

Following are the principal questions and answers from the Bidders Conference:

Q1: The NOFO states that the project should not include sub-awards to beneficiary organizations. We would anticipate working with partner organizations. Can they be paid from the grant for their expenses implementing the project with us? What about their overhead costs?

A: It is understood that the grantee may work with co-implementing partners. Their costs to manage this project, including an appropriate level of indirect costs, may be included in the grant. The intention of the restriction in the NOFO is that grant funds should not be used to support the regular, ongoing work of beneficiary organizations. However, the grantee may develop, in collaboration with partners and/or beneficiaries, demonstration projects that directly further the project's goals of regional collaboration, advocacy, and the application of the Women, Peace, and Security framework to climate change issues.

Q2: What is your overall vision for the project?

A: Taking into account the political realities facing civil society generally and women-led CSOs in particular, we would like to see innovative proposals that provide new approaches to ensuring and promoting the participation of women-led CSOs in climate change policy and programs. As the first such project for our bureau, this project will provide a proof-of-concept or pilot project in this area, so we would envision the winning project as one that takes risks to explore this problem and give us the opportunity to determine our best next steps in addressing it. Accordingly, a robust evaluation and assessment activity should be included in the proposal, including the possibility of mid-course corrections as necessary.

Q3: Does DOS have specific key climate issues that it would like to address?

A: We will rely on your assessment of the situation in the countries in which you propose to work. The climate issues you address should be those where women's voices are or can be effectively mobilized. You may also take into account climate-related issues that cross national boundaries.

Q4: Is there a preference for working in all five countries listed in the NOFO, or focusing more closely, and possibly for a longer period of performance, on a smaller number?

A: There is no requirement or preference stated in the NOFO in this regard, keeping in mind that we want to see a regional cross-boundary focus. The proposal should clearly identify the reasons for the selection of countries.

Q5: While the proposed budget level for the project is adequate, are there thoughts about how to continue this work following the conclusion of this initial proof-of-concept or pilot project?

A: We do want to see the issue of sustainability built into the proposal. We cannot guarantee funding levels in future years. That being said, gender equity and climate are key issues for the Administration and it seems possible that additional resources will be provided to support work in these areas.

Q6: How do you see the use of the Women, Peace and Security Agenda, which currently does not have a strong connection to climate change? Are we bringing back a radical feminist agenda that was at the origins of the WPS? Is there a role for men in this process?

A: Gender equality is both a goal in itself and a tool to solve problems. The WPS Agenda is fundamentally about participation, and we note its origins in the Global South. While our focus has shifted to consider gender more broadly, and we want to expand the range of stakeholders, we have chosen to focus in this project on women, because globally, female peace builders and women-led CSOs continue to be underfunded.

Q7: The NOFO calls for working with regional networks of CSOs. Is it acceptable to work with existing networks, or is it required to build specific networks for this project?

A: It is completely acceptable to work with existing networks whose activities correspond to the goals of the project.