

Syria Annual Program Statement (DFOP0018862)

Frequently Asked Questions

(Posted August 13, 2026)

Question: 1

Can applicants submit one SOI addressing multiple/all three Goals and Objectives, or does each Objective require a separate SOI submission? Would the budget ceiling be the sum of the objectives included?

Answer:

Proposals that integrate various program areas may be submitted for consideration. NEA reserves the right to separate components of a proposal during the review and/or negotiation phase as programmatic priorities are developed, and funding is made available for specific areas. The estimated award ceiling for each objective is stated in section C.

Question: 2

I am having issues establishing a MyGrants account – AND/OR - having other issues with MyGrants. Who should I contact?

Answer:

Given that NEA/AC does not have technical oversight of MyGrants, please submit a ticket via the [ILMS helpdesk](#). Please also send a screenshot of the helpdesk ticket submission and ticket number to nea-grants@state.gov.

Question: 3

The SF-424 form is not indicated as “Required” in this opportunity. And we should prepare a SOI and a budget form to apply for phase 1. Do you recommend using specific forms for these documents specifically?

Answer:

There are no required templates or formatting specifications beyond what is stated in the APS.

Question: 4

The APS states that applicants must have the capacity to operate in Syria and the ability to obtain the necessary registrations and permits. May a U.S.-registered prime applicant demonstrate this capacity through one or more duly registered Syrian subrecipients that would undertake in-country implementation, while committing to obtain any additional prime-recipient registrations or permits required before mobilization?

Alternatively, must the prime applicant itself be legally registered in Syria before SOI submission, Phase 2 submission, award, or the start of activities?

Answer:

Applicants are not required to have completed their own local registration prior to SOI submission but must obtain all necessary registrations and legal authorizations before commencing project activities. Working through a locally registered partner/subrecipient while your own registration is finalized may be a viable structure, however final determination for this approach will need to be approved by the Grants Officer prior to starting project activities.

Question 5:

Does NEA/AC expect applicants to provide a letter, written indication of interest, or other evidence of engagement from the relevant Syrian ministry, regulator, public institution, or authority at the SOI stage?

If such evidence is not required, would it be considered favorably during the merit review?

Answer:

Such evidence is not required at the SOI stage. If available, applicants may reference existing engagement or collaboration with relevant Syrian institutions within the "List of Partner Roles and Responsibilities" narrative section, which may be considered favorably during merit review at the full application stage. Formal letters of collaboration or support are not a required or explicitly defined submission component at the SOI stage.

Question: 6

Under the commercial-entry pathway, does NEA/AC expect the Phase 1 SOI to identify specific U.S. companies or industry associations and provide evidence of their interest, or would a well-supported market consultation and engagement plan be sufficient at the SOI stage?

Answer:

Either approach is acceptable at the SOI stage. Applicants may identify specific U.S. companies or industry associations if such relationships already exist or present a well-supported market consultation and engagement plan if they do not, while specifying potential partners. A more detailed and fully developed engagement strategy, including specific U.S. commercial partners where possible, would be expected at the full application stage.

Question: 7

May a legally registered Syrian commercial company serve as a subrecipient under this APS, including for field research, feasibility studies, technical or engineering services, monitoring, and operational support?

If so, would the prohibition on profit and the applicable cost principles for commercial organizations also apply to the commercial subrecipient?

Answer:

Yes, a legally registered Syrian commercial company can serve as a subrecipient. The prohibition on profit would be applicable. No profit can be earned/made from USG federal assistance.

Question: 8

Is there a specific dollar threshold that would trigger vetting requirements, particularly regarding cash and in-kind support (Syria Vetting Procedures sub-section 3(b))? Or would an entity receiving any dollar amount be subject to vetting?

Answer:

There is not a dollar threshold for vetting of Key Individuals of entities receiving cash or in-kind support.

Question: 9

Under Objective 2, does "prioritizing U.S. firms, agricultural equipment, and seed varieties" require direct procurement or partnership with U.S. companies, or can projects focus on strengthening market systems, distribution channels, and enabling conditions that facilitate future engagement by U.S. agricultural suppliers?

Answer:

Projects may involve direct procurement or partnership with U.S. firms, **and/or** focus on strengthening market systems, distribution channels, and enabling conditions that position U.S. agricultural suppliers for future market entry. Applicants should clearly articulate how their proposed approach expands opportunities for U.S. firms, equipment, and seed varieties in the Syrian market.

Question: 10

For agriculture and returnee recovery objectives, is direct financial or in-kind support to beneficiaries expected, or are facilitative approaches that work through local private-sector actors, financial institutions, and service providers equally encouraged?

Answer:

Direct financial or in-kind support is not specifically expected or required. Facilitative approaches that work through local private-sector actors, financial institutions, and service providers are equally encouraged, provided the proposed approach achieves the objective's intended outcomes.

Question: 11

Under Objective 3, what level of engagement with formal financial institutions is expected? Would partnerships with licensed Syrian microfinance banks and loan-guarantee mechanisms be considered responsive to the objective? Would partnerships involving regulated Syrian banks together with local microfinance or cooperative financial mechanisms be considered consistent with this expectation?

Answer:

NEA/AC is open to a range of approaches and levels of engagement with formal financial institutions, whether used individually or in combination. Applicants should clearly demonstrate how their proposed financial partnership approach uses Syria's formal financial institutions "to the maximal extent practicable," as stated in the APS, while generating benefit to both the Syrian people and U.S. interests.

Question: 12

Would NEA/AC consider favorably an integrated systems-based project that combines multiple priority areas within a single coherent economic recovery platform (for example, financial inclusion, returnee recovery, climate-smart agriculture, and private sector development), or is the Department seeking proposals focused primarily on a single funding opportunity?

Answer:

The APS is structured around three distinct funding tiers, each with its own award ceiling, but integrated proposals are not precluded. Applicants combining multiple tiers should clearly map activities and budget to each relevant tier, noting NEA/AC reserves the right to separate proposal components during review or negotiation.

Question: 13

Under the Returnee Business Recovery opportunity, the APS emphasizes increasing access to finance through Syria's formal financial institutions. Would projects that establish or expand revolving financing mechanisms in partnership with licensed Syrian financial institutions be considered responsive, provided that financing is delivered through formal banking channels rather than direct grant mechanisms?

Answer:

Projects that establish or expand revolving financing mechanisms in partnership with licensed Syrian financial institutions, delivering financing through formal banking channels, align with the APS's emphasis on using Syria's formal financial institutions to the maximal extent practicable.

Question: 14

The APS references shelter rehabilitation as a priority investment supporting voluntary returns. Would financing mechanisms supporting household rehabilitation through formal lending arrangements be considered an eligible component of Returnee Business Recovery?

Answer:

Yes, financing mechanisms supporting household rehabilitation through formal lending arrangements would be considered an eligible component of Returnee Business Recovery.

Question: 15

Would projects that include multiple financial products (SME finance, agricultural finance, housing finance, education finance, healthcare finance and women's enterprise finance) within one integrated financial inclusion platform be viewed as responsive to the Returnee Business Recovery objective?

Answer:

Multiple financial products (SME finance, agricultural finance, housing finance, education finance, healthcare finance and women's enterprise finance) within one integrated financial inclusion platform could be viewed as responsive provided the design meets objectives stated in the APS.

Question: 16

Does NEA/AC encourage formal partnerships with Syrian commercial banks as implementing partners, or would banks be expected to participate primarily as service providers?

Answer:

Either approach would be acceptable provided the approach meets the criteria and objectives of the APS.

Question: 17

Would formal partnerships with Syrian Chambers of Commerce be considered an appropriate mechanism for strengthening private sector engagement, SME development and commercial enabling environments under the APS?

Answer:

Yes, formal partnerships with the Syrian Chambers of Commerce may be considered appropriate provided the design meets objectives stated in the APS.

Question: 18

Would projects operating across multiple governorates be considered appropriate where interventions are linked through one integrated market system, or is NEA/AC seeking geographically focused interventions?

Answer:

Yes, projects may operate across multiple governorates.

Question: 19

The APS highlights catalyzing private capital. Would leveraging private lending, commercial banking resources and institutional co-financing satisfy this objective where federal assistance primarily de-risks or catalyzes investment?

Answer:

Yes, provided the objectives and criteria for the APS are met.

Question: 20

Would NEA/AC consider partnerships with Chambers of Commerce, banking institutions, producer associations and private sector organizations as evidence of sustainable institutional capacity and market systems strengthening?

Answer:

Yes, depending on the approach, partnerships of this kind may serve as evidence of sustainable institutional capacity and market systems strengthening.

Question: 21

Would revolving financing mechanisms that continue operating beyond the project period be viewed favorably as demonstrating long-term sustainability and reduced dependency on external assistance?

Answer:

Per the APS, the nature, scope, and sustainability of outcomes and results will be critical to assessing the costs and benefits – and determining whether the SOI will proceed to the next stage of the merit review process, expanded proposal submission.

Question: 22

The APS requests a Theory of Change within the SOI. Given the 1–3 page narrative limit, would a concise narrative statement be sufficient, or would NEA/AC prefer applicants to include a simple visual logic model or diagram as an annex? The APS notes that diagrams and conceptual frameworks may be included as charts or annexes outside the page limit.

Answer:

A concise narrative statement is sufficient provided it satisfies the “Theory of Change” instructions in the Project Design section of the application. Applicants may elect to include diagrams and/or conceptual frameworks as annexes supplementing, not replacing, the narrative if they decide doing so would enhance their responses to the requirements detailed in the APS.

Question: 23

Would projects designed to strengthen financial markets, agricultural markets and SME ecosystems simultaneously be considered responsive if all activities directly contribute to the APS objective of promoting trade, private investment and long-term economic resilience?

Answer:

Depending on the approach, projects that strengthen multiple market systems simultaneously may be considered responsive, provided all activities clearly and directly contribute to the objectives of the APS.

Question: 24

Would NEA/AC advise applicants to frame integrated concepts primarily around the named APS funding opportunity (e.g., Returnee Business Recovery or Agriculture System Recovery), while describing complementary activities that support broader economic recovery objectives?

Answer:

Yes. Applicants should frame their SOI primarily around the named funding opportunity/tier they are applying under, while describing any complementary activities that support broader economic recovery objectives.

Question: 25

Where engagement with Syrian ministries, governorates, municipalities, or technical directorates is necessary, what forms of cooperation or institutional support would be considered acceptable, including technical assistance, equipment, infrastructure rehabilitation, or capacity-building?

Answer:

Applicants should propose the form of engagement they consider most effective for achieving the objectives outlined in the APS.

Question: 26

Where suitable U.S. equipment, technologies, or seed varieties are unavailable, not adapted to Syrian conditions, or not commercially viable, would the use of non-U.S. alternatives remain permissible if appropriately justified?

Answer:

Non-U.S. alternatives could be permissible where appropriately justified and as approved by the Grants Officer.

Question: 27

Would direct cash or in-kind grants to returnee-owned MSMEs be considered eligible where they form part of a broader market-based recovery model linked to formal financial institutions, business development services, and private-sector engagement?

Answer:

Direct cash or in-kind grants may be eligible as part of a broader market-based recovery model, but applicants are encouraged per the APS to use Syria's formal financial institutions "to the maximal extent practicable."

Question: 28

Can you please confirm that Phase 1 initial SOI applications are only required to include the total federal share requested?

Answer:

Please refer to section D for required contents and format of a SOI.