Success will be measured by the project's ability to increase knowledge of and access to independent and up-to-date socioeconomic data for the Western Sahara, and by the successful implementation of a pilot project that addresses identified needs and promotes inclusive local economic growth and livelihoods in the private sector. Where appropriate, findings and recommendations from the project will be shared with U.S. government and economic stakeholders, civil society actors, municipalities, and businesses to inform future decision-making.

The project directly supports the Middle East Partnership Initiative's (MEPI) strategic objective of bolstering social entrepreneurship initiatives that develop, fund, and implement innovative solutions. The project also supports MEPI's Strategic Framework to promote economic growth through increasing women's participation in economic activities and reducing the gender income and employment gap. Gender integration methodology will be taken into account during the project design.

Eligible Geographic Areas

In this announcement, we seek to support projects in ***the Western Sahara, specifically Dakhla, Laayoune, and the surrounding areas.*** Please note: Applications that focus on activities in cities and territories other than those listed will NOT be considered.

All applications must be submitted in English. Applicants may submit only 1 application. Complete information on how applicants can submit proposals for this opportunity can be found in Section VI below.

Background Information about NEA/AC

The U.S. Department of State's Bureau of Near Eastern Affairs, Office of Assistance Coordination (NEA/AC) offers Economic Support Fund (ESF) assistance to groups and individuals striving to bring about positive change in the Middle East-North Africa region. The Assistance Coordination Office works in 20 countries and territories, partnering with governments, civil society organizations (CSOs), community leaders, youth and women activists and private sector groups to advance their efforts. Competitively selected projects aim to foster participatory governance, economic reform, and educational advancement in response to local interest and needs.

Table of Contents

I.	FUNDING OPPORTUNITY DESCRIPTION	5
A.	PROBLEM STATEMENT	5
B.	ACHIEVABLE OBJECTIVES.....	6
C.	PROJECT DESIGN.....	6
D.	DEFINITIONS.....	7
II.	MEASUREMENT OF RESULTS	7
III.	AWARD INFORMATION	8
IV.	SUBSTANTIAL INVOLVEMENT.....	- 8 -
V.	ELIGIBILITY INFORMATION	- 9 -
A.	ELIGIBLE APPLICANTS	- 9 -
B.	REGISTRATION REQUIREMENTS	- 10 -
C.	ADDITIONAL ELIGIBILITY CONSIDERATIONS	- 11 -
VI.	APPLICATION AND SUBMISSION INFORMATION	11
A.	APPLICATION DOCUMENTS.....	11
B.	APPLICATION FORMATTING REQUIREMENTS	14
C.	SUBMITTING AN APPLICATION.....	14
D.	SUBMISSION DATES AND TIMES.....	15
VII.	FUNDING LIMITATIONS, RESTRICTIONS, AND OTHER CONSIDERATIONS	15
VIII.	APPLICATION REVIEW AND SELECTION PROCESS.....	16
A.	APPLICATION EVALUATION CRITERIA.....	17
B.	REVIEW AND SELECTION PROCESS	18
IX.	ADMINISTRATION INFORMATION.....	19
A.	AWARD NOTICES	19
B.	REPORTING REQUIREMENTS	19
C.	TRAVEL NOTIFICATIONS	20
D.	BRANDING AND MARKING REQUIREMENTS FOR GRANTEEES	20
E.	UEI NUMBER REQUIREMENT FOR SUB AWARDEES	20
F.	SUB AWARDEE REPORTING REQUIREMENT	20
X.	AGENCY CONTACTS.....	20
XI.	DISCLAIMER.....	21

APPENDICES (*Posted with NOFO*)

APPENDIX 1— Budget Sample Template and Budget Narrative Guidance

APPENDIX 2— Logic Model Template

APPENDIX 3— Application Guidance

I. FUNDING OPPORTUNITY DESCRIPTION

The Bureau of Near Eastern Affairs' Office of Assistance Coordination's (NEA/AC) Middle East Partnership Initiative (MEPI) seeks proposals that support inclusive economic growth in the Western Sahara by improving local economic opportunities within the private sector and among women and youth. Detailed socioeconomic data on the Western Sahara, however, is lacking or unavailable, limiting the ability to conduct targeted interventions and initiatives. Thus, proposals should offer a phased approach to programming to include: 1) conducting research of constraints to local economic development in the Western Sahara that will serve as a baseline for economic data (with special attention to disaggregating these data by youth and women); 2) completing a formative assessment on the data and findings, which offers recommendations for targeted interventions to develop existing or high-potential local economic opportunities; and 3) developing and implementing a data-driven, action-oriented pilot project that bolsters inclusive private sector economic opportunity by addressing some of the identified constraints to development of one or more promising sectors, or filling existing high-demand local jobs. The project must be scalable and replicable should additional funding become available.

Applications must clearly and succinctly outline a detailed plan for how each activity will be completed, how information will be collected and analyzed, and how information will be strategically shared with stakeholders. Applications must demonstrate a strong capacity to establish local partnerships and work with businesses, think tanks, civil society, municipalities, key stakeholders, etc. on the ground.

Projects in this opportunity are intended to support local small and medium enterprises outside of established sectors.

A. PROBLEM STATEMENT

The residents of the Western Sahara face economic challenges such as an undeveloped economy and limited opportunities for employment. The economy of the Western Sahara is largely dependent on the established sectors of agriculture, fisheries, and phosphate mining, leaving limited opportunities for private sector growth; meanwhile, the lack of resolution to the political situation has complicated the efforts of some exporters and foreign investors. The World Statistics Pocketbook cited vastly disproportionate labor participation rates between men and women in 2017. According to one official estimate, the unemployment rate in the Western Sahara was 16.5% in 2015. Despite these statistics, detailed and independent socioeconomic data on the Western Sahara is lacking or unavailable, limiting the ability to conduct targeted interventions and initiatives.

While some macro-level statistics exist, detailed and independent economic data on the territory's business environment, availability of inclusive employment opportunities, and projections for the territory's economic growth is largely unknown, unavailable, or out of date. Independent and up-to-date socioeconomic data is needed to develop targeted economic initiatives that are responsive to the needs on the ground.

B. ACHIEVABLE OBJECTIVES

MEPI invites applications that focus on private-sector growth in the Western Sahara by increasing knowledge of the socioeconomic conditions and creating opportunities for inclusive local economic growth. Proposals should offer innovative and strategic ways to collect and analyze socioeconomic data in the Western Sahara and a targeted pilot project that can be used to shape targeted initiatives and interventions.

A successful project will result in:

1. U.S. government and economic stakeholders' increased knowledge of, and access to, reliable and up-to-date data on constraints to local economic development the Western Sahara.
2. A formative analysis and assessment of opportunities for local economic development, including recommendations for economic initiatives and interventions at the macro and/or micro levels.
3. A data-driven, action-oriented pilot project that targets an identified constraint to economic development and serves to broadly or directly support inclusive private sector economic growth and opportunity in local communities.

C. PROJECT DESIGN

MEPI seeks proposals that can provide a comprehensive analysis and assessment of socioeconomic data and conditions in the territory followed by a data-driven, pilot project informed by the initial findings.

Project activities ***should*** include:

- a. Data collection of micro- and macro-level socioeconomic conditions in the Western Sahara to include surveys as needed.
- b. Analysis of socioeconomic conditions in the Western Sahara to include gaps, opportunities, and recommendations for economic interventions and initiatives at all levels, including a focus on women and youth.
- c. Development and implementation of an outreach/communications plan to share findings and recommendations with relevant economic stakeholders, academics, civil society, municipalities, etc.
- d. Execution of a pilot project to address one or more identified constraints to inclusive private-sector economic growth and employment outside of the established sectors.

Note: MEPI recognizes that the pilot project will be informed by the data collected and assessment completed, and therefore does not require applicants to propose a specific project idea at this time. However, applications **must** include an implementation plan for the undertaking of a project within the first year of the award period in their proposal. The implementation plan should detail how the applicant will conduct stakeholder engagement and buy-in, secure local partnerships, and conduct results-driven monitoring and evaluation. Applicants **must** also include examples and outcomes of successful local economic growth projects implemented previously.

Project beneficiaries ***should*** include:

- a. Economic stakeholders
- b. Private sector businesses
- c. Women and youth

Note: Applicants should read this NOFO in its entirety before writing their proposal, and should **refer to the full Evaluation Criteria provided in [Section VII](#)** while drafting all materials.

The following activities and costs are **NOT ALLOWED** under this announcement:

- Exchange activities with other countries or territories;
- Social welfare projects: Paying to complete activities begun with other funds;
- Activities that appear partisan or that support individual or party electoral campaigns;
- One-time events, such as stand-alone conferences and one-off round tables;
- Medical and psychological research and clinical studies;
- Projects of a commercial or profit making nature;
- Cultural presentations, cultural research, cultural clubs, or festivals, etc. and Entertainment costs (e.g., receptions, social activities, ceremonies, alcoholic beverages, guided tours).

NOTE: Applications that include any of these activities or costs above may be eliminated at the Technical Eligibility Review stage and will not advance to the Merit Review Panel.

D. DEFINITIONS

The following are **definitions** accepted under this announcement:

Economic Stakeholders

Economic stakeholders include local governments, public and private sector leaders and employees, entrepreneurs, civil society organizations, universities, and other representatives that contribute to the development and growth of economies.

Inclusive

For the purposes of this NOFO, “inclusive” refers to the inclusion and participation of women and youth specifically, but may also include other underrepresented or disenfranchised populations.

II. MEASUREMENT OF RESULTS

Applicants shall provide a logic model or a theory of change to demonstrate how the proposed project (including activities, the project design, and the surrounding context) will achieve the stated objectives. The logic model or theory of change statements can be generated using the template in Appendix II.

Successful applicants will work with the NEA/AC program and monitoring and evaluation (M&E) teams to create a plan based on the proposed logic model/theory of change to measure

qualitative and quantitative indicators as part of the award negotiations process. The successful applicants will be responsible for collecting data against these indicators, which will be monitored throughout the period of performance of the award to gauge necessary modifications to the project's design, and assess the results of the project's success in meeting expected outcomes.

III. AWARD INFORMATION

Funding Mechanism Type:	Cooperative Agreement
Estimated Number of Awards:	1
Estimated Total Program Funding:	\$1,000,000
Estimated Award Ceiling:	\$1,000,000
Estimated Award Floor:	\$500,000
Cost-Sharing or Matching:	Encouraged; NOT Required
Estimated Length of Project Period:	1-3 years

Contingent on the availability of funds, approximately \$1,000,000 in Economic Support Funds for approximately 1 award will be awarded through this announcement. If selected to receive an award, an applicant will be awarded funds for up to 3 years, depending on the activities and countries proposed. The estimated start date for this project is October 1, 2018. NEA/AC reserves the right to award more or less than the estimated program funding, and reserves the right to award funding under this announcement for a period of up to two years after the announcement's close date.

This request for full applications **does not** constitute an award or commitment on the part of the U.S. government to make any awards, **nor does it commit the U.S. government to pay for costs incurred in the preparation and submission of an application.**

IV. SUBSTANTIAL INVOLVEMENT

NEA/AC shall be involved in the program and management performance of these cooperative agreements through consultation and technical collaboration on specified program activities.

NEA/AC Responsibilities

Examples of NEA/AC responsibilities for a cooperative agreement may include:

- Collaboration in establishing annual program objectives and approval of an annual work plan;
- Collaboration in development of methodology such as surveys and questionnaires;
- Approval of information sharing plans;
- Approval of training materials;

- Collaboration on/approval of pilot project design; and/or
- Provision of Government resources or logistical support for the project.

V. ELIGIBILITY INFORMATION

All applicants will be screened by NEA/AC to determine whether they meet all of the program eligibility requirements detailed below.

NOTE: Applications that do not demonstrate that they meet all of the eligibility requirements in Section A and Section B will not advance past the Technical Eligibility Review stage and may be deemed ineligible for funding under this announcement. Nothing can be added to an application once the competition deadline has passed.

A. ELIGIBLE APPLICANTS

Eligible applicants include:

- U.S. or foreign
 - o Non-profit organizations;
 - o For-profit organizations;
 - o Private institutions of higher education;
 - o Public or state institutions of higher education; and/or
 - o Public international organizations or intergovernmental organizations.

NEA/AC strongly encourages applications from organizations headquartered in the Middle East and North Africa region (MENA). International non-governmental organizations with principal bases of operations outside the Middle East and North Africa are also encouraged to apply, **but the percentage of total budget actually spent in the region through local partners will be among the elements of evaluation for this competition.**

NEA/AC is committed to an anti-discrimination policy in all of its programs and activities. NEA/AC welcomes applications irrespective of an applicants' race, ethnicity, color, creed, national origin, gender, sexual orientation, or disability. We encourage applications from organizations working with underserved communities, including women, people with disabilities, and youth.

A.1. Prime Applicant

To be considered for funding under this opportunity, applicants SHALL:

- Have demonstrable previous experience collecting socioeconomic data and implementing economic and/or business reform projects in the MENA region. This should be addressed within the project narrative section of your application.
- Meet ALL of the registration requirements listed in *Section F* below.
- Meet any requirements listed as MANDATORY in *Section G, Additional Eligibility Considerations*, below.

A.2. Local Partners

Applicants are strongly encouraged to submit projects that include partnerships with local organizations that would work together on specific programmatic objectives or priorities and that utilize local expertise. **In particular, NEA/AC strongly encourages applicants not based in the MENA region to partner with local organizations**

B. REGISTRATION REQUIREMENTS

To apply for NEA/AC (Federal) funding, organizations, whether based in or outside the U.S., must have a Unique Entity Identifier (UEI) number, currently referred to as a DUNS number, and an active account with the System for Award Management (SAM). Applicants who do not meet all registration requirements are NOT eligible for funding under the opportunity. Local Partners receiving a subaward must at a minimum have an UEI.

UEI Number

The UEI number is a nine-digit number established and assigned by Dun and Bradstreet, Inc. (D&B) to uniquely identify business entities.

All applicants must have a UEI number. To obtain a UEI number, please follow the steps below:

Go to <http://fedgov.dnb.com/webform/pages/CCRSearch.jsp>.

Select the country or territory where your organization is physically located. Complete and submit the form. Organizations will need to provide basic information, including physical and mailing addresses, name and title of the chief executive, primary [Standard Industrial Code](#) (SIC), and annual revenue.

For technical difficulties in obtaining this number, please contact D&B at: govt@dnb.com.

System for Award Management (SAM)

SAM is a U.S. government wide registry of vendors doing business with the Federal government and requires annual renewal. The system centralizes information about grant applicants/recipients, and provides a central location for grant applicants/recipients to change organizational information.

Further, applicants must maintain an active account, with current information, while its application is under consideration for funding. To keep an active SAM.gov account, applicants must renew it at least once each year. **If an organizations account expires, the organization cannot submit a grant application until it is renewed.**

To create a new account, please follow the steps below:

Go to <http://www.sam.gov>.

Select *Create User Account*, and then select *Create an Account* on the left-hand side of the screen under *Individual Account Details*. Organizations must have a UEI number and a CAGE number (US Domestic Organizations) or a NCAGE number (Foreign Organizations), to create an account.

Complete and submit the online form. If the applying organization already has the necessary information on hand (see the [SAM User Guide](#)), the online form takes approximately one hour to complete, depending upon the size and complexity of the applying entity. Because of the different steps in the process, it might take anywhere from **three to fourteen business days** to complete the process of creating an account with the system.

For help with SAM.gov, please visit their support page at <https://www.fsd.gov> or contact them at: 001-334-206-7828.

C. ADDITIONAL ELIGIBILITY CONSIDERATIONS

Cost-Sharing or Matching

There is no minimum or maximum percentage required for this competition. However, NEA/AC encourages applicants to provide maximum levels of cost sharing and funding in support of its programs.

Cost-sharing or matching is NOT an evaluation criteria of this NOFO.

VI. APPLICATION AND SUBMISSION INFORMATION

A. APPLICATION DOCUMENTS

All applications must include the application components detailed below. **All application documents must be submitted in English.** Applicants may submit only 1 application. Please refer to Section B below for additional submissions guidance and requirements.

NOTE: Applications that do not include all the required documentation described in Section 1 below will not advance past the Technical Eligibility Review state. Further, applications that exceed the allowable page limits will not be reviewed by the review panel. **Applicants may not add any materials to an application once it has been submitted and the competition deadline has passed.**

A.1. Required Documents

Federal Assistance Application Forms (SF-424, SF424a, and SF-424b):

Applicants must complete all three forms online to be considered for funding. **Guidance on how to complete the SF-424 and SF424a is provided in Appendix 3.** **NOTE: In addition to following all guidance outlines below regarding application materials, applicants are strongly encourage to review the [Application Evaluation Criteria section](#) of this NOFO closely as they prepare their proposal. The Evaluation Criteria section is the rubric by which each application will be scored.**

Project Narrative:

The Project Narrative describes the efforts the applicant will undertake to address the priorities and goals of this announcement. It may **be no longer than 15 pages**. More details on preparing

the Project Narrative are provided in Appendix 3. **Applicants are strong encouraged to review Appendix 3 before preparing their Narrative.**

Budget & Budget Narrative Submission:

Applicants must provide the following three elements as part of their budget submission:

- Summary Budget
- Detailed Line Item Budget
- Budget Narrative

*Budget documents for one year are required as well as notional budget documents for out years two and three.

There is no page limit for this section of an application. A sample fillable template can be found in Appendix 1. This template includes three tabs: The first tab includes written guidance on preparing the **Budget Narrative**. Applicants are strongly encouraged to create their Budget Narrative in Word and submit as either a Word Doc or PDF file. Please note that the Budget Narrative should include designations of who is considered Key Personnel for this project. The second tab has the template for the **Summary Budget**. This tab will auto-fill as you complete the Detailed Line Item Budget, which can be found on the third tab. The third tab is where you can fill in the template for the **Detailed Line Item Budget** as stated above. **NOTE: Applicants are strongly encouraged to use the same format as provided in the template, and to submit summary and detailed line item budgets in Excel form, and the Budget Narrative as either a PDF or Word file.** If the applicant does not use the template, the applicant must ensure that their submission includes all elements outlined in the sample. The template, which includes more detailed instruction, can be found in Appendix 1. **Applicants are strongly encouraged to review Appendix 1 before preparing their Narrative.**

Logic Model:

Applicants shall provide a logic model to demonstrate how the proposed project (including activities, the project design, and the surrounding context) will achieve the stated objectives. The logic model statements can be generated using the template in **Appendix 2**. **NOTE: Applicants are strongly encouraged to use the same format as found in the sample.** If the applicant does not use the template, the applicant must ensure that their submission includes all elements outlined in the sample. This section **may be no longer than 3 pages.**

Project Timeline:

Applicants must provide an overall breakdown of the order and timeframe in which all project activities will take place. This item should provide a macro snapshot of what will take place from beginning to end of the project. Applicants must ensure that the timeline of activities/events corresponds with details provided in the Project Narrative and RMP. Applicants are strongly encouraged to use the template provided in **Appendix 4**. If the applicant does not use the template, the applicant must ensure that their submission includes all elements outlined in the sample. Please note that additional guidance on this item is also included in Appendix 4. This section **may not exceed 2 pages.**

Implementation Plan:

The implementation plan should detail how the applicant will conduct stakeholder engagement and buy-in, secure local partnerships, and conduct results-driven monitoring and evaluation. Applicants **must** also include examples and outcomes of successful local economic growth projects implemented previously.

Job Descriptions / Biographical Info for Key Personnel Positions:

For each position designated as key personnel for this project, applicants must provide the following:

1. If the position is already filled: Provide brief biographical information summarizing the person's qualifications, as well as a brief description of the roles or responsibilities pertaining to this project.

OR

2. If the person to fill a key position has not yet been hired: Provide a brief summary of the job description, which should include a description of the roles and responsibilities pertaining to this project, as well as a description of qualifications of eligible candidates.

For information on both vacant positions and already hired personnel, applicants are strongly encouraged to use the template provided in **Appendix 5**. If the applicant does not use the template, the applicant must ensure that their submission includes all elements outlined in the sample. **NOTE:** If an applicant is proposing sub grant partner(s) as part of their project design, **Key Personnel/Positions of the sub grantee must also be included.** This section of the application **may not exceed 5 pages.**

Negotiated Indirect Cost Rate Agreement: **NOTE: This item is required only IF applicable.**

Applicants proposing indirect costs in the Budget greater than the 10% de minimis must provide a copy of their Negotiated Indirect Cost Rate Agreement (NICRA). This item will not be counted toward any page limits.

A.2. Optional Documents

Applicants may submit additional documents for consideration with their application. These documents are not required and there is a 10 page limit for this section of the application. Below are examples of some additional documents an applicant may wish to submit.

1. **Letters of Agreement or Letters of Intent:** Applicants proposing partner organizations and/or government bodies should include Letters of Intent or Letters of Agreement from their proposed partners.
2. **Organizational Chart:** The organizational chart outlines the clear lines of responsibility and authority in the applicant organization to include budgeted level of effort listed by each person.
3. **Outreach/Communications Plan:** The sustainability plan outlines how the proposed project will be sustained beyond the initial award period. More information on preparing the Sustainability Plan is provided in **Appendix 3**. Sustainability Plans may not exceed **2 pages.**

4. **Security, Risk Mitigation, & Contingency Planning Summary:** This item should provide detail regarding the applicant's intended due diligence to assess and mitigate risks, and put in place adequate security measures to ensure the safety and well-being of project staff, participants, and partners, if applicable. This should include specific actions by the applicant to ensure risks are adequately and routinely assessed, and that security measures are commensurate with operational concerns specific to the locale. The applicant should also include a contingency plan that highlights potential challenges and limitations to project implementation in the operating environment and propose contingency plans should program activities be impacted. Please note that this section should not be limited to physical security and risk but should cover any applicable factors relevant to the given operating environment. More details about how to complete this item may be found in **Appendix 6**. Applicants are strongly encouraged to use the template provided in Appendix 6. If the applicant does not use the template, the applicant must ensure that their submission includes all elements outlined in the sample. This section **may not exceed 5 pages**.

NOTE: Applicants must adhere to all maximum allowed page counts. Applications that exceed any of the allowable page limits will not advance past the Technical Eligibility Review stage.

B. APPLICATION FORMATTING REQUIREMENTS

The required font is 12-point, Times New Roman. All application documents must be single spaced, with all margins (left, right, top, and bottom) of at least one inch each. Also, applicants should ensure all pages in the application package are numbered consecutively and meet the page limit requirements outlined in [Section A.1](#) and [A.2](#) above. **The Standard Forms 424 (SF-424, SF-424a, and SF-424b) are excluded from the page numbering.**

It is strongly recommended that applicants submit grant applications using Microsoft Office. If applicants do not have access to Microsoft Office products, Adobe PDF files may be submitted.

C. SUBMITTING AN APPLICATION

Applicants must submit their application electronically using either [Grants.gov](#) OR [SAMS Domestic](#). Both systems require that the applying organization have an account with the system and both require a UEI number and SAM.gov account as detailed in [B.3](#) above. **It is the responsibility of the applicant to ensure they have an active account and will be able to submit its application. Applicants must select one of these systems to submit their application; do not submit an application through both systems.** NEA/AC is not in a position to grant exceptions to these requirements.

The application process is not complete until the applicant receives notification that its application has been validated and forwarded to the granting agency (NEA/AC). Please allow sufficient time for entering the application into these systems. It is the responsibility

of the applicant to monitor its application to ensure that it is successfully received and validated.

C.1. Grants.gov

Grants.gov is a single portal for applicants to find and apply to U.S. government funding opportunities. Creating an account with this system is a five-step process: 1) obtain a UEI number; 2) create an account with the System for Award Management; 3) create a profile, including username and password; 4) obtain Authorized Organization Representative (AOR) authorization; and 5) track AOR status. This process can take 10 business days or longer, even if all the steps are completed in a timely manner. **To create an account, go to www.grants.gov and click on the “Register” link, located at the top, right-hand side of the page.**

C.2. SAMS Domestic

SAMS Domestic is a comprehensive grants management system that allows applicants to apply for, manage, and report on the use of U.S. government funds for multiple programs, accessed online at mygrants.service-now.com.

To create an account, go to <http://mygrants.service-now.com>, and click the “create an account” hyperlink, located above the user name prompt. Users will be directed to a page entitled “User Registration Request;” complete the online form and click the “Submit” button. Users will receive an activation email entitled “Verify Your Grants Account Registration;” click the activation link within the email to receive a username and password.

SAMS Domestic has Quick Tours available to educate users about the system. These documents can be found on the Support tab upon logging into the system.

D. SUBMISSION DATES AND TIMES

Applications must be time stamped before 17:00:00 eastern time (ET) on 7/3/2018 There will be no grace period, and any application not received by the application deadline will be deemed ineligible and will not advance to be reviewed. **Applicants are encouraged to submit an application far enough in advance of the deadline so it can alert NEA/AC (nea-grants@state.gov) of any technical difficulties and allow sufficient time to resolve difficulties before the deadline.** Although NEA/AC will work with applicants to resolve technical issues, it is not in a position to grant exceptions to the submission requirements outlined in this announcement.

VII. FUNDING LIMITATIONS, RESTRICTIONS, AND OTHER CONSIDERATIONS

A. Awards to Commercial Firms or For-Profit Organizations

The Department of State prohibits profit under its assistance awards to commercial organizations. No funds will be paid as profit to any recipient that is a commercial organization. Profit is defined as any amount in excess of allowable direct and indirect costs. The allowability

of costs incurred by commercial organizations is determined in accordance with the provisions of the Federal Acquisition Regulation (FAR) at 48 CFR Part 31. Program income earned by the recipient may be:

- added to the total of the amount of this award, including the required cost sharing or matching, and use it to further eligible project objectives;
- used to meet the Recipient's cost sharing or matching requirement;
- OR deducted from the total project or program allowable cost in determining the net allowable costs on which the federal share of costs is based.

B. Audit Requirements

Domestic and foreign organizations that expend \$750,000 or more in a fiscal year in federal assistance must perform an independent, recipient-contracted Single Audit or Program Specific Audit. (***Program-specific Audit*** means an audit of one Federal award program. ***Single Audit*** means an audit which includes both the entity's financial statements and the Federal Awards to be conducted in accordance with Generally Accepted Government Auditing Standards (GAGAS). The audits must be independently and professionally executed in accordance with GAGAS either prescribed by a government's Supreme Audit Institution with auditing standards approved by the Comptroller General of the United States, or the host country's laws or adopted by the host country's public accountants or associations of public accountants, together with generally accepted international auditing standards. However, foreign entity audits consistent with International Standards for Auditing or other auditing standards are acceptable with the Grants Officer's approval. More information can be found at <http://gao.gov/assets/590/587281.pdf>

For sub-non-Federal entities expending \$750,000 or more in Department of State award funding during their fiscal year, Department of State standard audit provisions require that Prime non-Federal entities certify that audits of sub-non-Federal entities are performed annually and according to the standards described above. The cost of audits required under this policy may be charged either as an allowable direct cost to the award, OR included in the organizations established indirect costs in the award's detailed budget.

C. Compliance with Applicable Federal Funding Regulations and DOS Terms and Conditions

Payment of funds awarded under this Notice of Funding Opportunity will not be disbursed until the DOS has been assured that the Recipient's financial management system will provide effective control over and accountability for all Federal funds in accordance with [2 CFR 200](#) and [2 CFR 600](#) as applicable. Awards issued under this NOFO are subject to the [Department of State Standard Terms and Conditions](#) and [2 CFR 200](#) and [2 CFR 600](#) as applicable.

VIII. APPLICATION REVIEW AND SELECTION PROCESS

A. APPLICATION EVALUATION CRITERIA

Achievable Objectives (30 points)

Each of the project objectives listed above (in Section I) are clearly addressed.

- Impact and Effectiveness: The applicant describes the project's potential contribution to solving the problem addressed in the problem statement and achieving results.
- Timeframe: The applicant describes realistic results to be accomplished within the timeframe of the proposed award.
- Beneficiaries: The applicant clearly identifies the anticipated beneficiaries and explains how the project's objectives will positively affect them.
- Milestones: The applicant provides realistic milestones to indicate progress toward goals and objectives as described in the program announcement.
- M&E: The applicant explains how monitoring and evaluation activities will be carried out throughout the award's period of performance and who will be responsible for them.

Project Design (40 points)

The applicant clearly describes how each proposed project activity will address each of the objectives outlined in the requested priority area above (Section I).

- Responsiveness to NOFO: Explain how the proposed activities respond to the objectives listed in the NOFO.
- Rationale: To justify how the proposed activities will achieve the above objectives in this context.
- Project Management: Clear description of how the project will be managed in terms of initiation, planning, implementation and closing.
- Partnerships and Buy-ins: The applicant addresses how the project will engage or obtain support from relevant stakeholders and identifies local partners.
- Feasibility: The applicant proposes activities that are feasible, and are also practical, and/or experiential in nature to encourage innovation.
- Beneficiaries Selection Criteria and Process: The applicant explains how participants will be selected (e.g., criteria for selection, selection process).
- Duplication: The applicant acknowledges if activities similar to those proposed are already taking or have taken place previously, and provides an explanation as to how proposed new activities will not duplicate or merely add to existing/recent activities.
- Division of Labor: The application describes the division of labor among the applicant and any partners.
- Program Logic: Is it theoretically sound? Do all elements of the logic model fit together showing plausible pathways to achieving project outcomes? Have all the key assumptions been identified and their potential influences described? Are the risks to implementation (external factors) fully accounted for and described?

Organizational Capacity (20 points)

- The applicant demonstrates experience (e.g., has previously worked and/or has established contacts/partners) in the proposed country/territory/region.
- The applicant demonstrates an institutional record of successful programs in the content area proposed (e.g., socioeconomic data collection, economic programming, etc.).

- The applicant demonstrates capacity for responsible fiscal management of donor funding (e.g., successful management of a previous sub-award or grant).
- The applicant demonstrates the ability to meet monitoring and evaluation requirements.
- The applicant has adequate staffing and demonstrates the capacity to manage the proposed project.

Staff and Position Specifications (10 points)

- Pre-identified key staff members, including volunteers, demonstrate experience working in the country/territory/region proposed and with participants from that area (e.g., language skills, cultural understanding).
- A description of the roles of each person or position on the project, whether staff, partner, consultant, or volunteer demonstrates that the project will be adequately but efficiently staffed, avoiding redundancy or duplication of effort.
- A job description, including hiring criteria, is provided for each open key position.
- Pre-identified key staff members, including volunteers, demonstrate experience and knowledge in the proposed content area.
- Applicant and/or partner staff have relevant language competencies.

Budget & Budget Narrative (Acceptable or Not Acceptable)

- The costs proposed are reasonable in relation to the proposed activities and anticipated results, which are clearly explained in the budget narrative.
- The budget provides details of calculations, including estimation methods, quantities, unit costs, and other similar quantitative detail sufficient for the calculation to be duplicated.
- The preponderance of the budget is spent on supporting the project participants/activities in country.
- The budget includes costs dedicated to management, monitoring, and evaluation.
- Adequate travel costs are proposed.
- The budget demonstrates a reasonable cost per participant.
- The budget accounts for monitoring and evaluation costs.

B. REVIEW AND SELECTION PROCESS

NEA/AC is committed to ensuring a competitive and standardized process for awarding funding. Applications will be screened initially in a Technical Eligibility Review stage to determine whether applicants meet the eligibility requirements outlined in [Part V](#) and have submitted all required documents outlined in [Part VI](#). Applications that do not meet these requirements will not advance beyond the Technical Eligibility Review stage and will be deemed ineligible for funding under this NOFO.

NEA/AC reserves the right to have all applications deemed to be eligible undergo a Subject Matter Expert (SME) review prior to the Merit Review Panel. Applications that do not pass SME review will not proceed to the Merit Review Panel.

All applications that proceed to the Merit Review Panel will be evaluated by U.S. government and non-governmental subject matter and/or country-specific experts and will be rated on a 100-point scale. Point values for individual elements of the application are presented in [Part VII, Section A](#). Panel Reviewers' ratings, and any resulting recommendations, are advisory.

Final award decisions will be influenced by whether the application meets NEA/AC's programmatic goals and objectives, how it supports the Department's overarching foreign policy priorities, and the geographic distribution of the top-ranking applications.

IX. ADMINISTRATION INFORMATION

A. AWARD NOTICES

Applicants who do not advance beyond the Technical Eligibility Review stage will be notified 30 business days after the closing of the announcement. The authorized representative and program point of contact listed on the SF-424 will receive the notification via email. If an applicant does not receive such a notification, their submission was put forward for review.

NEA/AC expects to notify applicants who proceeded past the Technical Eligibility Review stage about the status of their application by October 1, 2018. Final awards cannot be made until funds have been appropriated by Congress, allocated and committed through internal bureau procedures. Successful applicants will receive a Federal Assistance Award (FAA) from the bureau's Grants Office. The FAA and the original proposal with subsequent modifications (if applicable) shall be the only binding authorizing document between the recipient and the U.S. Government. The FAA will be signed by an authorized Grants Officer, and transmitted to the recipient's responsible officer identified in the application. NEA/AC reserves the right to award funding to applicants under this announcement for a period of up to two years after the announcement's close date.

B. REPORTING REQUIREMENTS

Reporting is critical to effective program management and oversight. Reports are required as a means of evaluating the recipient's progress and utilization of resources. They are divided between a performance progress report and a financial status report.

Recipients will, at a minimum, be required to submit Quarterly Performance Reports (QPR) and a Quarterly Financial Report (QFR). The QPRs will compare actual to planned performance and indicates the progress made in accomplishing each assistance award tasks/goals noted in the grant agreement and will contain analysis and summary of findings, both quantitative and qualitative, for key indicators. The QFRs provide a means of monitoring expenditures and comparing costs incurred with progress.

Recipients must report ***immediately*** when a program faces unplanned delays in implementation, fails to meet program targets or milestones, or costs increase. Any changes or revisions to the approved budget require prior approval from the NEA/AC Grants Officer.

Recipients are required to report program and beneficiary achievements on a quarterly basis (or provide written confirmation that there is no related news for the given quarter) beginning with second quarter's program report.

C. TRAVEL NOTIFICATIONS

Selected applicants will be required to provide prior notification of all international travel as a requirement of their agreement. This includes travel which is already included in the approved budget and Scope of Work. The purpose of this notification is to enable NEA/AC to inform the relevant U.S. Embassy or post of the recipient's intent to travel. The recipient must notify the Grants Officer at least three (3) business days prior to any travel. The Grants Officer reserves the right to advise against specific travel arrangements for security-related reasons.

D. BRANDING AND MARKING REQUIREMENTS FOR GRANTEES

Grantees awarded under this announcement will be required to make all materials produced under the award with the standard U.S. flag in a size and prominence equal to (or greater than) any other logo or identity. Materials are defined as but not limited to: training materials, materials for recipients, or materials to communicate or promote with foreign audiences a program, event, project, or some other activity under this award, including but not limited to invitations to events, press materials, event backdrops, podium signs, etc. In addition, sub-recipients or sub-awardees are subject to the marking requirements and the grantee shall include a provision in the sub-recipient or sub-awardee's agreement indicating that the standard, rectangular U.S. flag is a requirement. **Exceptions to this requirement can be discussed with NEA/AC when negotiating an award.**

E. UEI NUMBER REQUIREMENT FOR SUB AWARDEES

All sub-awardees are required to have a UEI number. For information on obtaining a UEI number, please see Part III, Section B.1. **Proposed sub-awardees are not required to have a UEI number prior to the submission of an application but must have one prior to a sub-award being issued.**

F. SUB AWARDEE REPORTING REQUIREMENT

Grantees awarded under this announcement will be required to report all sub-awardees receiving funds of \$25,000 or more to <http://www.fsrs.gov>. More information about this requirement can be found at this site.

X. AGENCY CONTACTS

For questions regarding this funding opportunity including: completing an application, financial and grants management issues, or technical matters, contact:

Program Specialist

Ayhan Ucok

nea-grants@state.gov

All questions must be submitted in writing to nea-grants@state.gov by **June 05, 2018** at 17:00:00 eastern time (ET). NEA/AC will create a document of the submitted questions along with the answers and post it on [SAMS Domestic](#) and Grants.gov. Questions submitted after the deadline will not be addressed.

The intent to apply is a notification to the Bureau of Near East Affairs Office of Assistance Coordination via email expressing the intent to submit a proposal under this announcement. The notification does not require any specific format or template, and unless specifically indicated, the notification is not mandatory.

The intent to apply is optional and will not be binding.

For questions regarding creating an account with or using grants.gov to submit an application, contact the grants.gov Contact Center. The Contact Center is available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, excluding Federal holidays.

Grants.gov Contact Center

(800) 518-4726

support@Grants.gov

For questions regarding creating an account or using [SAMS Domestic](#) to submit an application, contact the ILMS Help Desk. The Help Desk is available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, excluding Federal holidays. The ILMS Help Desk utilizes a user-facing ticketing interface that allows users to submit and monitor their SAMS Domestic tickets. The ILMS Self Service Portal can be accessed by going to <https://afsitsm.service-now.com/ilms/home>.

ILMS Help Desk

(888) 313-ILMS (4567)

[ILMS Self Service Portal](#)

XI. DISCLAIMER

The terms and conditions published in this NOFO are binding and may not be modified by any Bureau representative. Explanatory information provided by the bureau that contradicts public language will not be binding. Issuance of the NOFO does not constitute an award commitment on the part of the U.S. government. The Bureau reserves the right to reduce, revise, or increase proposal budgets in accordance with the needs of the program and the availability of funds. Awards made will be subject to periodic reporting and evaluation requirements listed in this NOFO.