Funding Opportunity Title: FY24 EB ITSI Programs Vietnam – Statements of Interest
Funding Opportunity Number: DFOP0016759
Deadline for Applications: 15 September 2024, at 11:59pm EDT
Assistance Listing Number: 19.322
Deadline for Receipt of Questions: August 2, 2024, 11:59pm EDT
Submission to: EB-ITSI Grants at eb-itsi-grants@state.gov

Question 1: Can applications be submitted on Grants.gov or via email?

Answer: Applications can be submitted via email to EB-ITSI-Grants@state.gov. Submissions must reference the funding opportunity number DFOP0016759 in the subject line. Please see the "Related Documents" tab for attached submission instructions.

Question 2: Are commercial entities eligible to apply? Is it possible for semiconductor companies to submit SOIs for this solicitation?

Answer: Yes. For-profit entities are eligible to apply under this announcement. Please visit the Grants Eligibility page on Grants.gov for more information on different eligibility categories. https://www.grants.gov/learn-grants/grant-eligibility.html

Question 3: Is cost share required and if yes, what is the percentage of cost share.

Answer: Cost share is not required under this solicitation.

Question 4: Can text boxes can be 10-point font?

Answer: All documents must be single-spaced, 12-point Times New Roman font, with 1-inch margins. Captions and footnotes may be 10-point Times New Roman font. Font sizes in charts and tables can be reformatted to fit within one page width.

Question 5: Can hyperlinks be included throughout the statement of interest - either in the main text or in the footnotes?

Answer: No. SOIs must be no more than three (3) pages and may not include links to other documents or resources.

Question 6: Is the length of the SOI three (3) pages for both categories combined, or three (3) pages for each category?

Answer: This solicitation includes multiple categories under which applicants may submit a SOI. Organizations may submit no more than one (1) SOI per category. Each SOI must be no more than three (3) pages.

Question 7: Is there a budget template we can use? What budget categories are allowable?

Answer: Please use the budget categories below:
Personnel

Fringe Benefits
Travel
Equipment
Supplies
Contractual
Other Direct Costs
Total Direct Costs
Total Indirect Costs
U.S. Share of Costs
Recipient Share of Costs

The summary budget must show the total program cost broken down by cost category. There is no required template for the SOI. The summary budget must show the total program cost broken down by cost category. A specific template will be required if the applicant is later invited to submit a full proposal following panel review.

Question 8: Is there a tentative start date for budgetary purposes?

Answer: EB anticipates the award period of performance beginning in January 2025, but final start dates are subject to change. Per the review and selection process outlined in the solicitation, a Grants Review Committee will evaluate all eligible SOIs, and any successful SOI applicants will be invited to submit full applications through a limited competition. This will be followed by another independent panel review and vote to recommend funding. Final funding decisions, including the number of awards, will depend on panel recommendations and final determination by the Grants Officer as well as be subject to availability of funds. See the "Related Documents" tab in the solicitation for attached detailed background, illustrative activities, evaluation criteria, and submission instructions.

Question 9: Is it permissible to submit an application that focuses solely on one of the categories of activities (i.e., Policy and Regulatory Reform) or must all categories be addressed within a single proposal?

Answer: Each SOI must be specific to one category. This solicitation includes multiple categories under which applicants may submit a SOI. Organizations may submit no more than one (1) SOI per category. The applicant must explicitly identify the category for each SOI submitted. If a SOI may fit within more than one category, the organization must explicitly identify which category they determine is the best fit for the work proposed. If a SOI does not explicitly identify one of the below categories on the first page of the SOI, it may be deemed technically ineligible and may not be forwarded to the review panel for consideration.

Question 10: Are there any specific guidelines or considerations that we should take into account when preparing our submission? Especially considering that content requirements for the submission demand some aspects related to the education category.

Answer: See the "Related Documents" tab in the solicitation for attached detailed background, illustrative activities, evaluation criteria, and submission instructions.

Question 11: Is it possible to participate as a Consortium or Joint Venture (JV)? Can several companies or a combination of educational institutions can apply jointly?

Answer: It is possible to participate as a Consortium or JV. Organizations part of the Consortium/JV must be eligible under the categories outlined in the RSOI and may only submit one joint SOI per category.

Question 12: Do SOIs need to include the same elements, regardless of whether it is a SOI for Workforce Development (Category 1) or Policy and Regulatory Reform (Category 2)?

Answer: Complete SOI submissions must follow the same requirements as outlined in the solicitation. Please see the "Related Documents" tab in the solicitation for attached detailed background, illustrative activities, evaluation criteria, and submission instructions.

Question 13: Understanding that it is possible to submit multiple SOIs, one per category, will there be a grant awarded per category?

Answer: A Grants Review Committee will evaluate all eligible SOIs. Following the review, any successful SOI applicants will be contacted and instructed to expand on their ideas and submit full applications for grants or cooperative agreements through a limited competition. This will be followed by another independent panel review and vote to recommend funding. Final funding decisions, including the number of awards, will depend on panel recommendations and final determination by the Grants Officer as well as be subject to availability of funds.

Question 14: Is the award floor and ceiling the total amount of the award for all SOI categories to be divided between them or is it the floor and ceiling amount for each of them? If the award floor and ceiling is the total amount of the award for all SOI categories, will the total amount be divided equally among all categories or under what criteria would it be divided?

Answer: The listed award floor and ceiling is per SOI. Each SOI per category may include a budget within the floor and ceiling range.

Question 15: Regarding “Record on Previous USG Federal Assistance Awards” – all federal grant awards count or only those from the State Department?

Answer: This includes experience with all USG federal assistance, including, but not limited to, the U.S. Department of State.

Question 16: Is the entity submitting required to have a counterpart in the target country?

Answer: Applicants are not required to have counterparts in the target country. See the "Related Documents" tab in the solicitation for attached detailed evaluation criteria.

Question 17: Regarding the possible partner companies in the target country, is this solicitation

exclusive or restricted to American Companies that engage in semiconductor manufacturing? Is this funding opportunity open to other semiconductor companies in other countries, including South Korean or Japanese companies?

Answer: Both U.S. and foreign for-profit organizations are eligible to apply. This solicitation does not exclude foreign companies.

Question 18: Can we submit letters of support in addition to 3-page SOI document?

Answer: No. Each SOI must be no more than three (3) pages. Successful SOI applicants may be asked to include letters of support if invited to submit full applications.

Question 19: Can you further define/explain what kind of components in the semiconductor and ICT supply chain qualify?

Answer: EB administers a portion of the ITSI funds, the "ITSI Promote" line of effort, to help expand international semiconductor assembly, testing, and packaging ("ATP" or "downstream") capacity in key partner countries that will in turn diversify the global semiconductor supply chain. See the "Related Documents" tab in the solicitation for attached detailed background, illustrative activities, evaluation criteria, and submission instructions.

Question 20: Can an organization submit one or two proposals with public institutions as beneficiaries? Alternatively, should the proposal ideally be led by a public institution, educational institution, or another international organization?

Answer: This solicitation includes multiple categories under which applicants may submit a SOI. Organizations may submit no more than one (1) SOI per category. The applicant must explicitly identify the category for each SOI submitted. If a SOI may fit within more than one category, the organization must explicitly identify which category they determine is the best fit for the work proposed. If a SOI does not explicitly identify one of the below categories on the first page of the SOI, it may be deemed technically ineligible and may not be forwarded to the review panel for consideration.

Foreign government entities are not eligible to apply, however, public international organizations are eligible. A public international organization is an organization entitled to enjoy privileges, exemptions, and immunities as an international organization under the International Organizations Immunities Act (22 U.S.C. 288-288f). The applicant must determine who best to lead their proposal based on the eligibility requirements and criteria outlined in the solicitation. See the "Related Documents" tab in the solicitation for attached detailed evaluation criteria.

Question 21: I am registered with SAM.gov. Do I need to register in the target country to be eligible for the award?

Answer: No. It is only mandatory for all applicants to obtain a Unique Entity Identifier (UEI) and to register in the System for Award Management (SAM.gov) to be eligible to receive federal assistance, unless they meet the criteria for exception. Please visit the SAM.gov help page for additional information on obtaining a UEI and registering in SAM.gov.

https://sam.gov/content/help
https://sam.gov/content/entity-registration

Question 22: How should coordination with the target country government be reflected in the SOI? Does the SOI need to provide evidence that the applicant has coordinated with the government in the design of the SOI, or do they need to indicate that they will be coordinating with government in the future?

Answer: Applicants are not required to provide evidence that they coordinated with the government in the design of the SOI, but should provide examples of current government collaboration if any exist. The SOI should demonstrate how it will engage relevant stakeholders in the government and identify any government partners as appropriate.