

Supporting Civil Society in Syria NOFO Questions
Opportunity Number: SFOP0009221

1. In relation to this clause "The project should be implemented from a third country, with a strong justification for why that country was chosen. NEA/AC highly recommends a presence in Berlin, Germany for operational and donor liaison purposes." We are US based; however we have partner implementers in other countries. If one of our partners is registered in Germany, does that fulfill the recommendation for a third country implementation?

ANSWER: The staff responsible for managing the project should be based in Berlin as that is where donor coordination meetings are anticipated to occur.

2. Do both partner implementers (i.e., our group and our partner in Germany) have to be registered in both countries/in the SAMS directory to qualify for this grant? Could a German-based organization be the primary implementer on the application?

ANSWER: There can only be one prime applicant for an application, with the number of partners at the prime applicant's discretion. The prime applicant is required to have both a UEI and SAM.gov registration as noted in section V. B., Registration Requirements. Eligible applicants include U.S. and foreign non-profit organizations; for-profit organizations; private, public, or state institutions of higher education; and public international organizations. A German-based organization meeting the aforementioned eligibility requirements would be eligible to be the prime applicant.

3. In light of the focus of NEA's existing FURAT program and other ongoing USAID projects, as well as the "Wiaam II" program results listed on pg. 4 of the NOFO, to what extent should activities in the Strengthening Civil Society NOFO focus on providing direct assistance to restore essential services and promote livelihoods?

ANSWER: Applications should demonstrate an approach for how subawards to Syrian civil society organizations in Syria may address service and livelihood gaps as a means to achieving project objectives, particularly related to reintegration.

4. What is the purpose of Berlin-based coordination and any recommendations for how those partners not based in Germany could still meet these conditions?

ANSWER: NEA/AC supports other related projects with a successful history of operating out of Berlin and also supports contracted staff located in Berlin who provide oversight of activities. NEA/AC avoids supporting field offices in neighboring countries to Syria as a way to mitigate potential objections from host countries. However, we welcome a management approach and staffing plan that enables the partner to operate safely and successfully while effectively coordinating with NEA/AC and other US-funded projects.

5. Please reconfirm that registration in Germany is not an eligibility requirement.

ANSWER: While organization registration in Germany is not an eligibility requirement, section III., part C. Additional Eligibility Considerations, subpart C.2 host Country Legal Compliance reflects that “NEA/AC requires that applicants be in sound legal standing with appropriate host government authorities at the time of application to this funding opportunity. If the applicant is not currently based in Berlin, Germany and intends to operate from that location, they should demonstrate the ability to establish a base there in a timely manner following notification of the award. Award recipients will be required to maintain legal standing throughout the life of the award, including for any sub-grant made under its auspices.”

6. Please share whether any % of evaluation criteria are related to registration or staff in Germany.

ANSWER: “Staff and position specifications” represents 15% of the total score, of which the proposed office posture for staff is one component. NEA/AC highly recommends a presence in Berlin, Germany for operational and donor liaison purposes.

7. Would it be possible to clarify the preferred requirement "A presence in Berlin, Germany for operational and donor liaison purposes." Does it refer to staff presence or organizational presence?

ANSWER: The preference relates to staff presence, but that staff presence should comply with host country regulations and the organization must be in sound legal standing with appropriate government authorities.

8. Does NEA envision the awardee to have both a presence in the MENA Region and in Germany?

ANSWER: Yes, NEA/AC anticipates the award recipient to have both a presence in Syria and in Germany. The presence in Syria Many past NEA/AC stabilization projects have included a team of Syria-based field officers to facilitate oversight and implementation of programming. Specifically, the applicant should – as reflected under section V., A.1, – “Demonstrate the ability to accomplish the required activities with efficient staffing and without establishing a dedicated local office in Syria.”

9. Would an organization based elsewhere than Germany but with staff either based or able to frequently travel to Germany be eligible?

ANSWER: Yes, as long as the eligibility requirements detailed in section V. A., Eligible Applicants and V. B., Registration Requirements are met.

10. Can you provide any more information on what the expected engagement in Berlin, Germany would look like and the expected frequency?

ANSWER: There is a strong preference for locating the project management team in Berlin, Germany to facilitate regular coordination with other US-funded Syria projects managed from Berlin, weekly meetings with Berlin-based NEA/AC staff, monthly in-person meetings when the Istanbul-based GOR visits, and irregular visits from other US officials. Applications proposing basing staff elsewhere should provide a strong justification for the alternate location, paying particular attention to the Staff and Position Specifications reflected in section VIII., Application Review and Selection Process.

11. A potential partner organization is considering working through a UN agency on activities in Syrian government-held areas. Would this preclude them from being a partner under this Call for Proposals?

ANSWER: Potential partnerships are reviewed on a case-by-case basis with many factors considered, including risks related to supporting organizations who may coordinate with the Syrian regime or other malign actors.

12. We would like to arrange a call with NEA to hear more about the work that is ongoing or has been done under the Wiaam II project. Would you be available for an introduction call about our work in NES and for us to hear about current programming?

ANSWER: NEA/AC frequently meets with organizations to provide them with a general overview of the work we are undertaking. While we cannot provide specifics regarding the current Wiaam project, we would entertain such a call following the close of the NOFO. Please send an email to the NEA-Grants@state.gov address and we will ensure the correct individual receives the request.

13. For the notional budget pertaining to the optional years two and three, can applicants simply provide budget estimates according to the subheadings listed in NEA's budget template, i.e., labor, travel, supplies, etc.?

ANSWER: Yes, applicants must provide budget estimates according to the subheadings reflected in the budget template provided as part of this NOFO. The budget should be reflective of anticipated costs as much as possible and not however be an overall amount per budget category. Please review the "Budget and Budget Narrative" section in the NOFO under VIII. Application Review and Selection Process, A. Application Evaluation Criteria to ensure the budget is presented to permit appropriate assessment of proposed budget costs.

14. Can NEA please clarify whether the proposal narrative and proposed milestones should address all three years of programming in full detail or if applicants should focus on detailed year one activities, with summaries of illustrative year two and three activities?

ANSWER: Applicants should focus the project narrative and corresponding logic model and Results Monitoring Plan for one year, with illustrative summaries of activities for subsequent option years.

15. For the proposal timeline that will be submitted as an annex, should the timeline describe all three years of the proposed project or the first 12 months of performance?

ANSWER: Applicants should focus the timeline for one year, with illustrative summaries of activities for subsequent option years.