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FROM THE AMERICAN PEOPLE

Request for Information (RFI)

Activity: The Nita M. Lowey Middle East Partnership for Peace Act (MEPPA)
Notice Type: Request for Information
Notice No.: RFI-294-25-001-MEPPA
Issuance Date: November 20, 2024
Response Due Date: December 11, 2024 at 16:00, Jerusalem Time
Response Email Address: wbg-ocm-submissions@usaid.gov

Congress enacted the Nita M. Lowey Middle East Partnership for Peace Act (MEPPA) in 2020 to build the foundation for peaceful co-existence between Israelis and Palestinians and to enable a sustainable two-state solution. Working toward that vision, USAID/West Bank and Gaza is implementing a number of initiatives intended to strengthen the Israeli and Palestinian peacebuilding community and engage new local partners to deliver on MEPPA peacebuilding objectives, including awards under several Annual Program Statements, the Building Regional Economic Bridges activity, and a small new initiative that will provide capacity-building to local organizations. The Mission is looking to identify ways to further strengthen the peacebuilding enabling environment and community in Israel, the West Bank, and Gaza, particularly by providing new local partners with small grants and technical assistance and by facilitating collective action among peacebuilders, including MEPPA partners and beyond. Priorities for capacity-building include organizational administration and management, peacebuilding best practices, and conflict sensitivity.

Several assessments have identified the overarching capacity needs among Israeli and Palestinian peacebuilding organizations. Palestinian non-governmental organizations (NGOs) tend to rely on fewer donors compared to their Israeli counterparts and struggle to diversify funding sources for sustainability. Israeli organizations, especially smaller groups, also have capacity strengthening needs, but issues tend to be less acute since they are operating in a more permissive and better resourced context. Social and political pressures can make some Israeli and, particularly, Palestinian organizations reluctant to take on higher profile roles as prime USAID partners, only furthering the disparities. Some of the needs that were identified by both Israeli and Palestinian NGOs in these assessments include fundraising and diversifying

revenue streams; Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning (MEL) capacities; and flexible capacity-building resources.

Both Israeli and Palestinian peacebuilding communities face significant challenges in sustaining their efforts. Recent Gallup polling shows that only 25% of Israelis currently support a two-state solution, down from 61% a decade ago. Among Palestinians, recent polling from PSR shows support for a two-state solution has risen from 34% to 45%, but still, only 37% believe that this is likely achievable. The brutality of Hamas on October 7, 2023 shook Israelis to the core, and prominent peacebuilders – many of whom lived in Gaza periphery communities – were killed, injured, and displaced. The subsequent Israeli campaign has killed over 43,000 Gazans. Peacebuilding is needed now more than ever, and grassroots work is vital to help stop the cycle of violence. Yet, dealing with the conflict every day takes its toll; peacebuilding organizations are grappling with internal tensions, staff attrition, logistical impediments, changes to funding streams, and shifting program plans.

Enabling this community to manage these shocks and stressors is crucial. If the Israeli and Palestinian peacebuilding communities become more resilient to current and future challenges, boost their capacity, and improve collaboration around common goals, they can mitigate conflict, empower Israeli and Palestinian citizens to work together, and stimulate public support for non-violent conflict resolution initiatives.

USAID is in the design stage for an activity that aims to reinforce the peacebuilding ecosystem by enhancing Israeli and Palestinian civil society organizations' (CSOs) capacity and their ability to deliver on peacebuilding objectives. Through a comprehensive set of interventions, the activity will address key challenges faced by CSOs. It will enhance collaboration, support networks and coalition-building, provide training, and empower emerging organizations to contribute effectively to peacebuilding objectives.

The activity will contribute towards MEPPA's overall goal to build the foundation for peaceful co-existence between Israelis and Palestinians and enable a sustainable two-state solution. Working toward that vision, the activity seeks to strengthen people-to-people grassroots linkages to address common challenges and enhance peacebuilding momentum to affect institutional and policy change.

<u>Summary Activity Description</u>

Objective 1: Palestinian and Israeli peacebuilding community strengthened.
Objective 2: Performance of peacebuilding organizations improved.

Objective 3: MEPPA peacebuilding community expanded to include more new, local partners.
Objective 4: Collective action among MEPPA partners, between MEPPA partners and other entities, and among other institutions or entities interested in peacebuilding supported and improved.

Objective 1: Palestinian and Israeli peacebuilding community strengthened.
This component seeks to support the peacebuilding community as a whole through networking, visioning, and collaboration to advance peacebuilding objectives. This component focuses on the peacebuilding community writ-large and building collective power for conflict prevention and mitigation.

Where possible, activities should support, strengthen, and improve the sustainability of existing structures rather than create new ones.

Objective 2: Performance of peacebuilding organizations improved.
This component should include tailored capacity-building activities to improve the performance of CSOs undertaking peacebuilding initiatives. Capacity-strengthening should be customized to meet local organizations' self-identified needs and/or gaps identified through Capacity Assessment tools, pre-award surveys, financial reviews, and/or audits.

Objective 3: MEPPA peacebuilding community expanded to include more new, local partners.
This component will identify potential new and/or emerging local (Palestinian and Israeli) partners with innovative ideas for advancing MEPPA objectives. This component will include micro- or small grants, in-kind support, and capacity support for new organizations seeking to implement peacebuilding programs. In addition, this component will reduce barriers to entry for organizations seeking to implement peacebuilding programming and participate in the peacebuilding community.

Grants under this component and, if appropriate, the other two components are expected to range from $25,000 to $150,000.

Objective 4: Collective action among MEPPA partners, between MEPPA partners and other entities, and among other institutions and entities interested in peacebuilding supported and improved.
Under this component, the awardee will facilitate MEPPA-driven collective action to advance peacebuilding in Israel, the West Bank, and Gaza, including any efforts that advance peacebuilding further afield.

Work under all objectives must be flexible, tracking and responding to emerging needs in a dynamic context.

Response Requirements:

Interested parties can respond to the RFI by following the instructions provided herein. This RFI is issued solely for information and planning purposes. This is not a Request for Proposals, a Request for Applications, or a Request for Concept papers, and is not to be construed as a commitment by the U.S. Government to issue a solicitation or a Notice of Funding Opportunity (NOFO), or ultimately award a contract or an assistance agreement on the basis of this RFI.

Please also note the following: (a) responding to this RFI will not give advantage to any organization or individual for any subsequent competition; (b) responses are not applications and cannot be accepted by the U.S. Government to form the basis for an award; (c) the U.S. Government will not pay for any information voluntarily submitted as a result of this request; (d) responses may be used by USAID without restriction or limitation, therefore proprietary information should not be sent; (e) responses may be provided to any or all of the questions herein; and (f) concept papers or applications will be discarded, and should therefore not be included in your response.

Responses to this RFI must be in English and must not exceed the page limitations noted below. The pages must be numbered bottom right, with 12pt Calibri font.

a) Request for Information (no more than five (5) pages)

USAID is seeking feedback on the above draft activity description. Interested parties/organizations are invited to answer **any or all** of the questions outlined below. In your response, please specify the question, including its number, followed by your answer:

USAID is seeking input from potential implementing partners and the peacebuilding community on the design of this activity. We are looking for input in the following areas:

1. Do these objectives as described accurately reflect the needs of the peacebuilding community? If not, what is missing, or what is included that is not necessary? Why?
2. Does it make sense to combine these objectives into one project, as laid out in this document? Or would dividing these objectives better advance implementation, effectiveness, and/or sustainability? How? Why?
3. Does the notional description above include any objectives that would discourage bidders' or participants' interest? If so, what, and how might the design be adjusted to address this?

4. How do USAID Branding & Marking requirements affect bidders' interest in this potential opportunity? How might USAID Branding & Marking requirements affect programmatic impact, effectiveness, and/or sustainability?
5. What are the best ways to integrate and address women's empowerment and gender equality issues, such as active participation, leadership and Gender-Based Violence, into the above-outlined design?
6. What range of subaward values and subawarding approach would be most useful for the local peacebuilding community to advance peacebuilding?
7. What approaches and methodologies would be most effective in increasing the number of Palestinian partners?
8. Will the above objectives improve the enabling environment for cross-border partnership and strengthen the resilience of peacebuilding constituencies and institutions? If not, how can those goals be better addressed?

b) Capability Statement (No more than one (1) page):

In addition to the above, USAID is conducting market research on the availability of potential partners to implement this type of program and would like to receive capabilities statements from qualified organizations that would be interested in implementing the activity described above. Please address the following areas:

1. Name of the organization;
2. Type of organization;
3. Name, email and phone number of contact person;
4. Website of the organization (if any);
5. Where is your organization based?
6. Brief statement describing the capabilities of the organization, including a description of any previous/current activities of similar scope. The standard capability statement of an organization is also acceptable.

Submission Instructions

Please send your response to this RFI via email to **wbg-ocm-submissions@usaid.gov** by the date indicated above with the subject "MEPPA-RFI No. 294-25-001." Responses must include the organization's name, address, point of contract, position title, phone number, and email address.

Responses to this notice will inform future MEPPA Programming and information received will be shared within USAID. USAID will not respond to any questions or clarifications submitted as part of this submission.

Use of Responses: Commercially sensitive information will not be shared publicly. Responses to the larger strategic questions referenced above may be used in the drafting of a solicitation by USAID without restriction or limitation. This is not a solicitation or call for proposals or applications. Any proposals or applications submitted in response to this request will not be considered. All information provided will become the property of USAID and will not be returned. USAID reserves the right to use information provided by respondents for its purposes. Proprietary information must not be sent. USAID will not pay for information submitted nor will it reimburse for costs incurred by an organization that elects to respond to this request. All costs associated with responding to this request will be solely at the respondent's expense. USAID is in no way obligated to utilize submitted information or issue a solicitation as a result of this request.

USAID is not obligated to procure any of the services described herein, nor should the release of this request be construed as such a commitment on the part of USAID. Not responding to this request does not preclude participation in any future solicitation(s) or notices of funding opportunity, if any is issued.

Thank you for your assistance and interest in USAID programs.

Sincerely,

Deborah Perlman

Digitally signed by Deborah Perlman
Date: 2024.11.20 16:42:18 +02'00'

Deborah Perlman
Agreement Officer
USAID West Bank and Gaza