
**Questions to and Answers from the Office to Monitor and Combat
Trafficking in Persons (TIP Office) about its 2022 Program to End Modern
Slavery (PEMS) Programming Solicitation: Request for Statements of
Interest (SOI)**

ELIGIBILITY

Q. Who is eligible to apply for funding?

A. U.S.-based and foreign non-profits, nongovernmental organizations (including faith-based organizations), for-profit organizations, institutions of higher education, and public international organizations (PIOs) are eligible to apply for funding under this solicitation.

For-profit organizations are **not permitted** to generate profits from grant-funded activities.

The Department of State's Office of the Procurement Executive must provide additional approval for grants awarded to for-profit entities.

Foreign governments are not eligible to apply, although governments may be beneficiaries of funded programs, provided that funding does not pay salaries of government agency personnel and that such assistance is not restricted by U.S. law or policy.

Q. Are US agencies able to apply?

A. U.S. government agencies may respond to this Notice of Funding Opportunity (NOFO) with applications for projects that would be funded through an Interagency Acquisition Agreement.

Q. Does the TIP Office allow for local providers whose parent agency is headquartered outside said country to apply? For example, XX is headquartered in the U.S., however it has a regional Africa headquarters/office where it is registered as an agency.

A. Organizations with a parent agency headquartered outside of the country of proposed programming are welcome to apply to the solicitation.

LOGISTICS

Q. How much funding does the TIP Office have for the Program to End Modern Slavery in 2022?

A. The Program to End Modern Slavery has received \$25 million in annual appropriations for each of Fiscal Years 2016 through 2021. This round of funding will use Fiscal Year 2021 funds.

Q. How much money will be allocated to each Programming Priority Category?

A. The TIP Office does not have specific category budgets. The final amount allocated for each category will depend on many factors, including the quality of applications received and the nature of the proposed activities.

Q. What is the minimum and maximum funding amounts?

A. The lower threshold for this award is \$1.5 million with a ceiling of \$15 Million. Typical awards have been in the \$3-12 million range.

Q. What is the maximum number of awards?

A. The number of awards obligated depends on the availability of funds and the quality of applications received.

Q. Is there a maximum and/or minimum program duration?

A. The TIP Office plans to issue awards with a project duration not to exceed 60 months (five years). There is no minimum program duration. Past awards have typically been in the two to five year range.

Q. From the solicitation it is unclear whether the full SF-424 package is required by the deadline at this SOI stage.

A. Only the SF-424 form is required with the SOI submission. Instructions on how to complete the SF-424 form can be found in the Guidelines for Submitting TIP Office PEMS Statements of Interest (SOI).

If you are unable to attach a document once the forms are completed, please contact the ILMS Support Desk at 1 (888) 313-4567 or submit a ticket through the ILMS Self Service Portal (<https://afsitsm.service-now.com/grants>).

Q. What should be submitted with the Statements of Interest?

A. Please note applicants are required to submit only the project narrative (using the online narrative template) and online SF-424 form for the SOI submission. Any additional document will result in the failure of the technical review. Applicants are required to use the project narrative template on SAMS Domestic **and must type within the template's grey box**. The narrative should be no more than 9,000 characters including spaces, footnotes, and graphs and charts, which is roughly 3 pages. The character count limit does not include the Key Information which is detailed in the PEMS Guidelines Document. Applicants should carefully read the Funding Opportunity and Guidelines (Guidelines for Submitting TIP Office PEMS Statements of Interest) when preparing their proposal.

Q. May an applicant include footnotes in the project narrative?

A. Yes, an applicant may include footnotes within the project narrative. However, the footnotes are included within the character count limit. Spaces, footnotes, and charts are included within the 9,000-character limit.

Q: Do charts count toward the character count?

A. Yes, anything in the project narrative counts towards the character count.

Q. May an organization submit multiple proposals?

A. Yes, an organization may submit multiple proposals

Q. Will there be acknowledgement of successful on-time submission by the TIP Office?

A. Successful submission acknowledgments will be received via SAMS-D, you will not receive an acknowledgement directly from the TIP Office.

Q. When can applicants expect a decision from the TIP Office on its SOI?

A. Applicants should receive a status update within about 45 days from the submission deadline. If an applicant is invited to submit a full proposal, the applicant will have approximately 45 days to complete the full proposal.

Q. May we submit additional attachments in our application?

A. No. An applicant may only submit the documents requested: project narrative (online template) and the online form SF-424. Any additional attachments will result in a failure of the technical review.

Q: Is SAMS-D the same as “SAM” or “SAMS” for organizations outside the US?

A. Applications for this funding opportunity must be submitted via SAMS Domestic (SAMS-D) (<https://mygrants.service-now.com/grants>) by 5:00 p.m. Eastern Daylight Time (EDT) on March 10, 2022, to be eligible for consideration. The System for Award Management (SAM.gov) is not required for submission of an application on SAMS Domestic; however, a valid Unique Entity Identifier number is required for organizations selected for an award. See section 3. under Application and Submission Information for more details.

SAMS Domestic is the system for applying to federal assistance, countersigning awards, and managing post-award documentation with the Department of State.

SAM.gov is used to register organizations with the U.S. government. Registration makes organizations eligible to receive federal assistance.

Q. How do I unlock my SAMS-Domestic account or change my SAMS-Domestic password? What should I do if I encounter difficulty using the SAMS-Domestic website?

A. The TIP Office is unable to unlock SAMS-Domestic account or reset passwords. For assistance with SAMS-Domestic (<https://mygrants.service-now.com/grants>) contact the ILMS Support Desk at 1-888-313-4567 (toll free for international callers) or submit a ticket using the ILMS Self Service Portal (<https://afsitsm.service-now.com/ilms/home>). Please let us know if you have any questions by emailing JTIPGrants@state.gov.

Q. Is there any restriction with regard to cost share (e.g., max. amount)? Is cost sharing mandatory?

A. Cost sharing, cost matching, and cost participation are not required to carry out a project under this funding opportunity. If cost sharing is proposed, if awarded, the Recipient must provide the minimum amount of cost sharing as stipulated in the Recipient's budget; if the Recipient is not successful in raising the amount by the end of the award, the USG will reduce the federal funds proportionally.

CONTENT

Locale

Q. Does my application have to specify in which country or region my organization will work?

A. Yes, applicants must indicate the country(s) or region(s) in which the program will occur.

Q. May organizations submit an application for multiple countries or a regional project? Is there a preference for a regional or multiple country approach over a one-country approach?

A. An applicant may propose a regional or multi-country project; however, the same TIP Office programming priority category must be applied within all identified countries in a single proposal.

Q. Do countries facing a security crisis have a chance to benefit from this fund?

A. Organizations working in countries that face security crisis would be eligible for funding. However, the State Department monitors those situations to determine if projects or programs should continue.

Q. Are there geographical priorities for funding, in terms of countries or regions or TIP Tier ranking? Can an organization submit an application for a country or region where they are already implementing a related program?

A. The TIP office identified priority categories and requires applicants to propose and justify the chosen locale. Organizations currently receiving funds from the TIP Office may apply for funding under the present funding opportunity. Under the project description, applicants should explain how the project will compliment or fill gaps with existing interventions. The eligibility requirements for applying to this funding opportunity do not restrict applicants from receiving other sources of funding from the United States government, including funding from other bureaus within the Department of State. However, the applicant must provide information on any work conducted with U.S. government funding related to human-trafficking issues or cross-cutting (health, education, labor, gender, etc.) human-trafficking issues within the project narrative.

Q. Are there any country/regional restrictions for applicants? Any specific country/region priorities?

A. The NOFO did not identify any country of focus so organizations may select one or more country in their approach. Foreign assistance funds may not benefit countries or entities that are not eligible recipients of United States foreign assistance or for which there are applicable assistance restrictions. Foreign assistance funds cannot be used for programming in the United States.

Priority Categories

Q. May one organization submit two SOIs for the same category but for separate countries and products (not linked to each other)?

A. Applicants may submit multiple SOIs within the same category if proposed programming is distinct and not overlapping.

Q. Will an application be more competitive if it addresses multiple categories and topics?

A. Reviewers will evaluate applications based on their own merits. Reviewers will use the criteria outlined in the SOI under section E. Application Review Information.

Q. May applications be across multiple categories or does it need to identify one category to focus on?

A. If applicants address multiple *categories* within a single application, the application must demonstrate how they are interconnected. If an application touches on more than one priority category, applicants should identify one priority category at the top of the SF-424 and note the connection to other priority categories in the narrative.

Q: What is the difference between categories and topic areas? Do applicants have to select a listed topic area?

A. Example topic areas are provided in the NOFO. Applicants may select the provided topic area OR propose a different topic area that falls within the category. Under the problem criteria, applicants must describe how the organization understands the programming priority(ies) and issue(s) it has chosen to address as they exist within the chosen locale(s)

Q. Must applicants address all topic areas listed under a category in the SOI or may we select one or two?

A. Applicants must carefully read the programming priorities included in the Notice of Funding Opportunity. The SOI should address one topic within one priority category but may overlap with other priority categories. If an application touches on more than one priority category, applicants should identify one priority category at the top of the SF-424 and note the connection to other priority categories in the narrative. If applicants address multiple categories within a single application, the application must demonstrate how the chosen topic areas are interconnected. Applicants may submit multiple proposals on different categories and/or topic areas that are not interconnected. Each individual application may focus on either one or multiple countries.

If selected to participate in the second stage, organizations may receive feedback from the TIP Office regarding condensing multiple proposed projects.

Q. In the SOI under project description should we include a goal and objectives - and how much can this alter at the full proposal stage?

A. Applicants may provide goals and objectives in the project narrative, as applicable, under one of the categories stated in the guidelines. In the second stage, selected applicants will receive feedback from the TIP Office and can incorporate that into their full proposals.

Q. Under the supply chains category, can a proposal focus on multiple supply chains? i.e. may an application focus on reducing trafficking across textile AND farming?

A. Applicants can submit multiple SOIs on different categories and/or topic areas that are not interconnected. If applicants include multiple topic areas under the supply chain category in one SOI, the application should provide a rationale for how they are interconnected and why including them enables the program to accomplish its goals.

Q. Are there specific industries of focus under supply chains?

A. Example topic areas are provided under each category. Applicants may select the provided topic area OR propose a different topic area that falls within the category.

Q. Can you please clarify further if the public health topic also needs to contribute to prevalence reduction - the other topics speak to prevention and prevalence reduction, but the description for the Public Health category sounds more like identification/referral/care? Is my understanding correct?

A. To be eligible, SOIs must present a strategy for measuring and reducing the prevalence of human trafficking. Under some circumstances the use of outcome i.e., proxy, indicators to measure prevalence will be accepted, provided there is a strong justification and empirical evidence.

Q. Under the Financial Inclusion Category, does "2-3 or more distinct settings" necessarily mean different countries, or would multiple districts or communities within a single country meet the requirement?

A. Provided there are demonstrable differences in the type of trafficking or demographic/socioeconomic characteristics of the region, this may be considered.

Q. For sex trafficking applications, do programs need to only target adults, men and boys, and/or LGBTQI+ community? Will SOIs focusing on sex trafficking of women and girls not be funded? Can it be broad-based with disaggregation and targeted interventions?

A. The target populations include adults (both men and women), boys, and the LGBT+ community. While there is no restriction on including other groups not specifically mentioned, such as girls, the primary focus should be on one or more of the listed target populations.

Q. For sex trafficking, do beneficiaries have to include ALL the identified categories?

A. Applicants should select one or more target populations listed under the sex trafficking category. The target populations include adults (both men and women), boys, and the LGBT+ community. While there is no restriction on including other groups not specifically mentioned, such as girls, the primary focus should be on the listed target populations.

Prevalence Reduction and M&E

Q. Will any preference be given to projects that include Randomized Controlled Trials (RCTs) between subject groups?

A. PEMS funds scientifically rigorous research to establish evidence on the effects of anti-trafficking programs on the reduction of the prevalence of human trafficking through the advancement of sound prevalence measurement methodologies, strong monitoring and evaluation practices, evidence-based programming, and the application of victim-centered and trauma-informed approaches. PEMS prioritizes the use of experimental methods in research, monitoring, and evaluation. Applicants are strongly encouraged to utilize randomized controlled trials if appropriate to the research question and context. However, all proposed academically approved research methodologies will be considered. Any proposed research methodology should be well explained and

strongly justified and should depend on the context and the research question identified.

Q. Will other measures of prevalence be given equal weight to RCT proposals during the review process i.e., proxy indicators? If applicants propose using proxy indicators, does the application need to specify the proxy indicators in the Statement of Interest?

A. If proxy or outcome indicators are chosen instead of a direct measurement of the prevalence of victims, the connection between the proxy/outcome and potential human trafficking victimization must be strongly justified and based on qualitative or quantitative evidence. The evidence should indicate that if a proxy/outcome is achieved, it lessens the likelihood of victimization. Ideally proxy or outcome indicators should be identified in the SOI, but if additional time is needed, a strong justification of the process the team will go through to determine proxy or outcome indicators will be considered.

Q. What constitutes experimental research and what constitutes distinct settings? Are two regions in one country distinct settings?

A. Applicants should conduct their own investigation into what constitutes experimental research before applying. Distinct settings generally means different geographic locations. Two regions in one country could be considered provided there are demonstrable differences in the type of trafficking or demographic and/or socioeconomic characteristics of the regions.

Q: May applicants use proxy indicators, especially with sex trafficking of males?

A. PEMS is open to the use of proxy indicators, but applicants must have a strong justification and empirical evidence as to why proxy indicators are being used rather than direct estimation.

Q. Please provide an example of a proxy measure for prevalence that is supported by empirical evidence.

A. Examples of potential proxy measures that could be considered instead of direct estimates of prevalence are: (1) Use of an anonymous complaint mechanism, tips of potential human trafficking, and law enforcement actions to investigate and/or prosecute trafficking; (2) victim use of legal assistance during court proceedings, victim use of assistance with accessing legal services such as visas and employment authorization, and number of workers filing rights-based complaints

anonymously; and (3) number of children recovered from high trafficking risk situations by trained police officers and number of investigations initiated by law enforcement into potential trafficking situations. The justification must be explained, and the evidence must be cited.

Q. Do we need to specify the proxy indicators in advance? Or could that be further elaborated upon in the full proposal?

A. Ideally proxy or outcome indicators should be selected in the SOI stage, but if additional time is needed, a strong justification of the process the team will go through to determine proxy or outcome indicators will be considered.

Q. Could you clarify further the need for empirical evidence for choosing proxy indicators? Is that evidence about harm caused for collecting directly relevant data?

A. If proxy or outcome indicators are chosen instead of a direct measurement of the prevalence of victims, the connection between the proxy/outcome and potential human trafficking victimization must be strongly justified and based on qualitative or quantitative evidence. The evidence should indicate that if a proxy/outcome is achieved, it lessens the likelihood of victimization.

Q. What is intended with 'prevalence reduction' and how does the baseline prevalence need to be established-- i.e., is quantitative and qualitative prevalence research expected?

A. Prevalence reduction means a demonstrable decrease in the level of prevalence of victims of human trafficking. The baseline prevalence estimate should be established at the start of the project. The prevalence estimate should be quantitative, but it can be supplemented/supported by qualitative evidence.

Q. Are there standard prevalence reduction measurements used or recommended by PEMS? Or are applicants allowed to define these specific measurements?

A. Applicants are allowed to define prevalence reduction measurement methodologies provided they include a strong justification, and their choice is based on evidence.

Q. Prevalence estimates can be misleading because a small percentage of a large population can be a large number and a large percentage of a small population can be a small number. Can we use estimated number of victims rather than prevalence?

A. Prevalence estimates are counts, either directly or by proportion, of the victims of trafficking. Both proportions and counts will be accepted.

Q. Should all SOIs propose programs on prevalence research only, or prevalence research and interventions to reduce prevalence, or either?

A. SOIs should not be focused solely on research, there should be an element of programming/implementation.

Q. If a prevalence baseline has been established within the past year, is a new baseline required to be conducted and funding under this award?

A. No, not necessarily if there is a justification and evidence of the timing and connection to the proposed program

Partnerships

Q. Is there a vetting process for partnerships with the private sector?

A. Applications submitted by for-profit entities may be subject to additional review following the panel selection process. Additionally, the Department of State prohibits profit to for-profit or commercial organizations under its assistance awards. Profit is defined as any amount in excess of allowable direct and indirect costs. The allowability of costs incurred by commercial organizations is determined in accordance with the provisions of the Federal Acquisition Regulation (FAR) at 48 CFR 30, Cost Accounting Standards Administration, and 48 CFR 31 Contract Cost Principles and Procedures.

Q. Can you speak more about the potential of the TIP Office suggesting applicants to partner after submission?

A. The TIP Office will provide feedback on the selected SOIs and may recommend, but not require, collaboration between applicants. Funding will not be affected by the applicant's decision to collaborate or not, with other recipients.

Q. Is it possible to apply jointly with another organization? Is there a limit with how many organizations I could apply?

A. While applicants may designate one or more partner organizations as sub-grantees, there can only be one prime award recipient. When applying to the funding opportunity, there must be a single or primary applicant. There is not a limit on how many sub-grantees may join with the prime organization.

Q. May an organization submit one proposal as the prime applicant and submit another proposal as a sub-grantee? And may an organization be a sub-grantee under multiple proposals?

A. The answer to both questions is yes.

COMPETITIVE REVIEW

Q. Aside from previous experience, how will an organization's capacity be assessed: Is there a financial component to the assessment?

There is no financial component of the organizational capacity assessed during the application review stage. Organizational capacity will be judged according to the criteria stated: Describe the capacities and qualifications that enable your organization to address the problem(s) stated above in the proposed location(s). Briefly describe your organization's existing partners or ability to develop future partnerships with governments, academia, civil society, the private sector, other funders, and international organizations to advance the goals of the proposed project and improve collaboration on the reduction of the prevalence of human trafficking. Please also describe any demonstrable experience in administering projects of similar size and scope, and experience administering projects within similar or related subject matter areas.

Q. How will the TIP Office decide which SOIs to fund?

A. All SOIs received will first undergo a technical review to ensure they meet the technical requirements. SOIs which pass the technical review are reviewed by TIP Office colleagues and are forwarded to the relevant U.S. embassy and regional bureau colleagues and other USG experts for review and comment. Recommendations are compiled and reviewed by the TIP Office staff, which then recommend selected SOIs for full proposals to TIP Office leadership.

Q. Will applicants be contacted during the review period if additional information is required from them, rather than the submission simply being rejected?

A. Applicants will not be contacted during the review period to provide additional information. After SOIs are selected, the TIP office may provide feedback to the selected applicants.

Q. Where may I find additional advice about preparing the SOI or full application?

A. The TIP Office must ensure a fair, transparent, competitive grants process.

No one from the TIP Office or other Department of State personnel, including Embassy personnel, is permitted to advise you on the content of your application.

Persons with additional questions about the requirements of the solicitation may contact JTIPGrants@state.gov.