

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF STATE
Bureau of Economic and Business Affairs
Request for Statements of Interest

Funding Opportunity Title: FY24 EB ITSI Programs Costa Rica – Statements of Interest

Funding Opportunity Number: DFOP0016763

Deadline for Applications: 11:59 PM EDT on September 15, 2024

Assistance Listing: 19.322

PROGRAM DESCRIPTION

The U.S. Department of State Bureau of Economic and Business Affairs (EB) announces an open competition for organizations to submit a statement of interest (SOI) to carry out a program under the International Technology Security and Innovation (ITSI) Fund, created by the CHIPS Act of 2022. Please carefully follow all instructions below.

The submission of the SOI is the first step in a two-step process. Applicants must first submit a concise no more than **three (3)** page statement of interest designed to clearly communicate the program idea and objectives. This is not a full proposal. The purpose of the SOI process is to allow applicants to submit program ideas for evaluation prior to requiring the development of a full proposal application. Upon a merit review of eligible SOIs, selected applicants will be invited to expand on their program idea(s) by submitting a full proposal application. Full proposals will go through a second merit review before final funding decisions are made.

Priority Country: Costa Rica

Program Objectives:

The CHIPS Act established the ITSI Fund “to support the development and adoption of secure semiconductors, [and] semiconductor supply chains” with the goal to make the global semiconductor supply chain more resilient, diversified, and secure. EB administers a portion of the ITSI funds, the “ITSI Promote” line of effort, to help expand international semiconductor assembly, testing, and packaging (“ATP” or “downstream”) capacity in key partner countries that will in turn diversify the global semiconductor supply chain. The goal of this program is to bring that capacity online in ways that will be beneficial to the new U.S. semiconductor manufacturing facilities as well as our allies and partners. The State Department announced its partnership with Costa Rica under the ITSI Fund on July 14, 2023.

Applicants can find additional information on the ITSI Fund here: [The U.S. Department of State International Technology Security and Innovation Fund - United States Department of State](#)

EB’s objectives under the ITSI Fund are to: 1) Expand and diversify the required workforce for

semiconductor ATP facilities to ensure growth; and 2) Improve regulatory environments that will encourage private sector efforts that generate additional capabilities in ATP facilities.

Participants and Audiences: Policy experts, industry leaders, educational institutions, and U.S. and foreign government officials. Beneficiaries should include, but are not limited to, Costa Rican educational institutions, and U.S. and foreign private industry. Work should align with Costa Rica's National Semiconductor Roadmap goals and demonstrate collaboration with the Costa Rican government.

This solicitation includes **two (2)** categories under which applicants may submit SOIs.

Organizations may submit no more than two (2) SOIs and only one (1) SOI per category. The applicant must explicitly identify the category for each SOI submitted. If a SOI may fit within more than one category, the organization must explicitly identify which category they determine is the best fit for the work proposed. **If a SOI does not explicitly identify one of the below categories on the first page of the SOI, it may be deemed technically ineligible and may not be forwarded to the review panel for consideration.**

Category 1: Workforce Development

Illustrative activities include:

- Build or expand public-private partnerships that create a new pipeline of talent for ATP facilities. Create new or expand internship and apprenticeship programs and scholarships in the ATP industry.
- Develop programs to certify students in equipment key to the ATP industry.
- Create or expand educational and training exchanges between Costa Rican and U.S. industry, academic institutions and research facilities, with a focus on ATP industry.
- Streamline the process for updating curricula at universities and vocational education and training (VET) providers, including implementing existing, best-of-class curriculum.
- Build workforce training and certification programs at the Americas Partnership for Economic Prosperity Digital Center of Excellence. Create partnerships with industry to ensure skills needs are developed.

Category 2: Policy and Regulatory Reform

Illustrative activities include:

- Reduce administrative burdens for business creation and the development of local suppliers and customers. Explore options to support start-ups and entrepreneurs specific to ATP, including for example through co-investment funds, investor matchmaking platforms, and business creation advisory services.
- Promote innovation in semiconductor-related fields and knowledge transfer, including by better aligning the national innovation priorities with those of higher education

institutions, enhancing the role and capacity of the innovation promotion agency, and improving administrative capacities for intellectual property examination and litigation.

FEDERAL AWARD INFORMATION

Award Floor: \$500,000

Award Ceiling: \$2,000,000

Performance Period: 36 months or less.

ELIGIBILITY INFORMATION

The following organizations are eligible to apply:

- U.S. or foreign non-profit organizations, including think tanks and civil society/non-governmental organizations
- U.S. and foreign public, private, or state educational institutions
- U.S. and foreign for-profit organizations
- Public International Organizations

All organizations later invited to submit full applications will be required to have a Unique Entity Identifier (UEI) number issued via www.SAM.gov as well as a valid registration on www.SAM.gov in order to be eligible to receive an award.

APPLICATION AND SUBMISSION INFORMATION

1. Content and Form of Application Submission

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

Complete SOI submissions must include the following:

- Program Statement (not to exceed three (3) pages in Microsoft Word) that includes:
 - A table listing:
 - Name of the organization;
 - Summary budget showing total program cost by cost category
 - Program length;
 - A concise synopsis of the operating and contextual environment for the expansion of the ATP sector in Costa Rica, including a summary of existing ATP-relevant public and private technical and vocational schools, roles of relevant government ministries, and current and projected demand for technical persons and specialties in Costa Rica's ATP sector;
 - A synopsis of the program, including a theory of change and a brief statement on how the program will have a demonstrated impact and engage relevant

stakeholders. The SOI should identify partners in government, industry, and academia as appropriate;

- A concise breakdown explicitly identifying the program's objectives and the activities and expected results that contribute to each objective; and,
- A brief description of the applicant's expertise and capacity to implement the program and manage a U.S. government award.

Technically eligible SOIs are those which:

- Arrive electronically via email to **EB-ITSI-Grants@state.gov** by **11:59 PM EDT on September 15, 2024** under the announcement titled "**FY24 EB ITSI Programs Costa Rica – Statements of Interest**," funding opportunity number **DFOP0016763**. SOIs submitted via email to **EB-ITSI-Grants@state.gov** must contain the funding opportunity number in the subject of the email.
- Are in English; and,
- Heed all instructions and do not violate any of the guidelines stated in this solicitation.

For all SOI documents please ensure:

- All pages are numbered;
- All documents are formatted to 8 ½ x 11 paper; and,
- All documents are single-spaced, 12-point Times New Roman font, with 1-inch margins. Captions and footnotes may be 10-point Times New Roman font. Font sizes in charts and tables can be reformatted to fit within one page width.

2. Submission Dates and Times

SOIs are due no later than **11:59 PM EDT on September 15, 2024**.

3. Other Submission Requirements

All application materials can be submitted electronically via email to **EB-ITSI-Grants@state.gov**.

APPLICATION REVIEW INFORMATION

1. Criteria

Each SOI will be evaluated and rated on the basis of the evaluation criteria outlined below.

Quality of Program Idea: SOIs should be responsive to the program framework and policy objectives identified in this RSOI, appropriate in the country context, and should exhibit originality, substance, precision, and relevance. Projects should have the potential to have an

immediate impact leading to long-term, sustainable reforms. SOIs should demonstrate ability to coordinate with existing relevant activities being implemented by the USG. A proposal that has built and demonstrates it incorporates a public-private partnership will be seen as an advantage as it brings additional industry, educational institution or government investment.

Organizational Capacity and Record on Previous USG Federal Assistance Awards: The SOI demonstrates the organization's expertise and previous experience in administering programs, preferably in Costa Rica and preferably similar programs targeting the requested program area or similarly challenging environments. SOIs should address how the program will engage relevant stakeholders and should identify local partners as appropriate.

Program Planning/Ability to Achieve Objectives: The SOI clearly articulates proposed program activities and expected results towards achieving program objectives.

2. Review and Selection Process

A Grants Review Committee will evaluate all eligible SOIs. Panelists review each SOI individually against the evaluation criteria, not against competing SOIs. Following the review, any successful SOI applicants will be contacted and instructed to expand on their ideas and submit full applications for grants or cooperative agreements through a limited competition. This will be followed by another independent panel review and vote to recommend funding.

FEDERAL AWARDING AGENCY CONTACTS

If you have any questions about the SOI application process, please contact EB-ITSI-Grants@state.gov by August 2, 2024. Emails must reference the funding opportunity number DFOP0016763 in the subject line. FAQ will be posted on Grants.gov by September 10, 2024.

