

DFOP0018712

Regional Annual Program Statement

Frequently Asked Questions

(Posted August 21, 2026)

Question 1:

Could you kindly confirm whether a for-profit company registered in Morocco is eligible to apply as the prime applicant under this funding opportunity, or whether applications from for-profit entities must be submitted in partnership with an eligible non-profit organization?

Answer 1:

For-profit organizations are eligible to apply independently and are not required to have a formal relationship with a U.S. registered business. Partnerships are welcomed and can strengthen a proposal (e.g., through added capacity, local expertise, or cost-share), but they are not a requirement at either the SOI or full-application stage.

Question 2:

Tunisia: Would a project aiming to leverage artificial intelligence as a specialized financial advisory tool to improve financial inclusion and financial literacy among individuals and small businesses that are currently underserved or have limited access to financial education and advisory services be considered eligible under this funding opportunity, given its focus on financial inclusion and its potential reliance on U.S.-based technology providers? The technological infrastructure would likely rely on services provided by a U.S.-based company, whether through large language models (LLMs), cloud computing services, or both.

Answer 2:

Yes, a project using artificial intelligence to improve financial inclusion and financial literacy for underserved individuals and small businesses would be eligible under this funding opportunity, provided it is tailored to Tunisia's specific country priorities and program description as outlined in the APS.

Question 3:

Are projects at the concept stage eligible for consideration, or is a demonstrated proof of concept required at the time of application?

Answer 3:

Yes. Projects at the concept stage are eligible for consideration under this funding opportunity, and a demonstrated proof of concept is not required at the time of SOI submission. The two-phase structure of this APS is designed to let applicants present early-stage ideas first, then develop a more detailed, evidence-backed proposal if invited to the full application stage.

Question 4:

Can the same organization submit its own Statement of Interest as the lead applicant for one project, while also participating as a consortium partner in a separate proposal led by another organization?

Answer 4:

Yes. The APS does not restrict an organization from serving as the lead applicant on one SOI while also serving as a consortium partner/subrecipient on a separate, unrelated SOI led by another organization.

Question 5:

West Bank: For the West Bank country allocation, would an organization that is currently in the process of registering in Israel be eligible to submit an SOI as a prime applicant?

Answer 5:

As per the eligibility requirements on page 12 of the APS, selected organizations must be locally registered in the West Bank. If an organization's registration is not complete by the time that the SOI is due, it should clarify its status in the SOI and identify a plan to obtain the required local registrations.

Question 6:

West Bank: For the West Bank country allocation, must the applicant already be locally registered in the West Bank at the SOI stage, or can West Bank registration be completed later during the full application, co-design, or pre-award stage?

Answer 6:

If selected, applicants are required to be locally registered in the West Bank by the time that the award agreement is signed. If an organization's registration is not complete by the time that the SOI is due, it should clarify its status in the SOI and identify its plan to obtain any required local registrations.

Question 7:

Can we participate in two projects? One project on our own and the second one in partnership with other NGOs.

Answer 7:

Yes, an organization may participate in two projects. The APS does not restrict an organization from serving as the lead applicant on one SOI while also serving as a consortium partner/subrecipient on a separate, unrelated SOI led by another organization.

Question 8:

Tunisia: Has a grant of this type previously been implemented in Tunisia? If so, could you share some information about the projects and whether the Embassy considered them successful or satisfactory? If not, could you clarify whether there is a particular reason why similar grants have not previously been implemented in Tunisia?

Answer 8:

Applicants should refer to Section C.1: Program Description of the APS, which outlines the current country priorities, thematic focus areas, and program objectives for Tunisia under this funding opportunity. Applicants can also refer to USASpending.gov to view awards that have been issued with performance in Tunisia.

Question 9:

Tunisia: Are real estate development projects (residential, commercial, hospitality) that bring U.S. brands to Tunisia eligible under this program?

Answer 9:

Projects submitted should be in alignment with the priority sectors outlined under the Tunisia section of the NOFO. Please review Section C for ‘Out of Scope Program Activities’ which references projects exclusively of a commercial or profit-making nature.

Question 10:

Are non-U.S. for-profit companies and non-profit organizations registered outside the U.S. (specifically in Jordan or Egypt) fully eligible to apply as the prime applicant (lead recipient) under the Regional Track?

Answer 10:

Yes, non-U.S. for-profit and not-for-profit organizations are eligible to apply as the lead applicant.

Question 11:

In a joint application between two non-U.S. organizations (e.g., Jordanian and Egyptian entities), is it required for one entity to serve as the prime applicant and the other as a subrecipient per 2 CFR 200.331/332? Does the location or non-U.S. status of either partner affect eligibility under the regional track, provided the ultimate beneficiaries align with eligible country priorities?

Answer 11:

Yes. The APS structures multi-organization applications around a single prime recipient with other partners serving as subrecipients.

No. Non-U.S. status and foreign location do not disqualify an organization from serving as the prime applicant, provided the ultimate beneficiary country/countries align with this APS's eligible country list.

Question 12:

Can the applicant submit a single Statement of Interest covering activities in two countries listed in the APS, such as Iraq and Lebanon?

Answer 12:

Yes, organizations may submit a SOI that includes more than one country that aligns with the Regional priorities listed on page 13 of the APS. Organizations may also submit multiple SOIs under this APS for different countries that align to the country-specific priorities included in Section C of the APS. Eligible countries are limited to the following:

- Algeria
- Bahrain
- Iraq
- Lebanon
- Libya
- Morocco
- Oman
- Tunisia
- West Bank

Question 13:

For a non-U.S. applicant without a Federally Negotiated Indirect Cost Rate Agreement (NICRA), may the organization elect the de minimis indirect cost rate under 2 CFR 200.414, and what percentage of Modified Total Direct Costs (MTDC) is applicable for this solicitation?

Answer 13:

Yes, a non-U.S. applicant without a NICRA may elect the de minimis indirect cost rate of 15%. Please note that the 15% de minimis indirect cost rate established under 2 CFR 200.414(f) does not apply to for-profit entities. For for-profit institutions without a NICRA, indirect costs should be allocated to the appropriate direct cost categories in accordance with applicable Department of State guidance. For-profit applicants may not elect the 15% de minimis indirect cost rate.

Question 14:

Given the strong emphasis on “America First” foreign assistance, commercial diplomacy, and adoption of U.S. technology/standards, is a formal written partnership with a U.S. private sector entity required at the Phase 1 (SOI) stage, or is demonstrating clear alignment with U.S. technologies and standards sufficient?

Answer 14:

No, a formal written partnership with a U.S. private sector entity is not required at the Phase 1 (SOI) stage. Demonstrating clear alignment with U.S. commercial and technology priorities is sufficient at this stage. However, consistent with the Department’s emphasis on commercial diplomacy and “America First” foreign assistance, priority will be given to SOIs that: 1) position U.S. businesses and products as the preferred choice for regional partners; 2) help U.S. businesses secure foreign government contracts and tenders; and 3) promote the adoption of U.S. technology, standards, and frameworks.

Question 15:

While cost sharing is not required, Section B.2 notes it is favorably considered during merit review. Is additional weight given to proposals that include private-sector contributions or in-kind commitments from regional/U.S. partners?

Answer 15:

No; although cost sharing or matching is favorably considered during merit review, there is not a preference between different forms of cost sharing or matching. Private sector partnerships may be beneficial for alignment with other requirements of the APS.

Question 16:

Are preliminary letters of support or MOUs between consortium partners permitted within these annexes, or should Phase 1 be strictly limited to project framework materials?

Answer 16:

Yes, letters of support of MOUs between consortium partners are permitted. However, please note that for a fair review during Phase 1, all panelists will review the first page of the SOI up to the page limit and no further.

Question 17:

Is recalling and resubmitting all previously submitted SOIs the expected process when submitting an additional SOI?

Answer 17:

Each SOI in MyGrants functions as its own discrete application record, with its own status (Draft, Pending Review, Returned to Applicant, etc.) that is edited and resubmitted independently. Applicants are permitted to submit more than one SOI under this APS.

Question 18:

If an SOI is recalled and resubmitted, will its original submission date and review status be preserved?

Answer 18:

If a SOI is edited or modified, the MyGrants system will preserve the original submission date. If a SOI is recalled and submitted as an entirely new document, the SOI will have new submission data associated with the document. For additional assistance with the MyGrants platform, please submit a ticket via the [ILMS helpdesk](#).

Question 19:

Is there an alternative method within MyGrants to submit multiple SOIs independently under the same funding opportunity?

Answer 19:

Each SOI should be submitted as a separate application to the funding opportunity in MyGrants. For assistance with the MyGrants platform, please submit a ticket via the [ILMS helpdesk](#).

Question 20:

Can a startup that is actively building its platform submit a Statement of Interest under APS DFOP0018712 while technical development continues?

Answer 20:

There is no minimum organizational track record expected or required of applicants. However, the SOI should briefly demonstrate the organization's expertise and previous experience in administering programs and be able to explain their concept for the proposed project. The two-phase structure of this APS is designed to let applicants present early-stage ideas first, then develop a more detailed, evidence-backed proposal if invited to the full application stage.

Question 21:

Could you please confirm whether the lead applicant/legal entity identified in the initial SOI may be changed at the expanded proposal stage, subject to the Department's approval, or whether the same legal entity that submits the SOI must remain the lead applicant throughout the process?

Answer 21:

If an organization submits a SOI as the lead applicant or primary legal entity, it must remain the primary applicant throughout the expanded application process.

Question 22:

Can we participate in other projects at the same time?

Answer 22:

Yes, you can participate in other projects at the same time. Organizations must be able to allocate and document resources dedicated to a project on the basis of work performed on that project.

Question 23:

We found the opportunity through MyGrants, however, we are not able to locate any form for the submission. Can you please support us on this?

Answer 23:

There is not a specific form for the SOI submission. You can find the required format of the SOI submission in the APS. To submit your SOI, you will navigate to the "Application Uploaded Docs" tab from the MyGrants funding opportunity page and upload your document there.

If you experience technical issues with MyGrants, please contact the ILMS Help Desk, as the Department is unable to provide technical or back-end system support.

Question 24:

Tunisia: Would a Tunisian for-profit social enterprise be eligible to apply directly under this opportunity?

Answer 24:

Yes, for-profit organizations are eligible to apply as the lead applicant.

Question 25:

Tunisia: Are projects focused on developing Tunisia–U.S. trade in handicrafts, artisan products, and creative industries within the scope of the program?

Answer 25:

Please review Section C.1 of the APS which outlines Tunisia’s identified priority sectors.

Question 26:

Is a U.S.-based partner or consortium required, or is it possible to apply with U.S. partner?

Answer 26:

No, a U.S.-based partner or consortium is not required. Please note that there can only be one applicant listed on the SOI; as such, if you intend to apply with a U.S. partner, you will need to determine who will be the primary applicant and list the other party as a sub-awardee or other partner.

Question 27:

Are there specific priorities, geographic areas, or project components that applicants should address in the 1–3 page Statement of Interest?

Answer 27:

SOIs may address foreign assistance programs for partner countries in sectors including energy development and exports; trade facilitation; emerging technologies (particularly AI and telecommunications); critical infrastructure (aviation, 5G, transport, space technology); critical minerals; regional economic integration; advanced manufacturing; workforce training aligned with U.S. business needs; and economic recovery in conflict-affected areas. Projects should orient implementing partners toward the American business community and foster burden-sharing.

Priority will be given to projects that champion and position U.S. businesses and products as the preferred choice for regional partners, that help U.S. businesses secure foreign government contracts and tenders for key

projects, and that promote the export of U.S. technology that will lock in alignment with U.S. technological standards and frameworks. Projects should promote trade, not aid, by catalyzing private capital, ensuring market principles guide development, and delivering measurable benefits to host countries while also advancing U.S. commercial interests. Successful SOIs will demonstrate how they advance America's strategic leverage by increasing U.S. exports and investment while reducing host country dependencies on adversarial powers.

Please review the APS for further country specific priorities.

Question 28:

Are there any specific requirements regarding cost-sharing or matching contributions at the SOI stage?

Answer 28:

There are not specific requirements regarding cost-sharing or matching contributions at the SOI stage or any stage as cost share or matching is favorably considered, but not required, as part of the merit review process. Opportunities for cost sharing and matching may be discussed during negotiation and/or consultative program design (aka “co-design”), if applicable.

Per 2 CFR §200.306, items that are proposed for cost share must be allowable per 2 CFR §200, Subpart E—Costs Principles.

Question 29:

Tunisia: Geographic Scope: While we note the announcement prioritizes primary hubs like Greater Tunis and Sfax, it indicates programming is "not limited to" these areas. Would an impactful project operating out of Djerba be considered competitive if its technological solutions directly support and scale the commercial supply chains flowing into the Sfax industrial and agribusiness hub?

Answer 29:

As outlined in the application guidelines, projects are not limited to a specific city or area. The application should demonstrate how the project will address the identified application priorities for the country in question (i.e., Tunisia), including alignment with relevant thematic/sector priorities.

Question 30:

Tunisia: Project Nature (Applied R&D): We understand that "predominant academic or basic research" is out of scope. Could you clarify if applied R&D aimed directly at market deployment, commercial transactions, and digital data sovereignty is acceptable?

Answer 30:

As outlined in the application guidelines, the SOI must demonstrate how a project will leverage foreign assistance for U.S. partners to advance U.S. economic, security, and diplomatic objectives. Commercial objectives fall under that requirement. A project that involves R&D is acceptable under the application guidelines if there is a demonstrable connection between the proposed project and the outlined priorities, including a foreign assistance benefit, listed on page 11 of the APS.

Question 31:

To satisfy the requirement of championing American enterprise and increasing U.S. exports, our digital framework is designed to build its core infrastructure exclusively on U.S. cloud services and database architectures (e.g., AWS or Microsoft Azure). Does this framework meet the strategic intent of orienting regional partners toward the American business community?

Answer 31:

The merit review panel will be able to determine whether the framework responds to the application guidelines after the SOI is submitted for review. The merit review panel will then determine if the project proposal meets the application requirements.

If the proposal does not meet the requirements outlined in the APS, then the SOI will not move forward in the review process. Please review Section F, Application Review Information, as it pertains to how each submission will be evaluated and rated.

Question 32:

Section C (NOFO page 6) states that “priority will be given to projects that champion and position U.S. businesses and products as the preferred choice for regional partners, that help U.S. businesses secure foreign government contracts and tenders for key projects, and that promote the export of U.S. technology that will lock in alignment with U.S. technological standards and frameworks.” a. Can NEA/AC please clarify how applicants should reflect these objectives in USG-funded procurements made under this award, while complying with applicable federal assistance and competition requirements? In any USG-funded procurements made under this award, under what circumstances (if any) may applicable award terms permit participation to be limited to qualified U.S. providers?

Answer 32:

Applicants should reflect the listed priorities through project design and activities rather than through the procurement process itself; any procurement conducted with award funds remains subject to the Department of State's Standard Terms and Conditions incorporating 2 CFR 200.

Question 33:

May applicants provide nonbinding letters of support from prospective partners who are not expected to be formal sub-recipients? If yes, can NEA/AC please confirm that these letters will not count towards the four-annex limit?

Answer 33:

Yes, applicants may include nonbinding letters of support from prospective partners who are not expected to be formal subrecipients. These letters are not required but may help demonstrate stakeholder buy-in or partnership interest. Letters of support count toward the four-annex limit described in the APS. Applicants should prioritize using annexes for the most relevant supporting materials and are encouraged to reference or summarize any letters of support within the narrative itself where space allows, rather than relying solely on the annex to convey partner interest.

Question 34:

Lebanon: How should applicants reconcile the country priority on diaspora engagement with the exclusion of initiatives directed toward diaspora communities (out of scope activities, activity d)? Are diaspora actors eligible to participate as investors, buyers, technical experts, or commercial connectors rather than beneficiaries?

Answer 34:

Yes, diaspora actors may participate in the award as key personnel as long as they are contributing to the project's core objectives rather than serving as its intended beneficiaries. Out-of-scope activity (d) excludes projects primarily directed toward diaspora communities as beneficiaries; it does not exclude diaspora individuals or entities from contributing their expertise, capital, or commercial networks in service of the project's broader goals. Applicants should clearly describe in their SOI how any diaspora participation supports — rather than constitutes — the project's primary purpose.

Question 35:

Iraq: Are there any limitations to pooling capital with non-US public sector or development finance institution capital in service of establishing financing initiatives that advance the U.S. strategic priorities as defined in the APS?

Answer 35:

As outlined in the APS, SOIs must describe how proposed resources, including resource contributions and/or cost share from non-federal sources, will contribute to the proposed activities and outcomes of the project. Establishing a capital fund using the foreign assistance funds would be considered out of scope as a project exclusively of a commercial or profit-making nature; for additional information, please review Section C of the APS.

Question 36:

Tunisia: What are the agency's preferred indicators of success (reforms enacted/ deals closed/ number of market entries/etc.)?

Answer 36:

During Phase 2 of the application process, selected applicants will be directed to submit a full application based on the approved concept. As outlined in the APS document, a full application typically includes materials such as a Logic Model, Results Monitoring Plan (RMP) with a workplan. At Phase 2, applicants will receive a list of standard indicators as suggested options. Applicants should review this list and select the indicators most appropriate for their proposal, tailoring their choices to reflect the specific goals and activities of their project.

If an application is selected by the merit review panel for funding, specific indicators of success may be further detailed during the award negotiations process.