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Notice of Funding Opportunity (NOFO)

U.S-Saudi AI Research Commercialization Accelerator Program (ReCAP)

U.S. Mission to Saudi Arabia, Department of State

Opportunity number: DOS-SAU-2605-PD

Application deadline: September 14, 2026, 23:59 EDT

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U.S Department of State
U.S. Mission to Saudi Arabia, Public Diplomacy Section
Notice of Funding Opportunity

A. BASIC INFORMATION

1. Overview

Funding Opportunity Title	U.S.–Saudi AI Commercialization Accelerator Program (ReCAP)
Funding Opportunity Number	DOS-SAU-2605-PD
Announcement Type	Initial Announcement
Deadline for Applications	September 14, 2026, 23:59 EDT
Assistance Listing Number	19.040 Public Diplomacy Programs
Length of performance period	12 months
Number of awards anticipated	One (1) award
Award amounts	$900,000
Total available funding	$900,000 pending availability of funds
Type of Funding	FY26 Smith Mundt Public Diplomacy Funds
Anticipated project start date	October 1, 2026

Funding Instrument Type: Cooperative agreement. This award includes substantial involvement by the U.S. Embassy in program implementation (see Section C.8 below).

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

This notice is subject to availability of funding. The Public Diplomacy Section reserves the right to award less or more than the funds described under circumstances deemed to be in the best interest of the U.S. government, pending the availability of funds and approval of the designated grants officer.

2. Executive Summary

The U.S. Embassy Riyadh Public Diplomacy Section announces an open competition for organizations to design and implement the U.S.–Saudi AI Research Commercialization Accelerator (ReCAP), a 12-month initiative connecting Saudi Arabia's expanding artificial intelligence innovation ecosystem with the United States' world-leading technology, investment, and commercialization ecosystem. The program will source and evaluate 20–30 Saudi-developed AI technologies, advance approximately 10 of the most promising through applied, U.S.-led commercialization programming and Innovation Labs, connect participants to the American AI ecosystem through an intensive U.S. study tour, and culminate in a high-level U.S.–Saudi AI Research Commercialization Summit. The program advances U.S. foreign policy priorities by positioning the United States as Saudi Arabia's preferred partner for AI innovation and commercialization, strengthening durable relationships between Saudi innovators and American technology, investment, and commercialization networks.

B. ELIGIBILITY

1. Eligible Applicants

The following organizations are eligible to apply:

- *Not-for-profit organizations, including civil society/non-governmental organizations*
- *Public and private educational institutions*
- *Public International Organizations and Governmental institutions*

For-profit entities, even those that may fall into the categories listed above, are **not** eligible to apply for this NOFO. Organizations may sub-contract with other entities, but only one, non-profit, non-governmental entity can be the prime recipient of the award. When sub-contracting with other entities, the responsibilities of each entity must be clearly defined in the proposal. For more information on the difference between sub-contract and sub-recipient, please refer to 2 CFR 200.331.

2. Cost Sharing or Matching

Cost sharing is not required for this funding opportunity. Applicants are encouraged to identify opportunities to leverage complementary U.S. government programs, private-sector engagement, institutional cost sharing, or other resources where doing so enhances program impact.

3. Other Eligibility Requirements

All organizations must have a Unique Entity Identifier (UEI) issued via SAM.gov as well as a valid registration in SAM.gov. Please see Section E.3 for more information. Individuals are not required to have a UEI or be registered in SAM.gov.

Applicants are only allowed to submit one proposal per organization. If more than one proposal is submitted from an organization, all proposals from that institution will be considered ineligible for funding under this funding opportunity.

4. This opportunity will not support:

- Projects relating to partisan political activity;
- Charitable or development activities; including direct social services such as medical, psychological, and/or humanitarian support
- Construction projects;
- Projects that support specific religious activities;
- Fund-raising campaigns;
- Lobbying for specific legislation or programs

- Scientific research or surveys;
- Commercial projects (note: this exclusion does not apply to the market validation, technical assessment, and commercialization-advisory activities central to this NOFO's Public Diplomacy objectives);
- Projects intended primarily for the growth or institutional development of the organization;
- Projects that duplicate existing projects;
- Illegal activities

C. PROGRAM DESCRIPTION

1. Project Background, Goals, and Objectives

Background

Saudi Arabia is making significant investments in artificial intelligence, research and development, and emerging technologies. Saudi research institutions have generated substantial portfolios of intellectual property; however, generating intellectual property does not necessarily result in successful commercialization. Moving promising technologies from research environments into commercially viable products requires rigorous market validation, customer discovery, product development, access to capital, and connections to experienced commercialization ecosystems.

The United States possesses unique comparative advantages across this commercialization continuum, including world-leading research institutions, technology companies, entrepreneurs, venture capital networks, technology transfer organizations, and AI infrastructure and services. This program will leverage those strengths to identify promising Saudi-developed AI technologies and expose Saudi innovators and commercialization stakeholders to U.S. approaches for evaluating, developing, financing, deploying, and scaling emerging technologies.

The program should not function primarily as a traditional capacity-building or academic training initiative. Activities must be applied, market-oriented, and focused on advancing selected technologies toward measurable commercialization outcomes during the 12-month period of performance.

The program will advance U.S. foreign policy and economic interests by strengthening the position of the United States as Saudi Arabia's preferred partner for AI innovation and commercialization. Saudi Arabia possesses significant capital to finance its own technological development; U.S. government investment through this program is therefore not intended to substitute for Saudi resources or subsidize Saudi research. Rather, the program represents a strategic public diplomacy investment intended to connect Saudi capital, innovators, and commercially promising technologies with American expertise, innovation networks, technical approaches, and commercialization ecosystems.

By engaging Saudi innovators at the point at which technologies move from research toward market deployment, the program will increase familiarity with and confidence in U.S. approaches to AI development, commercialization, interoperability, investment, and scale — strengthening durable professional connections with the American AI ecosystem and positioning U.S. technologies, expertise, and commercial partners for downstream opportunities.

Project Audience(s):

The program will engage Saudi professionals positioned to translate artificial intelligence research and intellectual property into commercially viable applications and to strengthen linkages with the U.S. innovation ecosystem. Primary audiences may include:

- AI researchers, Inventors, and Technical Entrepreneurs: Saudi nationals and residents, generally early- to mid-career professionals, affiliated with research universities, national research institutions, tech startups, or other innovation-focused organizations across Saudi Arabia. Participants should have developed or have responsibility for an AI-related technology, patent, prototype, or other intellectual property with potential commercial application. The program will equip this audience to assess market demand, refine use cases, validate potential customers, and develop viable pathways toward commercialization using proven U.S. approaches and expertise.

- Technology Commercialization and Innovation Professionals: Saudi professionals responsible for moving research and intellectual property toward market application, including technology transfer, commercialization, licensing, venture development, innovation, and entrepreneurship personnel at universities, research institutions, and innovation organizations. The program will strengthen this audience's connections to U.S. commercialization ecosystems and increase its ability to apply market-driven U.S. approaches to identifying and advancing promising technologies.

- Industry, Investment, and End-User Stakeholders: Saudi professionals from the private sector, investment community, and government-linked entities, and other organizations with the expertise or authority to assess, pilot, finance, adopt, or scale emerging AI applications. This audience may include sector specialists, corporate innovation leaders, investors, technical decision-makers, and potential end users from priority areas of the Saudi economy. Their participation will provide real-world market feedback to participating innovators and help connect promising tech with credible pathways toward deployment.

Participants will primarily be based in Saudi Arabia, with emphasis on individuals who demonstrate the professional expertise, institution position, and commitment necessary to influence commercialization decisions beyond their individual participation. Selection should prioritize demonstrated potential for impact and commercial relevance while seeking a balance of geographic, institutional, and professional representation.

Project Goal: Strengthen U.S. economic and technological leadership in Saudi Arabia by accelerating commercially promising Saudi AI innovations through U.S. commercialization models and building durable connections between Saudi innovators and the American AI, investment, and technology ecosystem. If commercially promising Saudi AI technologies are systematically identified and subjected to rigorous market validation; if their inventors and commercialization teams work with American experts to develop viable pathways from intellectual property to market deployment; and if Saudi innovators and decision-makers build sustained relationships with U.S. AI, investment, and commercialization ecosystems, then participating technologies will become more commercially viable while Saudi stakeholders become more likely to engage American systems, expertise, technologies, and partners as they move toward deployment and scale. Over the 12-month period of performance, this process will produce a pipeline of pilot-, partnership-, or investment-ready AI opportunities while positioning the United States for downstream commercial engagement.

Project Objectives: Applicants must propose a methodology capable of achieving the following objectives during the 12-month period of performance:

Objective 1 – Identify Commercially Promising AI Technologies: Source approximately 20–30 Saudi-developed AI technologies or AI-related IP assets and apply a transparent, market-oriented evaluation process to select approximately 10 technologies with the strongest commercialization potential.

Objective 2 – Validate Market Potential: Provide selected teams with intensive, applied U.S.-led commercialization programming resulting in clearly defined customer needs, value propositions, target markets, competitive positioning, and preliminary commercialization strategies.

Objective 3 – Advance Technologies Toward Commercial Deployment: Through structured Innovation Labs, advance the strongest technologies toward pilot-, partnership-, licensing-, venture-, or investment-ready concepts, producing at least five commercially promising concepts with documented implementation pathways.

Objective 4 – Strengthen Connections to the U.S. AI Ecosystem: Establish meaningful professional relationships between Saudi participants and U.S. researchers, entrepreneurs, investors, commercialization professionals, and AI practitioners through sustained expert engagement and an intensive U.S. study tour.

Objective 5 – Generate Measurable Follow-On Opportunities: Document concrete next steps resulting from the accelerator — pilots, licensing discussions, investment interest, research-to-market partnerships, or continued engagement with U.S. organizations.

Required Program Components: Applicants may propose innovative methodologies, but applications must incorporate the following components:

- Technology Sourcing and Commercial Viability Assessment (Months 1–2): The recipient will work with Embassy-approved Saudi research and innovation partners to identify approximately 20–30 AI-related technologies. The recipient must develop a rigorous evaluation methodology incorporating technical readiness, IP position, market need, competitive landscape, customer demand, scalability, regulatory/deployment considerations, commercialization pathways, and relevance to U.S. technological strengths, drawing on technical experts, commercialization practitioners, investors, and prospective end users. Approximately 10 technologies should advance into the accelerator.

- Applied Commercialization Workshop Series (Months 3–4): An intensive workshop series led substantially by qualified American practitioners, applying U.S. commercialization methodologies directly to participating technologies across three sequential themes: From Technology to Market; From Concept to Deployment; and From Solution to Scale. Each team should create a preliminary commercialization strategy.

- Innovation Labs (Months 5–8): Structured Innovation Labs operating as intensive commercialization sprints, bringing technology owners together with commercialization experts, prospective users, and technical specialists to test technologies against real market conditions. Applicants should propose a hybrid delivery model (in-person launch followed by virtual working sessions and expert consultations). The strongest technologies should emerge with a Commercialization Action Plan describing a credible route to pilot, licensing, partnership, venture creation, investment, or deployment.

- U.S. AI Commercialization Study Tour (Approximately Month 9): An intensive U.S. professional study tour for approximately 10 competitively selected participants, engaging U.S. technology companies, AI infrastructure/deployment ecosystems, research universities and technology transfer offices, venture capital and private investment organizations, startup accelerators, entrepreneurs, applied research organizations, relevant government-supported innovation programs, and regional technology clusters. The tour must be an applied component of the accelerator, not a stand-alone exchange.

- Commercialization Finalization (Months 10–11): Participating teams will incorporate lessons and connections from the study tour into final commercialization plans, supported by targeted mentoring and expert consultations to prepare pilot, partnership, licensing, venture, or investment-ready concepts.

- U.S.–Saudi AI Commercialization Summit (Month 12): A culminating high-level Summit in Saudi Arabia showcasing accelerator outcomes and convening senior U.S. and Saudi government, technology, research, and investment stakeholders. Programming may include technology showcases, demonstrations, panels, and commercialization presentations. The Summit should reinforce U.S. leadership in AI commercialization, connect Saudi stakeholders with the American technology ecosystem, generate visibility for U.S.–Saudi collaboration, and establish concrete post-award engagement pathways. The recipient should develop the Summit in close coordination with the U.S. Embassy.

Participants: Primary participants should include Saudi researchers, inventors, entrepreneurs, and technology commercialization professionals directly responsible for advancing selected AI technologies toward market deployment. Participants should be selected primarily on the commercial potential of their technologies rather than solely on seniority or institutional affiliation. The recipient should seek participation from a range of relevant Saudi research and innovation institutions, coordinating institutional engagement with the U.S. Embassy.

American Content: Strong American content is central to this program. Applications must demonstrate how the proposed project will meaningfully incorporate U.S. expertise, methodologies, institutions, innovation models, and professional networks throughout the period of performance — integrated into technology evaluation, workshops, Innovation Labs, mentoring, the U.S. study tour, and the Summit, not limited to individual guest speakers. Applicants should demonstrate substantial access to U.S. technology commercialization and AI ecosystems. The program must not promote or provide preferential treatment to individual U.S. companies; activities should demonstrate the strengths of the broader American innovation ecosystem.

Expected Results and Performance Indicators: At minimum, the program should achieve:

- 20–30 Saudi AI technologies sourced and assessed;
- Approximately 10 technologies competitively selected for intensive acceleration;
- 100% of accelerator teams completing structured market-validation activities;
- At least five technologies completing credible Commercialization Action Plans or equivalent frameworks;
- Approximately 10 participants completing the U.S. study tour;
- Substantive engagement with a diverse group of U.S. AI, commercialization, research, and investment stakeholders;
- One high-level U.S.–Saudi AI Commercialization Summit; and
- Documented follow-on actions demonstrating continued U.S.–Saudi commercial or innovation engagement.

Applicants are encouraged to propose additional indicators measuring changes in participant behavior, commercial readiness, engagement with American organizations, and progress toward real-world deployment.

2. Substantial Involvement

The U.S. Embassy anticipates substantial involvement in this cooperative agreement, including:

U.S. Embassy Roles and Responsibilities:

- Approval of key program milestones and implementation plans;
- coordination with Saudi institutional partners;
- consultation on participant and technology selection;
- identification/approval of appropriate U.S. experts and institutions;
- consultation on the U.S. study tour itinerary;
- participation in selected program activities;
- coordination of senior-level participation in the capstone Summit;
- review of public communications and program branding;
- ongoing consultation regarding alignment with U.S. foreign policy and public diplomacy objectives.

Recipient Roles and Responsibilities:

- Primary responsibility for program administration and implementation, including day-to-day management of all required components described above.

D. APPLICATION CONTENTS AND FORMAT

Please follow all instructions below carefully. Proposals that do not meet the requirements of this announcement or fail to comply with the stated requirements will be ineligible.

Content of Application

Please ensure:

- The proposal clearly addresses the goals and objectives of this funding opportunity
- All documents are in English
- All budgets are in U.S. dollars
- All applicant authorized signatures are provided where indicated on the various, required forms.

The following documents are **required**:

1. Mandatory application forms

- SF-424 (Application for Federal Assistance – organizations) or SF-424-I (Application for Federal Assistance --individuals) at grants.gov or Embassy website.
- SF-424A (Budget Information for Non-Construction programs) at grants.gov or Embassy website.
- SF-424B (Assurances for Non-Construction programs) at grants.gov or Embassy website. (note: the SF-424B is only required for individuals, organizations exempt from registration, and for organizations not required to fully register in SAM.gov)

2. Proposal (30 pages maximum)

Applicants must submit a complete narrative proposal in a format of their choice. The proposal should contain sufficient information that anyone not familiar with it would understand exactly what the applicant wants to do. The proposal must include all the items below:

- **Proposal Summary:** Short narrative that outlines the proposed project, including project objectives and anticipated impact.
- **Introduction to the Organization applying**: A description of past and present operations, showing ability to carry out the program, including information on all previous grants from the State Department and/or U.S. government agencies as well as experience with and expertise in areas related to those described in the NOFO.
- **Problem Statement:** Clear, concise and well-supported statement of the problem to be addressed and why the proposed program is needed
- **Program Methods, Design, Activities, and Deliverables:** The “goals” describe what the program is intended to achieve. The “objectives” refer to the intermediate accomplishments

on the way to the goals. These should be achievable and measurable. Describe the program activities and how they will help achieve the objectives.

- **Proposed Project Schedule and Timeline:** The proposed timeline for the program activities. Include the dates, times, and locations of planned activities and events.
- **Key Personnel:** Names, titles, roles and experience/qualifications of key personnel involved in the program. What proportion of their time will be used in support of this program?
- **Project Partners:** List the names and type of involvement of key partner organizations and sub-awardees (if applicable).
- **Future Funding or Sustainability** Applicant's plan for continuing the program beyond the grant period, or the availability of other resources, if applicable.
- **Monitoring & Evaluation Plan:** Proposals must include a Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) Performance Monitoring Plan (PMP). The M&E plan should show how applicants intend to measure and demonstrate progress towards the project's objectives and goals. The key components to the PMP are as follows:
    - **Monitoring and Evaluation Narrative**: In narrative form, applicants should describe how they intend to monitor and evaluate the activities of their award. In addition, the applicant should describe any M&E processes, including key personnel, management structure (where M&E fits into the overall program's staff structure), technology, and as well provide a brief budget narrative explaining any line-item expenditures for M&E listed in the program's budget. If the proposal is from a prior grantee, the proposal discusses how the grantee has adapted, improved or otherwise modified their approach based on learning from previous experience. This narrative is limited to two pages.

    - **Theory of Change Diagram:** Applicants are expected to submit either a Theory of Change diagram or an If-Then Statement that illustrates how project activities will lead to intended outcomes.

    - **Monitoring and Evaluation Datasheet:** The applicant must include their proposed activities and their expected outputs and outcomes as well as the goals and objectives as written in the NOFO. The datasheet's purpose is to explicitly illustrate how a project's activities lead to tangible results (such as increased beneficiary skills, knowledge, or attitudes) that ultimately address a PDS objective.

    - The selected applicant's M&E PMP is subject to review and approval before any award will be issued under this NOFO. The selected applicant may be asked to work with U.S. Department of State Monitoring and Evaluation Specialists to ensure the applicant's M&E PMP achieves an expected level of expertise and meets PDS objectives.

    - Expenses directly associated with monitoring and evaluation are considered allowable.

3. ***Budget Justification Narrative***

- **Detailed Budget** - Applicants must submit a detailed line-item budget. Applicants are encouraged to utilize the template provided with the funding opportunity but are not required to do so. Line-item expenditures should be listed in the greatest possible detail. The budget must identify the total amount of funding requested, with a breakdown of amounts to be spent in the following budget categories: personnel; fringe benefits; travel; equipment; supplies; consultants/contracts; other direct costs; and indirect costs. See Annex Section I for a description of the types of costs that should be included in each category. Personnel salaries should include the level of effort and the rate of pay, which should cover the percentage of time each staff member will dedicate to grant-based activities. If an organization is charging an indirect cost rate without a NICRA, it must apply it to the modified total budget costs (MTDC), refer to 2CFR§200.1. **Budgets shall be submitted in U.S. dollars** and final grant agreements will be conducted in U.S. dollars.

- **Budget Justification Narrative** – Applicants must submit a budget justification narrative to accompany the detailed line-item budget. The purpose of the budget justification narrative is to supplement the information provided in the detailed budget spreadsheet by justifying how the budget cost elements are necessary to implement project objectives and accomplish the project goals. The budget justification narrative is a tool to help Embassy staff fully understand the budgetary needs of the applicant and is an opportunity to provide descriptive information about the requested costs beyond the constraints of the budget template. Together, the detailed budget spreadsheet, the budget justification narrative, and the SF-424A should provide a complete financial and qualitative description that supports the proposed project plan and should be directly relatable to the specific project components described in the applicant's proposal.

  Additional Budget Notes:

- Audit Requirements: Please note the audit requirements for Department of State awards in the Standard Terms and Conditions https://www.state.gov/m/a/ope/index.htm and 2CFR200, Subpart F – Audit Requirements. The cost of the required audits may be charged either as an allowable direct cost to the award OR included in the organization's established indirect costs in the award's detailed budget.

- Visa Fees: Include all visa application and related fees in your budget as applicable. Please note DS-2019s for post-funded programs must be submitted directly by the award recipient. If you anticipate your program will include the DS-2019 visa processing, your organization must be a registered Designated Sponsoring Organization. For more information go to: https://j1visa.state.gov/sponsors/become-a-sponsor/

4. ***Attachments***

- **Key Personnel Resumes**: A résumé, not to exceed one page in length, must be included for the proposed key staff persons, such as the Project Director and Finance Officer, as well as any speakers or trainers (if applicable). If an individual for this type of position has not been identified, the applicant may submit a 1-page position description, identifying the qualifications and skills required for that position, in lieu of a résumé.

- **Letters of support from program partners:** Letters of support should be included for sub-recipients or other partners. The letters must identify the type of relationship to be entered into (formal or informal), the roles and responsibilities of each partner in relation to the proposed project activities, and the expected result of the partnership. The individual letters cannot exceed 1 page in length.

- **Indirect Costs**: If your organization has a Negotiated Indirect Cost Rate Agreement (NICRA) and includes NICRA charges in the budget, your latest NICRA should be included in the application submission.

- **Proof of Non-profit Status:** Documentation to demonstrate the applicant's non-profit status (e.g., U.S.-based organizations should submit a copy of their 501(c)(3) Internal Revenue Service determination letter, and non-U.S. organizations should provide evidence of non-profit status issued by a government entity).

- **Proof of Registration:** A copy of the organization's registration should be provided with the proposal application. U.S.-based organizations should submit a copy of their IRS determination letter. Non U.S.-based organizations should submit a copy of their certificate of registration from the appropriate government organization.

Other items NOT required/requested with the application submission, but which *may* be requested if your application is approved to move forward in the review process include:

a. Copies of an organization or program audit within the last two (2) years
b. Copies of relevant human resources, financial, or procurement policies
c. Copies of other relevant organizational policies or documentation that would help the Department determine your organization's capacity to manage a federal grant award overseas
d. Documentation that demonstrates the recipients' plan and/or policy to safeguard PII of participants and beneficiaries. It is the responsibility of the recipient to ensure protection of personally identifiable information (PII) and safeguard PII when collecting, maintaining, using and disseminating such information
e. Information to determine what financial controls and standard operating procedures an organization uses to procure goods and services, hire staff and track time and attendance, pay for grant-related travel, and identify other financial transactions that may be necessary to undertake the project activities
f. The Embassy reserves the right to request any additional programmatic and/or financial information regarding the proposal.

E. SUBMISSION REQUIREMENTS AND DEADLINES

1. Address to Request Application Package

Application forms required above are available at grants.gov

2. Department of State Contacts

If you have any questions about the grant application process, please contact: riyadhgrants@state.gov.

3. Unique entity identifier and System for Award Management (SAM.gov)

Required Registration: All organizations, whether based in the United States or in another country, must have a Unique Entity Identifier (UEI) and an active registration in SAM.gov. A UEI is one of the data elements mandated by Public Law 109-282, the Federal Funding Accountability and Transparency Act (FFATA), for all Federal awards.

An applicant must maintain an active registration while it has a proposal under review by the Department and must continue to keep the registration active for the entire duration of the period of performance of any Federal award that results from this NOFO.

The 2 CFR 200 also requires subrecipients to obtain a UEI. Please note the UEI for subrecipients is not required at the time of application but will be required before an award is processed and/or directed to a subrecipient.

Note: The process of obtaining or renewing a SAM.gov registration may take anywhere from 4-8 weeks. <u>Please begin your registration as early as possible</u>.

- Organizations **based in the United States** or that pay employees within the United States will need an Employer Identification Number (EIN) from the Internal Revenue Service (IRS) and a UEI prior to registering in SAM.gov.

- Organizations **based outside of the United States** and that do not pay employees within the United States do not need an EIN from the IRS but do need a UEI prior to registering in SAM.gov.

- **<u>Organizations based outside of the United States that do not intend to apply for U.S. Department of Defense (DoD) awards are no longer required to have a NATO Commercial and Government Entity (NCAGE) code to apply for non-DoD foreign assistance funding opportunities.</u>** If an applicant organization is mid-registration and wishes to remove an NCAGE code from their SAM.gov registration, the applicant should submit a help desk ticket ("incident") with the Federal Service Desk (FSD) online at www.fsd.gov using the following language: "I do not intend to seek financial assistance from the Department of Defense. I do not wish to obtain an NCAGE code. I understand that I will need to submit my registration after this incident is resolved in order to have my registration activated."

Organizations based outside of the United States and that DO NOT plan to do business with the DoD should follow the below instructions:

- Step 1: Proceed to SAM.gov to obtain a UEI and complete the SAM.gov registration process. SAM.gov registration must be renewed annually.

Exemptions
An exemption from the UEI and sam.gov registration requirements may be permitted on a case-by-case basis. See 2 CFR 25.110 for a full list of exemptions.

Organizations requesting exemption from UEI or SAM.gov requirements must email the point of contact listed in the NOFO at least two weeks prior to the deadline in the NOFO providing a justification of their request. Approval for a SAM.gov exemption must come from the warranted Grants Officer before the application can be deemed eligible for review.

Please note: Any applicant with an exclusion in the System for Award Management (SAM) is not eligible to apply for an assistance award in accordance with the OMB guidelines at 2 CFR 180 that implement Executive Orders 12549 (3 CFR, 1986 Comp., p. 189) and 12689 (3 CFR, 1989 Comp., p. 235), "Debarment and Suspension."

4. Submission Dates and Times

Submission Deadline: All applications must be received by **September, 14, 2026 at 23:59 EDT.**

This deadline is firm and is not a rolling deadline. If organizations fail to meet the deadline noted above their application will be considered ineligible and will not be considered for funding.

Submission Method: Submit all application materials directly to the following email address:Riyadhgrants@state.gov. Applicants **must** include the Funding Opportunity Title and Funding Opportunity Number in the subject line of the email.

5. Funding Restrictions

i. Funding Restrictions for the United Nations Relief and Works Agency (UNRWA): None of the funds awarded resulting from this Notice of Funding Opportunity may be made available for subawards, direct financial support, or otherwise used to provide any payment or transfer to United Nations Relief and Works Agency (UNRWA).

ii. Certification Regarding Compliance with Applicable Federal Anti-Discrimination Laws
If the place of performance or delivery of any award made under this NOFO will be within the United States, applicants are advised that they will be required to certify the following at the time of award:
   a. Its compliance in all respects with all applicable Federal anti-discrimination laws is material to the government's payment decisions for purposes of section 3729(b)(4) of title 31, United States Code and;
   b. It does not operate any programs promoting Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion that violate any applicable Federal anti-discrimination laws. A program promoting Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion means a program whose purpose is to promote

preferences based on race, color, religion, sex, or national origins, such as in training or hiring.

iii. Certification Regarding Compliance with 20 U.S.C. 1011f and any other applicable foreign funding disclosure requirements: Applicants are advised that IHEs must certify the following at the time of award, and that this certification requirement must be included in any subaward agreements to IHEs:
   a. Its compliance in all respects with section 1011f of title 20, United States Code, and any other applicable foreign funding disclosure requirements is material for purposes of section 3729 of title 31, United States Code, and for receipt of appropriate Federal grant funds.
   b. Applicants seeking clarification on the reporting requirement are encouraged to review the Frequently Asked Questions resource developed by the U.S. Department of Education.

iv. Certification of Trafficking in Persons Compliance and Compliance Plan: Applicants are advised that they will be required to certify the following at the time of award for awards where the estimated value of services to be performed outside the United States exceeds $500,000:

   a. To the best of the Recipient's knowledge, neither the Recipient, nor any subrecipient, contractor, or subcontractor of the Recipient or any agent of the recipient or of such a subrecipient, contractor, or subcontractor, is engaged in any of the activities described in 2 CFR 175.105(a);
   b. The recipient has implemented a Trafficking in Persons compliance plan to prevent activities described in 2 CFR 175(a) and is compliant with this plan; and the compliance plan must follow the minimum requirements described in 2 CFR 175(b)(5).
   c. That the Recipient has and will implement procedures to prevent activities described in 2 CFR 175.105(a) and to monitor, detect, and terminate any subrecipient, contractor, subcontractor, or employee of the recipient engaging in these activities.

  i. Recipients do not need to submit a copy of the plan. However, they must provide it to the Grants Officer upon request, and as appropriate, must post the useful and relevant contents of the plan or related materials on its website and at the workplace. Recipients must re-certify on an annual basis for the entire award period of performance.

v. Prohibition of Unmanned Aircraft System (UAS). If your project involves the purchase or use of an UAS, see this link for requirements and information you must include in your application.

vi. Pre-Award Costs: Pre-award costs are generally not allowable under this NOFO unless approved in advance by the Grants Officer and justified in the proposal.

vii. Construction: Any award made as a result of this NOFO will not allow for construction activities or costs.

viii. Direct Social Services: Costs that cover and provide direct social services, such as welfare, charity, health or economic relief, are unallowable. Medical assistance, such as costs to include medical professionals, including but not limited to doctors, nurses, and psychiatrists to participate in the project activities are not allowed.

6. Other Submission Requirements: Copyrights and Proprietary Information

If any of the information contained in your application is proprietary, please note in the footer of the appropriate pages that the information is Confidential – Proprietary. Applicants should also note what parts of the application, program, concept, etc. are covered by copyright(s), trademark(s), or any other intellectual property rights and provide copies of the relevant documentation to support these copyrights.

Applicants must acquire all required registrations and rights in the United States and Saudi Arabia. All intellectual property considerations and rights must be fully met in the United States and Saudi Arabia.

Any sub-recipient organization must also meet all the U.S. and Saudi Arabia requirements described above.

F. APPLICATION REVIEW INFORMATION

1. Review Criteria

Criteria: Each application submitted under this announcement will be evaluated and rated on the basis of the criteria enumerated below. The criteria are designed to assess the quality of the proposed project, and to determine the likelihood of its success.

- **Quality and Feasibility of the Program Idea** – 30 points: The program idea should be innovative and well developed, with sufficient detail about how project activities will be carried out. The proposals should demonstrate originality and outline clear, achievable objectives that align directly with the priorities and requirements of the NOFO. The proposal includes a reasonable implementation timeline, and the project scope is appropriate and clearly defined. Finally, the proposal aligns with the following:
    - The project clearly demonstrates a direct contribution to current U.S. foreign policy priorities.
    - The project will positively impact America's reputation among foreign government partners.
    - The project will positively impact American's reputation among foreign publics.
    - The proposal does not include any activities contrary to the following Executive Orders:
        - Executive Order 14173: "Ending Illegal Discrimination and Restoring Merit-Based Opportunity
        - Executive Order 14287: "Protecting American Communities from Criminal Aliens"

    - Executive Order 14168: [Defending Women from Gender Ideology Extremism and Restoring Biological Truth to the Federal Government]

- **Organizational Capacity and Record on Previous Grants** – 25 points:
    - The project proposal demonstrates that the organization has sufficient expertise, skills, and human resources to implement the project, including internal controls in place to manage federal funds. If sub-awards are proposed, applicant demonstrates experience managing subawards.
    - The organization demonstrates that it has a clear understanding of the underlying issue that the project will address.
    - The organization demonstrates capacity for successful planning and responsible fiscal management. This includes a financial management system, a bank account, and if applicable, satisfactory audit findings.
    - Applicants who have received grant funds previously have been compliant with applicable rules and regulations, including the Award Provisions and Standard Terms and Conditions.
    - Where partners are described, the applicant details each partner's respective role and provides curriculum vitae (CVs) for persons responsible for the project and financial administration. Proposed personnel, institutional resources, and partners are adequate and appropriate.

- **Project Planning/Ability to Achieve Objectives** – 20 points: The project plan is well developed, with sufficient detail about how activities will be carried out. The proposal specifies target audiences, participant recruitment, and geographic areas of implementation. The proposal outlines clear, achievable objectives. The proposal includes a reasonable implementation timeline. The project scope is appropriate and clearly defined.

- **Budget** – 10 points: The budget and narrative justification are sufficiently detailed. The budget demonstrates that the organization has devoted time to accurately determine expenses associated with the project instead of providing rough estimates. Costs are reasonable in relation to the proposed activities and anticipated results. The results and proposed outcomes justify the total cost of the project. Budget items are reasonable, allowable, and allocable.

- **Monitoring and Evaluation -** 10 points: The project proposal includes an M&E plan. The applicant demonstrates it is able to measure program success against key indicators and provides milestones to indicate progress toward goals and objectives outlined in the proposal. The proposal includes output and outcome indicators and shows how and when those will be measured. Funded projects will have their plans finalized during the negotiation phase, and monitoring plans may be subject to periodic updates throughout the life of the project.

- **Sustainability** – 5 points: The project proposal describes clearly the approach that will be used to ensure maximum sustainability or advancement of project goals after the end of project activity.

2. *Indirect Costs*

If two or more applications receive equivalent scores based on the evaluation criteria outlined in this NOFO, preference will be given to the applicant with the lower indirect cost rate, as consistent with Executive Order 14332, Section 4(b)(iii). This preference will only be applied as a tie-breaking mechanism and does not supersede the primary evaluation criteria.

3. *Review and Selection Process*

a. Acknowledgement of receipt. Applicants will receive acknowledgment of receipt of their proposal.

b. Review. All submissions are screened for technical eligibility. **If a submission is missing any required forms/documents listed above in Section D. Application Contents and Format, it will be considered ineligible and will not be reviewed by the grants review committee.** A technical review panel will review eligible proposals based upon the criteria noted in this NOFO.

c. Follow up notification. Applicants will generally be notified within 120 days after the NOFO deadline regarding the results of the review panel.

2. *Risk Review*

i. Under the merit review as required by 2 CFR 200.206, prior to making a Federal Award the Department will review and consider the following risk factors:
   a. Financial stability
   b. Management systems and standards
   c. History of performance
   d. Audit reports and findings
   e. Ability to effectively implement project requirements

ii. Responsibility/Qualification Information in SAM.gov

The Federal awarding agency, prior to making a Federal award with a total amount of Federal share greater than the simplified acquisition threshold, is required to review and consider any information about the applicant that is in the U.S. government designated integrity and performance system accessible through SAM.gov (see 41 U.S.C. 2313).

An applicant can review and comment on any information in the responsibility/qualification records available in SAM.gov.

Before making decisions in the risk review required by 2 CFR 200.206, the Department will consider any comments by the applicant, along with information available in the responsibility/qualification records in SAM.gov.

iii. <u>High Risk Designation</u>

Awardees that are deemed to be high risk based on the above risk factors will be held to special award conditions. At a minimum, the recipient and/or project designated as High Risk will be required to submit monthly narrative reports and/or quarterly detailed financial reports. Recipients may also be required, upon request of the Grants Officer or Grants Officer Representative, to provide electronic copies of receipts or other supporting documentation (e.g., timesheets, travel documents) for costs incurred. The Grants Officer may withhold 10% of the award amount until final reports have been reviewed and approved by the GO. The recipient may be required to pay all salaries supported by the grant via electronic funds transfer. Other special award conditions may also be included if deemed appropriate by the Grants Officer.

iv. <u>Risk Analysis Management</u>

To qualify for final consideration, certain applicants may be required to undertake the Risk Analysis Management (RAM) vetting process by providing Risk Analysis Information (RAI) about their "key individuals" (i.e., individuals with the ability to control applicant organizations' funds), including "key individuals" from selected sub-recipients. **Please note: these individuals *<u>could</u>* be different from the key personnel listed in the section 4 of required documents.** The purpose of vetting potential contractors and grantees is to reduce the risk that federal assistance funding is provided to terrorists or their supporters. **Potential grantees will be notified separately if RAI is required.** Applicants submit key individuals' RAI by completing the Risk Analysis Information Form, DS-4184, through the secure web portal at https://ramportal.state.gov. The DS-4184 requests the following RAI for each key individual: Full Name; Aliases; Gender; Birth Place; Birthdate; Home/Work Addresses; Phone Numbers; Employer; Professional Title; Email Addresses; Skype ID (if included, email address is also required); Numbers from All Official IDs (e.g., passports, ID cards, etc.); Nationalities; and Social Security Number (if U.S. person). Questions about the DS-4184 form may be emailed to RAM@state.gov. Failure to submit information when requested, or failure to pass vetting, may be grounds for rejecting your proposal.

G. AWARD NOTICES

The award or cooperative agreement will be written, signed, awarded, and administered by the Grants Officer. The award agreement is the authorizing document, and it will be provided to the recipient for review and counter-signature. The recipient may only start incurring project expenses beginning on the start date shown on the award document signed by the Grants Officer.

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

Issuance of this NOFO does not constitute an award commitment on the part of the U.S. government, nor does it commit the U.S. government to pay for costs incurred in the preparation and submission of proposals. Further, the U.S. government reserves the right to reject any or all proposals received.

Payment Method:

Recipients will be required to request payments by completing form SF-270—Request for Advance or Reimbursement and submitting the form to the Grants Officer and Grants Officer Representative.

Recipients may not draw down funds without the affirmative authorization of the Department of State. In addition, recipients must submit, with each SF-270 payment request, a detailed explanation justifying the request.

H. POST-AWARD REQUIREMENTS AND ADMINISTRATION

1. *Administrative and National Policy Requirements*

Before submitting an application, applicants should review all the terms and conditions and required certifications which will apply to this award, to ensure that they will be able to comply. These include:

In accordance with the Office of Management and Budget's guidance located at 2 CFR part 200, all applicable Federal laws, and relevant Executive guidance, the Department of State will review and consider applications for funding, as applicable to specific programs, pursuant to this notice of funding opportunity in accordance with the following:

- Guidance for Grants and Agreements in Title 2 of the Code of Federal Regulations (2 CFR), as updated in the Federal Register's 89 FR 30046 on April 22, 2024, particularly on:
  - Selecting recipients most likely to be successful in delivering results based on the program objectives through an impartial process of evaluating Federal award applications (2 CFR part 200.205),
  - Promoting the freedom of speech and religious liberty in alignment with *Promoting Free Speech and Religious Liberty* (E.O. 13798) and *Improving Free Inquiry, Transparency, and Accountability at Colleges and Universities* (E.O. 13864) (§§ 200.300, 200.303, 200.339, and 200.341),
  - Providing a preference, to the extent permitted by law, to maximize use of goods, products, and materials produced in the United States (2 CFR part 200.322), and
  - Terminating agreements pursuant to the U.S. Department of State Standard Terms and Conditions, including, to the greatest extent authorized by law, if an award no longer effectuates the program goals or agency priorities (2 CFR part 200.340). For the avoidance of doubt, the Department has sole discretion over the determination that an award no longer effectuates program goals or agency

priorities, and this provision permits awards to be terminated at the Department's convenience, including when it determines that the award no longer advances the national interest.

- 2 CFR 25 - UNIVERSAL IDENTIFIER AND SYSTEM FOR AWARD MANAGEMENT
- 2 CFR 170 - REPORTING SUBAWARD AND EXECUTIVE COMPENSATION INFORMATION
- 2 CFR 175 - AWARD TERM FOR TRAFFICKING IN PERSONS
- 2 CFR 182 - GOVERNMENTWIDE REQUIREMENTS FOR DRUG-FREE WORKPLACE (FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE)
- 2 CFR 183 - NEVER CONTRACT WITH THE ENEMY
- 2 CFR 600 – DEPARTMENT OF STATE REQUIREMENTS
- U.S. DEPARTMENT OF STATE STANDARD TERMS AND CONDITIONS
- Recipients must comply with all applicable Executive Orders. A searchable list can be found in the Federal Register: https://www.federalregister.gov/ .

2. ***Reporting***

Reporting Requirements: Recipients will be required to submit financial reports and program reports. The award document will specify what reports are required and how often these reports must be submitted. ***Note***: most recipients will be required to submit quarterly program progress and financial reports throughout the project period. The quarterly progress report must include updated M&E data for that quarter. Progress and financial reports are due 30 days after the reporting period. Final certified programmatic and financial reports are due 120 days after the close of the project period.

All reports are to be submitted electronically.

The Awardee must also provide the Embassy on an annual basis an inventory of all the U.S. government provided equipment using the SF428 form.

Applicants should be aware of the post award reporting requirements reflected in 2 CFR 200 Appendix XII—Award Term and Condition for Recipient Integrity and Performance Matters.

3. ***Branding and Marking***

The Department of State, its programs, and U.S. Government funding and assistance should be easily identifiable to the Department's global audiences.

Recipients of federal assistance awards must follow the branding guidance published at Guidance for Contracts and Grants - U.S. Department of State Brand System. Branding policy exceptions are outlined in the U.S. Department of State Foreign Affairs Manual 10 FAM 416, Policy Exceptions.

I. OTHER INFORMATION

Guidelines for Budget Justification

Personnel and Fringe Benefits: Describe the wages, salaries, and benefits of temporary or permanent staff who will be working directly for the applicant on the program, and the percentage of their time that will be spent on the program.

Travel: Estimate the costs of travel and per diem for this program, for program staff, consultants or speakers, and participants/beneficiaries. If the program involves international travel, include a brief statement of justification for that travel.

Equipment: Describe any machinery, furniture, or other personal property that is required for the program, which has a useful life of more than one year (or a life longer than the duration of the program), and costs at least $10,000 per unit.

Supplies: List and describe all the items and materials, including any computer devices, that are needed for the program. If an item costs more than $10,000 per unit, then put it in the budget under Equipment.

Contractual: Describe goods and services that the applicant plans to acquire through a contract with a vendor. Also describe any sub-awards to non-profit partners that will help carry out the program activities.

Other Direct Costs: Describe other costs directly associated with the program, which do not fit in the other categories. For example, shipping costs for materials and equipment or applicable taxes. All "Other" or "Miscellaneous" expenses must be itemized and explained.

Indirect Costs: These are costs that cannot be linked directly to the program activities, such as overhead costs needed to help keep the organization operating. If your organization has a Negotiated Indirect Cost Rate (NICRA) and includes NICRA charges in the budget, attach a copy of your latest NICRA. Organizations that have never had a NICRA may request indirect costs of 15% of Modified Total Direct Costs (MTDC) as defined in 2 CFR 200.1.

"Cost Sharing" refers to contributions from the organization or other entities other than the U.S. Embassy. It also includes in-kind contributions such as volunteers' time and donated venues.

Alcoholic Beverages: Please note that award funds cannot be used for alcoholic beverages and other entertainment related expenses.

STEP Enrollment

U.S. citizens who travel to Saudi Arabia are encouraged to enroll in the Department of State's Smart Traveler Enrollment Program (STEP) available at: https://step.state.gov/step/. Enrollment enables citizens to receive security-related messages from the Embassy and makes it easier for us to locate you in an emergency. The Embassy also recommends that all travelers review the State Department's travel website at travel.state.gov for the Travel Warnings, Travel Alerts, and Saudi Arabian Specific Information.