

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: Securing WMD Expertise at Higher Education Institutions
Funding Opportunity Number: SFOP0006247
Deadline for Applications: January 31, 2020
CFDA Number: 19.033
Total Amount Available: \$2,000,000

ELIGIBILITY

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

- *Not-for-profit organizations*
- *Public and private educational institutions*
- *For-profit organizations*
- *Public International Organizations*

Cost Sharing or Matching

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

Other Special Eligibility Criteria

Not Applicable.

CONTACT INFORMATION

For assistance with the requirements of this solicitation, please contact: ISN-CTR-CPFY20@state.gov

I. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Department of State's Office of Cooperative Threat Reduction (CTR) is pleased to announce an open competition for assistance awards through this Notice of Funding Opportunity (NOFO). CTR invites non-profit/non-governmental organizations, FFRDCs, international organizations, educational institutions, and for-profit organizations to submit proposals for projects that will advance the mission of the Department's Counter-Proliferation Program (CP). CTR prefers projects that cost less than \$250,000 including overhead, though awards may involve multiple projects that cumulatively exceed \$250,000.

A. PROGRAM DESCRIPTION

CTR sponsors foreign assistance activities funded by the Nonproliferation, Anti-terrorism, Demining and Related Programs (NADR) account, and focuses on mitigating proliferation risk

in states and regions where the state and non-state actor threat is on the rise, such as Eastern Europe, South and Southeast Asia, South America, the Middle East, and Africa.

CTR seeks to enhance the capacity of higher education institutions to prevent the transfer of sensitive technology to proliferator states, such as the Democratic People's Republic of Korea (DPRK), Iran, the People's Republic of China (PRC), Russia, and Syria. Specifically, CTR seeks proposals for programmatic activities that will help academic institutions control access to proliferation-sensitive research and equipment, and establish processes for the comprehensive vetting of students, faculty, researchers, and beneficiaries of research grants in WMD-applicable fields.

Universities are often a weak link in the global defense against proliferators' pursuit of WMD technology. For example, the PRC People's Liberation Army technical officers may disguise their affiliation in order to gain admission and secure visas to study advanced technology at universities abroad as part of the PRC's civil-military fusion program. The research and technological know-how these officers acquire may then be used to enhance the military and WMD capabilities of the PRC military. To address this threat, CTR programs will help partners in universities and research institutes develop rigorous protocols, such as student and faculty vetting programs, to prevent the transfer of technologies and intellectual property that could be used to develop or advance WMD programs or associated delivery systems.

This engagement is global in scope but focuses on states with research institutions and universities with research programs in the disciplines traditionally associated with the development of WMD, as well as advanced fields such as quantum mechanics, machine learning, and astrophysics. Notional jurisdictions of interest include, but are not limited to: India, Indonesia, Malaysia, Singapore, Taiwan, UAE, and Ukraine.

Program Objectives

For FY20, CTR supports efforts that broadly fall into the categories below:

- **Institute student and faculty vetting programs:** Vetting of university faculty, students, and research personnel to ensure applicants' research goals are not driven by advancing foreign military goals is essential in halting intangible technology transfer and preventing proliferator states from acquiring sensitive research, equipment, and technology. CTR seeks projects to assist universities to implement enhanced due diligence throughout their institutions, in order to recognize "red flags" associated with civil-military technology transfer and theft of intellectual property. Of particular importance are emphasizing open lines of communication between universities and government counterparts, as well as coordination of associated thresholds for taking action to prevent proliferation attempts.
- **Strengthen the ability of academic institutions to recognize and safeguard high-risk areas of study with WMD-applications:** Advanced research fields including quantum mechanics, machine learning, and astrophysics are uniquely vulnerable to the civil-military exploitation dynamic due to the highly technical subject matter and the small pool of applicants. Projects in this category should train universities to conduct extensive reviews of curricula, funding proposals, and international faculty exchange opportunities,

both internally and with public sector counterparts, in order to develop criteria for applicants to ensure diligent nonproliferation uses of educational resources.

- **Partner with foreign experts to raise awareness of the risk of technology transfer at academic institutions:** A key component in addressing the risk of intangible technology transfer to proliferator states is raising awareness in target countries of the threat of diversion of advanced technology. To address this challenge, CTR is interested in funding research partnerships with foreign institutions that use open source information to outline the risk of diversion of advanced technology from their country to support the military programs of proliferator states. These partnerships will raise awareness of the threat in specific terms within the policy and research & development communities in order to advance measures to close gaps and prevent technology leakage.

III. ELIGIBILITY REQUIREMENTS

CTR welcomes applications from not-for-profit organizations subject to 501 (c) (3) of the United States tax code, FFRDCs, educational institutions, public international organizations, and for-profit companies. Direct funding for both U.S. and non-U.S. institutions is available under this announcement.

IV. APPLICATION AND SUBMISSION INFORMATION

Award Period: 12 months, though longer periods of performance will be considered on a case-by-case basis. ISN/CTR will permit an additional three months for project close out.

Award Amount: Multiple awards will be granted, with the maximum amount per award determined by the number of discrete projects funded. ISN/CTR prefers projects that cost less than \$250,000, though awards may involve multiple projects that cumulatively exceed \$250,000. CTR will prioritize proposals that efficiently meet programmatic goals at the lowest technically acceptable cost.

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.

Application Deadline: All applications must be submitted on or before January 31, 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.

All applicants must register with Grants.gov prior to submitting an application. **Registering with Grants.gov is a one-time process; however, it could take as long as two weeks to have the registration validated and confirmed. Please begin the registration process immediately to ensure that the process is completed well in advance of the deadline for applications.** Until that process is complete, you will not be issued a user password for Grants.gov, which is required for application submission. There are four steps that you must complete before you are able to register: (1) Obtain a Data Universal Numbering System (DUNS) number from Dun & Bradstreet (if your organization does not have one already) by calling 1-866-705-5711; (2) Register with Central Contractor Registry (CCR); (3) Register yourself as an Authorized Organization Representative (AOR); and (4) Be authorized as an AOR by your organization. For more information, go to www.grants.gov. Please note that your CCR registration must be annually renewed. Failure to renew your CCR registration may prohibit submission of an application through Grants.gov.

Application Content: Applicants must follow the NOFO instructions and conditions contained herein and supply all information required. **Failure to furnish all information or comply with stated requirements will result in disqualification from the competition.** Applicants must set forth full, accurate, and complete information as required by this RFP. The penalty for making false statements in proposals to the U.S. government is prescribed on 18 U.S.C.1001.

The completed submission must consist of the following four parts:

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

This form can be found on-line at: <http://apply07.grants.gov/apply/FormLinks?family=15>

Section 2 – Consolidated Project List

This outlines the individual project proposals within your overall proposal submission

Section 3 – Project Proposal(s):

Using the provided template, the applicant must provide a completed project proposal. The proposal form must be completed in its entirety, include a gap analysis statement and clearly specify, the targeted objective, audience, and the proposed scope. The proposal must also identify deliverables and timeline. Applicants must specify a point of contact for each project that is proposed.

Section 4 - 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:

- Personnel and fringe benefits;
- Travel;
- Equipment and supplies;
- Contractual services;

- Construction;
- Other direct costs; and
- Indirect costs.

Applicants must adhere to the requirements of the Federal Travel Regulation (FTR), including Fly America Act requirements, when proposing and conducting travel. For further information and current foreign per diem rates, please visit: https://aoprals.state.gov/web920/per_diem.asp

V. AWARD SELECTION CRITERIA

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:** Applications should be responsive to the program framework and policy objectives identified in the solicitation, appropriate in the country/regional context, and 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 these objectives will address the identified gap, and advance ISN/CTR's mission. ISN/CTR will evaluate the project proposal in terms of how well it addresses the issues identified in the gap analysis, 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 realism, 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 OMB Circulars A-122 and/or A-21, and if the costs are consistent with the program narrative.
- **Past Performance:** In reviewing proposals, ISN/CTR will evaluate the organization's past performance on other federal and non-federal grants and cooperative

agreements. This will include a review of whether objectives for past awards were met; whether the organization complied with the terms of conditions of past awards, including reporting and financial management requirements; and the timeliness of project implementation.

- **Cyber Security:** Recipients and subcontractors are required to provide adequate security – (e.g. protective measures that are commensurate with the consequences and probability of loss, misuse, or unauthorized access to, or modification of information) on all covered information systems, and to rapidly report cyber incidents directly to the grantor.

VI. AWARD ADMINISTRATION INFORMATION

Award Notices: The cooperative agreement shall be written, signed, awarded, and administered by the Grants Officer. The Grants Officer is the government official delegated the authority by the U.S. Department of State Procurement Executive to write, award, and administer grants and cooperative agreements. The assistance award agreement is the authorizing document and it will be provided to the Recipient through either mail or facsimile transmission. Organizations whose applications will not be funded will also be notified in writing.

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 will have a pre-project implementation meeting with ISN/CTR within 30 days after the cooperative agreement is awarded and before any work is performed for the award.

Reporting Requirements: As a cooperative agreement, reporting and deliverable requirements for this project exceed those of typical grants administered by ISN/CTR. 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) 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

VII. DISCLAIMER

If a proposal is selected for funding, the Department of State has no obligation to provide any additional future funding in connection with the award. Renewal of an award to increase funding or extend the period of performance is at the total discretion of the Department of State.