

**U.S. DEPARTMENT OF STATE
BUREAU OF EAST ASIAN AND PACIFIC AFFAIRS (EAP)
Notice of Funding Opportunity (NOFO)**

Announcement Type:	New Announcement
Assistance Type:	Cooperative Agreement
Funding Opportunity Title:	Mekong Policy Dialogue Series
Funding Opportunity Number:	SFOP0006967
Catalog of Federal Domestic Assistance (CFDA) Number:	19.124
Total Available Funding:	\$700,000 U.S. dollars
NOFO Issuance Date:	May 19, 2020
Deadline for Receipt of Questions:	June 8, 2020 at 11:59PM Eastern Time
Application Deadline:	July 17, 2020 at 11:59PM Eastern Time
Eligibility Category:	U.S. non-profit/non-governmental organizations (NGOs) having a 501(c) (3) status with the IRS, or overseas-based non-profit/non-governmental organizations, U.S. or overseas private/state institutions of higher education.

A. PROJECT DESCRIPTION

A.1. Background

The U.S. Department of State's Bureau of East Asian and Pacific Affairs (EAP), Office of Multilateral Affairs (MLA) announces an open competition for organizations to submit applications for a funding opportunity for a series of track 1.5 dialogues focused on the Mekong (Cambodia, Laos, Myanmar, Thailand, and Vietnam). MLA supports the United States' Indo-Pacific strategy to strengthen governance and transparency, and promote a free and open Indo-Pacific. U.S. engagement in the Mekong region is an integral part of the Indo-Pacific Strategy. U.S. efforts in the Mekong region support respect for sovereignty and international law, transparency, good governance, sustainable development, transboundary river governance, energy market integration, and address non-traditional security issues including transnational crime, trafficking in persons, drugs, and wildlife, and humanitarian assistance and disaster relief.

This funding opportunity will host a series of five (5) track 1.5 dialogues for a minimum of forty (40) participants at each dialogue to include government, non-governmental organizations, civil society, academia, business, and other relevant policy practitioners, YSEALI alumni, and Friends of the Lower Mekong, and other relevant stakeholders committed to supporting sustainable

prosperity and autonomy among Mekong states. The track 1.5 dialogue series will support opportunities for U.S. allies and partners to promote a shared vision of the Mekong and provide space to discuss and promote the work of USG-led Mekong initiatives. Dialogue themes may include but are not limited to: water governance, regional energy integration and transmission, Mekong connectivity, economic and infrastructure development, non-traditional security such as transnational crime, and other salient policy topics as determined between the Department of State and the awardee. Each dialogue should be constructed in such a way to be policy relevant, interactive, and accessible to general audiences, rather than merely providing a platform for technical presentations and/or academic discussions. Led by regional experts, the interactive dialogues will encourage data sharing, dissemination of best practices, bolster institutional partnerships, and seek innovative policy solutions to key transboundary priorities and challenges. Each dialogue should center on one policy question affecting the Mekong while bringing together governments, policy specialists, subject-matter experts, civil society, and other thought leaders to collaboratively propose policy solutions and approaches. The dialogues must incorporate the participation of the next generation of scholars and policy practitioners from Mekong countries and the United States.

A successful proposal will include the following project objectives, activities, and indicators:

A.2. Project Objectives:

- Provide a policy platform to highlight U.S. and partner priorities in the Mekong and produce innovative solutions to pressing policy challenges. Strengthen existing institutional mechanisms and relationships while addressing transboundary challenges and providing solutions to these problems by convening a diverse group of issue-focused policy practitioners;
- Enhance and develop regional networks and further support transboundary collaboration and information-sharing among allies and partners in the Indo-Pacific on key policy challenges facing the Mekong. The dialogue series should provide space for regional interlocutors to coordinate on policy formation for key regional transboundary issues. The dialogues should bring together disparate sectors to holistically approach pressing policy challenges facing the Mekong;
- Share global lessons learned and best practices on transboundary challenges.

A.3. Main Activities

- A total of five (5) track 1.5 dialogue events to be held over the course of the funding period. Four (4) dialogues must be held in a Mekong country and one (1) event must be held in Washington, D.C. to support USG-led Mekong initiatives. Each dialogue should be a minimum of two full days and host at least forty (40) or more participants. Implementers will be responsible for providing travel and lodging for eligible participants;
- Prior to each dialogue, the implementer will submit an initial workplan for EAP review and approval. Each workplan must include the following information: proposed date and location of each dialogue event (ideally coinciding with DoS Mekong intergovernmental

meetings in the region), central discussion topic, panel topics, a plan for active engagement and education/training of participants, a draft event agenda, media monitoring plan with accompanying press-kit, and a gender equitable and inclusive discussant and participant list. After approval, the implementer will be the primary lead in coordinating all event logistics. The implementer can call upon EAP to assist when appropriate and necessary;

- Proposals must include a detailed plan and metrics for successful media engagement before, during, and after each dialogue event. Each proposal should identify a robust media/social media campaign to broadcast the challenges and resulting policy recommendations. Media plans should propose dissemination across Twitter, Facebook, YouTube or other prominent social media networks as applicable both in the United States and the Mekong region, as well as interaction with traditional print media outlets. Media plans should incorporate public engagement during each dialogue event and may include pull-aside press opportunities for USG or subject matter experts to engage with the press during each dialogue event;
- Develop and release five (5) corresponding final summary reports at the conclusion of each dialogue event. The reports will be distributed among key stakeholders and publicly available. Each report must include a summary report of the dialogue proceedings and include policy recommendations, problem set and the learning curriculum discussed during the event. The implementer must submit the summary reports to EAP prior to release for final approval;
- Proposals must include a plan for inclusion and meaningful participation of the next generation of scholars and policy practitioners from both the United States and Mekong countries.

A.4. Performance Indicators

The project should monitor and report on performance indicators that are specific, measurable, achievable, reasonable, and time-bound. Establish, where possible, performance baseline data and expected performance targets for each expected result, and include details on what sources of data will be used to document performance, how the indicators will be measured, frequency of measurement, and units of measure. Where possible, indicators should also allow for sex disaggregation. Possible suggestions for outcome and output indicators and targets for the project are provided below.

<i>Outcome Indicators</i>	<i>Targets</i>
The number of participants at each dialogue series is gender-balanced.	A minimum of 40 participants per dialogue event, half of which are women.
Participant satisfaction with the dialogue and knowledge gained during the dialogue event.	80% participant satisfaction and knowledge increase based on survey responses

All applicable indicators and outcome metrics should be included in the proposal and subsequent to the award, routine, periodic reporting all outcomes will be required. The implementer will be

responsible for quarterly reporting on each performance indicator included in the cooperative agreement as well as analysis of progress or impediments to reach indicator targets.

The State Department takes into consideration the quality of data reported by grant recipients as part of the award activities, therefore applicants should be aware that recipients will be subject to data quality assessments.

A.5. Substantial Involvement

A cooperative agreement (CA) differs from a grant (GR) in the area of the substantial involvement of key persons from the funding organization. For this cooperative agreement (CA), it is anticipated that the Department of State (EAP) will be substantially involved in the following areas at a minimum:

1. Approval of dialogue topics
2. Approval of work plans for each dialogue
3. Approval of dialogue dates and locations
4. Approval of presenters who will deliver presentations and/or lead dialogues
5. Approval of participant selection guidelines and final participant list.
6. Final approval of published summary reports
7. Approval of branding, promotional and traditional media/social media engagement and proposals.
8. Pre-approval of key personnel to recommend to Grants Officer for final approval.

B. FEDERAL AWARD INFORMATION

EAP anticipates having approximately \$700,000 of FY19 Economic Support Funds (ESF) available to support one successful application submitted in response to this NOFO, subject to the ability of funding. The authority for this funding opportunity is found in the Foreign Assistance Act of 1961, as amended (FAA).

Applicants should include an anticipated start date of September 2020 and the period of performance should be between 24 to 36 months.

The Department of State may make award(s) on the basis of initial applications received, without discussions or negotiations. Therefore, each initial application should contain the applicant's best terms from a cost and technical standpoint. The Department of State reserves the right (though it is not under obligation to do so), however, to enter into discussions with one or more applicants in order to obtain clarifications, additional detail, or to suggest refinements in the project description, budget, or other aspects of an application.

EAP anticipates awarding a cooperative agreement in response to this NOFO. The distinction between grants and cooperative agreements revolves around the existence of “substantial involvement.” Cooperative agreements require greater involvement from the Federal government

during the implementation of the award agreement. EAP will ensure reasonable substantial involvement during the award period. Please refer to Section A.6 for examples of possible substantial involvement.

C. ELIGIBILITY INFORMATION

C.1 Eligible Applicants

EAP welcomes applications from U.S. non-profit/non-governmental organizations (NGOs) having a 501(c) (3) status with the IRS, or overseas-based non-profit/non-governmental organizations, U.S. or overseas private/state institutions of higher education.

For-profit and commercial firms are not eligible to apply in response to this NOFO.

Please see 2 CFR 200.307 for regulations regarding program income.

C.2 Cost Sharing or Matching

Providing cost sharing, matching, or cost participation is not an eligibility requirement for this NOFO.

Please note: If cost-share is included in the budget then the recipient must maintain written records to support all allowable costs that are claimed as its contribution to cost-share, as well as costs to be paid by the Federal government. Such records are subject to audit. In the event the recipient does not meet the minimum amount of cost-sharing as stipulated in the recipient's budget, EAP's contribution may be reduced in proportion to the recipient's contribution.

C.3 Other Eligibility Requirements

In order to be eligible to receive an award, all organizations must have a unique entity identifier (Data Universal Numbering System/DUNS number from Dun & Bradstreet), as well as a valid registration on www.SAM.gov. Please see Section D.3 for information on how to obtain these registrations.

Any applicant listed on the Excluded Parties List System in the System for Award Management (SAM)(www.sam.gov) is not eligible to apply for an assistance award in accordance with the OMB guidelines at 2 CFR 180 that implement Executive Orders 12549 (3 CFR,1986 Comp., p. 189) and 12689 (3 CFR,1989 Comp., p. 235), "Debarment and Suspension." Additionally, no entity listed on the Excluded Parties List System in SAM can participate in any activities under an award. All applicants are strongly encouraged to review the Excluded Parties List System in SAM to ensure that no ineligible entity is included.

Organizations may only submit one application per organization. If more than one application is submitted by an organization, only the first application received from that institution will be reviewed for eligibility and funding.

D. APPLICATION AND SUBMISSION INFORMATION

D.1 Address to Request Application Package

Applicants can find application forms and other materials need to apply on [SAMS Domestic \(https://mygrants.service-now.com\)](https://mygrants.service-now.com) under the announcement title “Mekong Policy Dialogue Series,” funding opportunity number SFOP0006967. Please contact the EAP point of contact listed in section G if requesting reasonable accommodations for persons with disabilities or for security reasons. Please note: reasonable accommodations do not include deadline extensions.

D.2 Content and Form of Application Submission

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

For all submitted application documents, please ensure:

- The proposal clearly addresses the goals and objectives of this funding opportunity
- All documents are in English. If an original document within the application is in another language, an English translation must be provided (please note: the Department of State, as indicated in 2 CFR 200.111, requires that English is the official language of all award documents. If any documents are provided in both English and a foreign language, the English language version is the controlling version);
- All budget costs are in U.S. dollars;
- All pages are numbered, including budgets and attachments;
- 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, including the budget, can be reformatted to fit within 1 page width.

Complete applications must include the following required documents:

1. Completed and signed **SF-424**, **SF-424A**, and **SF-424B** and **SF-LLL** forms. These forms are available electronically via SAMS Domestic <https://mygrants.service-now.com>. *The SF-424 B is required only for those applicants who have not registered in SAM.gov or recertified their registration in SAM.gov since February 2, 2019 and completed the online representations and certifications. The SF-LLL is required for applicants that may engage in lobbying activities.* If applicable, a Letter of Disclosure for proposed consultants/personnel of potential conflicts of interest, employment with a local/state/federal government.
2. **Table of Contents** (not to exceed one [1] page in Microsoft Word) that includes a page numbered contents page, including any attachments.
3. **Executive Summary** (not to exceed two [2] pages in Microsoft Word) that includes:
 - a. The target country/countries and thematic area;
 - b. Name and contact information for the project’s main point of contact;
 - c. The total amount of funding requested and project length;

- d. A statement of work or synopsis of the project, including a concise breakdown of the project's objectives, activities, and expected results; and,
- e. A brief statement on how the project is innovative, sustainable, and will have a demonstrated impact.

4. **Proposal Narrative** (not to exceed ten [10] pages, single-spaced, 12 point Times New Roman font in Microsoft Word, at least one-inch margins). Please note the 10 page limit does not include the Table of Contents, Executive Summary, Attachments, Audit, Detailed Budget, Budget Narrative, or Negotiated Indirect Cost Rate Agreement (NICRA). Applicants are encouraged to submit multiple documents in a single Microsoft Word or Adobe file, (i.e., Table of Contents, Executive Summary, and Proposal Narrative in one file).

5. **Summary and Detailed Line-Item Budget** (in Microsoft Excel) that includes three [3] columns including the request to EAP, any cost sharing contribution, and total budget (see below for more information on budget format). **The federal share requested should not exceed the amount of funds available under section B.** A summary budget should also be included using the OMB approved budget categories (see SF-424A for budget categories). Costs must be in U.S. dollars. Detailed line-item budgets for sub-awardees should be included in additional tabs within the excel workbook. A template budget is provided, but is not required, as long as the submitted budget follows OMB budget categories.

6. **Budget Narrative** (in Microsoft Word) that includes substantive explanations and justifications for each line item in the detailed budget spreadsheet, as well as the source and a description of all cost-share offered. For ease of review, EAP recommends applicants order the budget narrative as presented in the detailed budget. Personnel costs must include a clarification of the roles and responsibilities of all staff, base salary, and percentage of time devoted to the project. The budget narrative should support the activities described in the proposal and provide additional information that might not be readily apparent in the detailed-line item budget, not simply repeat what is represented numerically in the budget, i.e. salaries are for salaries or travel is for travel. The budget narrative should also explain any cost share provided.

7. **Attachments** (not to exceed thirteen [13] pages total, preferably in Microsoft Word) that include the following in order:
- a. Logic model – Page 1-2. The logic model must demonstrate how the project will have an impact on its proposed objectives.
 - b. Narrative of Monitoring and Evaluation Plan – Pages 3-4.
 - c. Monitoring and Evaluation Performance Indicator Table – Pages 5-8. This section can be up to three pages long if necessary.
 - d. Timeline of the overall proposal – Page 9: Components should include activities, evaluation efforts, and project closeout:

Primary Activities, Deliverables, and/or Milestones	FY21 SA1	FY21 SA2	FY22 SA1	FY22 SA2	FY23 SA1	FY23 SA2	FY24 SA1
Project Monitoring Plan (may be requested within 90 days after the start of the activity)	X						
Activity 1.1	X	X	X	X			
Activity 1.2		X	X	X			
Activity 2.1				X	X		
Etc.					X	X	X

- e. Additional optional attachments – Page 10-13: Attachments may include further timeline information, letters of support, memorandums of understanding/agreement, etc. Letters of support and MOUs must be specific to the projects implementation (e.g. from proposed partners or sub-award recipients) and will not count towards the page limit.

8. C.V.s for all key program personnel.

9. **NICRA:** If your organization has a Negotiated Indirect Cost Rate Agreement (NICRA) and includes NICRA charges in the budget, your most recent NICRA should be included as a PDF file. This document will not be reviewed by the panelists, but rather used by project and grant staff if the submission is recommended for funding and therefore does not count against the submission page limitations. If your proposal involves subawards to organizations charging indirect costs, please submit the applicable NICRA).

Per 2 CFR200.414(f), organizations that have never had a NICRA may request a de minimis indirect rate of up to 10% of the Modified Total Direct Costs (MTDC) as defined in 2 CFR 200.68. *MTDC excludes equipment, capital expenditures, charges for patient care, rental costs, tuition remission, scholarships and fellowships, participant support costs and the portion of each subaward in excess of \$25,000.* The budget narrative must indicate what costs will be covered using the 10% de minimis rate.

10. A copy of your organization's most **recent audit** (single audit, if applicable, is required, otherwise standard audit).

11. A contingency plan to avoid or mitigate interruptions to the implementation of the project during the period of performance, due to travel restrictions related to COVID 19.

Note: Applications that do not include all required documents will be marked as incomplete, and will therefore be deemed technically ineligible.

EAP retains the right to ask for additional documents not included in this NOFO. Additionally, to ensure all applications receive a balanced evaluation, the EAP Review Panel will review the first

page of the requested section up to the page limit and no further. EAP encourages organizations to use the given space effectively.

Additional information that successful applicants may be asked to submit after notification of intent to make a Federal award, but prior to issuance of a Federal award, may include:

- Written responses and any revised application documents addressing any conditions or recommendations from the Review Panel;
- Completion of the Department's Financial Management Survey, if receiving EAP funding for the first time or requested by the Grants Officer;
- Submission of required documents to register in the Payment Management System managed by the Department of Health and Human Services if receiving EAP funding for the first time, unless an exemption is provided;
- Other requested information or documents included in the notification of intent to make a Federal award or subsequent communications prior to issuance of a Federal award.

D.3 Unique Entity Identifier and System for Award Management (SAM)

All organizations applying for grants must obtain these registrations. *All are free of charge:*

- Unique Entity Identifier from Dun & Bradstreet (DUNS number)
- NCAGE/CAGE code
- www.SAM.gov registration

Step 1: Apply for a DUNS number and an NCAGE number (these can be completed simultaneously)

DUNS application: Organizations must have a Data Universal Numbering System (DUNS) number from Dun & Bradstreet. If your organization does not have one already, you may obtain one by calling 1-866-705-5711 or visiting <http://fedgov.dnb.com/webform>

NCAGE application: Application page here:

<https://eportal.nspa.nato.int/AC135Public/scage/CageList.aspx>

Instructions for the NCAGE application process:

<https://eportal.nspa.nato.int/AC135Public/Docs/US%20Instructions%20for%20NSPA%20NCAGE.pdf>

For NCAGE help from within the U.S., call 1-888-227-2423

For NCAGE help from outside the U.S., call 1-269-961-7766

Email NCAGE@dlis.dla.mil for any problems in getting an NCAGE code.

Step 2: After receiving the NCAGE Code, proceed to register in SAM.gov by logging onto: <https://www.sam.gov>. SAM registration must be renewed annually.

Applicants must have an active registration in SAM (www.sam.gov) prior to submitting an application, must prove a valid Unique Entity Identifier (UEI) number, formerly referred to as a DUNS number, and must continue to maintain an active SAM.gov registration with current information at all times during which it has an active Federal award or an application or plan under consideration by the U.S. government. **If an organization does not have an active registration in SAM.gov prior to submitting an application, the application will be deemed ineligible.** Note: The process of obtaining a SAM.gov registration may take anywhere from 4-8 weeks. Please begin your registration as early as possible.

The Unique Entity Identifier (UEI) is one of the data elements mandated by Public Law 109-282, the Federal Funding Accountability and Transparency Act (FFATA), for all Federal awards. SAM is the Federal government's primary database for complying with FFATA reporting requirements. OMB designated SAM as the central repository to facilitate applicant and recipient use of a single public website that consolidates data on all federal financial assistance. Under the law, it is mandatory to obtain a UEI number and register in SAM.

SAM requires all entities to renew their registration once a year in order to maintain an active registration status in SAM. It is the responsibility of the applicant to ensure it has an active registration in SAM and to also maintain its active registration in SAM.

An exemption from this requirement may be permitted on a case-by-case basis if the applicant's identity must be protected due to possible endangerment of their mission, their organization's status, their employees, or individuals being served by the applicant. Organizations requesting an exemption should email the point of contact listed in Section G of this NOFO.

Please note: foreign organizations will be required to register with the NATO Support Agency (NSPA) to receive a NATO Commercial and Government Entity (NCAGE) code in order to register in SAM. NSPA will forward your registration request to the applicable National Codification Bureau (NCB) if your organization is located in a NATO or Tier 2 Sponsored Non-NATO Nation. (As of January 2015, NATO nations included Albania, Belgium, Bulgaria, Canada, Croatia, Czech Republic, Denmark, Estonia, France, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Iceland, Italy, Latvia, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Netherlands, Norway, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Slovakia, Slovenia, Spain, Turkey, United Kingdom, and the United States of America; and Tier 2 nations included Australia, Austria, Brazil, Finland, Israel, Republic of Korea, Malaysia, Morocco, New Zealand, Serbia, and Singapore.)

NSPA and/or the appropriate NCB forwards all NCAGE code information to all Allied Committee 135 (AC/135) nations, which as of January 2015 also included Afghanistan, Argentina, Bosnia & Herzegovina, Brunei Darussalam, Chile, Colombia, Egypt, Georgia, India, Indonesia, Japan, Jordan, Montenegro, Oman, Papua New Guinea, Peru, Saudi Arabia, South Africa, Sweden, Thailand, Republic of Macedonia, Ukraine, and the United Arab Emirates.

D.4 Submission Dates and Times

Applications are due no later than 11:59 p.m. Eastern Time (ET), on July 17, 2020 in SAMS Domestic (<https://mygrants.service-now.com>) under the announcement title “Mekong Policy Dialogue Series” funding opportunity number SFOP0006967.

Applications will not be accepted via www.grants.gov.

SAMS Domestic automatically logs the date and time an application submission is made, and the Department of State will use this information to determine whether an application has been submitted on time. Late applications are neither reviewed nor considered unless the EAP point of contact listed in section G is contacted prior to the deadline and is provided with evidence of system errors caused by [SAMS Domestic that is outside of the applicants’ control and is the sole reason for a late submission](#). Applicants should not expect a notification upon EAP receiving their application.

If ultimately provided with a notification of intent to make a Federal award, applicants typically have two to three weeks to provide additional information and documents requested in the notification of intent. The deadlines may vary in each notification of intent and applicants must adhere to the stated deadline in the notification of intent.

D.5 Funding Restrictions

EAP will not consider applications that reflect any type of support for any member, affiliate, or representative of a designated terrorist organization. No entity listed on the Excluded Parties List System in SAM is eligible for any assistance.

Project activities that provide training or other assistance to foreign militaries or paramilitary groups or individuals will not be considered for EAP funding given purpose limitations on funding.

The Leahy Law prohibits Department foreign assistance funds from supporting foreign security force units if the Secretary of State has credible information that the unit has committed a gross violation of human rights. Per 22 USC §2378d(a) (2015), “No assistance shall be furnished under this chapter [FOREIGN ASSISTANCE] or the Arms Export Control Act [22 USC 2751 et seq.] to any unit of the security forces of a foreign country if the Secretary of State has credible information that such unit has committed a gross violation of human rights.” Restrictions may apply to any proposed assistance to police or other law enforcement. Among these, pursuant to section 620M of the Foreign Assistance Act of 1961, as amended (FAA), no assistance provided through this funding opportunity may be furnished to any unit of the security forces of a foreign country when there is credible information that such unit has committed a gross violation of human rights. In accordance with the requirements of section 620M of the FAA, also known as the Leahy law, project beneficiaries or participants from a foreign government’s security forces may need to be vetted by the Department before the provision of any assistance.

If a proposed grant or cooperative agreement will provide assistance to foreign security forces or personnel, compliance with the Leahy Law is required. Federal awards generally will not allow reimbursement of pre-award costs; however, the Grants Officer may approve pre-award costs on a case-by-case basis. Generally, construction costs are not allowed under EAP awards.

Various policy and legal restrictions may apply to assistance to certain countries. For example, the use of FY 2019 economic support funds for assistance to the government of Cambodia, including to Cambodian government officials, is restricted and assistance for activities for Cambodia is limited to education and environment programs. In addition, all activities for Burma are would be subject to additional review and would require prior written approval by EAP.

D.6 Other Submission Requirements

All application submissions must be made electronically via [SAMS Domestic \(https://mygrants.service-now.com\)](https://mygrants.service-now.com). This system requires registration by the applying organization.

It is the responsibility of the applicant to ensure that it has an active registration in SAMS Domestic and that an application has been received by SAMS Domestic in its entirety. EAP bears no responsibility for disqualification that result from applicants not being registered before the due date or for data errors resulting from transmission or conversion processes. Additionally, you must save a screen shot of the checklist showing all documents submitted in case any document fails to upload successfully.

Faxed, couriered, or emailed documents **will not** be accepted. Reasonable accommodations may, in appropriate circumstances, be provided to applicants with disabilities or for security reasons. Applicants must follow all formatting instructions in the applicable solicitation and these instructions.

SAMS Domestic Applications:

Applicants using SAMS Domestic for the first time should complete their “New Organization Registration.” To register with SAMS Domestic, click “Login to <https://mygrants.service-now.com>” and follow the “create an account” link. Users will then complete the form with the requested information and click “submit.” A confirmation email will be sent once the account has been created. If users are experiencing difficulties obtaining a user login and completing the registration process, please contact ILMS Support.

Organizations **must** remember to save a screen shot of the checklist showing all documents submitted in case any document fails to upload successfully.

ILMS Support (SAMS Domestic Help Desk):

For assistance with SAMS Domestic accounts and technical issues related to the system, please contact the ILMS Support by phone at 1-888-313-4567 (toll charges for international callers) or through the Self Service online portal that can be accessed from <https://afsitsm.service-now.com/ilms/home>. Customer Support is available 24/7/365.

Should an applicant experience technical issues, contacted the helpdesk, and is not receiving timely assistance (e.g. if you have not received a response after 2 days of contacting the helpdesk), you may contact the EAP point of contact listed in section G, who may assist in contacting the appropriate helpdesk. Applicants should document their efforts in contacting the helpdesk.

E. APPLICATION REVIEW INFORMATION

E.1 Criteria

Each application will be evaluated individually against the following criteria, listed below in order of importance, and not against competing applications.

Quality of Project Idea (30 points)

Applications should be responsive to the NOFO, appropriate in the country/regional context, and should exhibit originality, substance, precision, and relevance to EAP's mission. EAP prioritizes innovative and creative approaches rather than projects that simply duplicate or add to efforts by other entities. This does not exclude projects that clearly build off existing successful projects in a new and innovative way from consideration. In countries where similar activities are already taking place, an explanation should be provided as to how new activities will not duplicate or merely add to existing activities and how these efforts will be coordinated.

Project Planning/Ability to Achieve Objectives (25 points)

A strong application will include a clear articulation of how the proposed project activities contribute to the overall project objectives, and each activity will be clearly developed and detailed. Objectives should be ambitious, yet measurable, results-focused and achievable within the requested period of performance. Applications should address how the project will engage relevant stakeholders and identify any local partners as appropriate/applicable. If local partners have been identified, EAP strongly encourages applicants to submit letters of support from proposed in-country partners. Additionally, applicants must describe the division of labor among the direct applicant and any sub-recipients/local partners. If applicable, applications should identify target areas for activities, target participant groups or selection criteria for participants, and the specific roles of sub-recipients, among other pertinent details. In particularly challenging operating environments, applications should include contingency plans for overcoming potential difficulties in executing the original work plan and address any operational or programmatic security concerns and how they will be addressed.

Institution's Capacity and Past Performance (20 points)

EAP will consider the past performance of prior recipients and the demonstrated potential of new applicants. Applications should demonstrate an institutional record of successful projects, including responsible fiscal management and full compliance with all reporting requirements for past awards. Proposed personnel and institutional resources should be adequate and appropriate to achieve the project's objectives.

Multiplier Effect/Sustainability (15 points)

Applications should clearly delineate how elements of the project will have a multiplier effect and be sustainable beyond the life of the grant. A good multiplier effect will have an impact beyond the direct beneficiaries of the grant (e.g. participants trained under a grant go on to train other people, workshop participants use skills from a workshop to enhance a national level election that affects the entire populace). A strong sustainability plan may include demonstrating continuing impact beyond the life of a project or garnering other donor support after EAP funding ceases.

Project Monitoring and Evaluation (10 points)

Complete applications will include a detailed plan (both a narrative and table) of how the project's progress and impact will be monitored and evaluated throughout the project. Incorporating a well-designed monitoring and evaluation component into a project is one of the most efficient methods of documenting the progress and results (intended and unintended) of a project. Applications should demonstrate the capacity to provide objectives with measurable outputs and outcomes and engage in robust monitoring and assessment of project activities. The quality of the M&E plan will be judged on the narrative explaining how both monitoring and evaluation will be carried out, who will be responsible for those related activities.

E.2 Review and Selection Process

EAP strives to ensure each application receives a balanced evaluation by an EAP Review Panel. All technically eligible applications for a given notice of funding opportunity are reviewed against the same criteria, listed above. Additionally, the EAP Review Panel will evaluate how the application addresses the NOFO request, U.S. foreign policy goals, and the priority needs of EAP overall.

The EAP Review Panel generally includes representatives from EAP, as well as other representatives from the Department of State, and may include additional panelists from U.S. embassies, other U.S. government departments, agencies, or boards, representatives from partner governments, or representatives from entities that are in a public-private partnership with EAP. All Panelists must sign non-disclosure agreements and conflicts of interest agreements.

EAP Review Panels may provide conditions and recommendations on applications to enhance the proposed project, which must be addressed by the applicant before further consideration of the award. To ensure effective use of EAP funds, conditions or recommendations may include requests to increase, decrease, clarify, and/or justify costs and project activities.

E.3 Federal Awardee Performance & Integrity Information System

The Department of State, prior to making a Federal award with a total amount of Federal share greater than the simplified acquisition threshold, is required to review and consider any information about the applicant that is in the designated integrity and performance system accessible through SAM (currently FAPIIS) (see 41 U.S.C. 2313).

The applicant, at its option, may review information in the designated integrity and performance systems accessible through SAM and comment on any information about itself that a Federal awarding agency previously entered and is currently in the designated integrity and performance system accessible through SAM.

The Department of State will consider any comments by the applicant, in addition to the other information in the designated integrity and performance system, in making a judgment about the applicant's integrity, business ethics, and record of performance under Federal awards when completing the review of risk posed by applicants as described in §200.205 Federal awarding agency review of risk posed by applicants.

F. FEDERAL AWARD ADMINISTRATION INFORMATION

F.1 Federal Award Notices

EAP will provide a separate notification to applicants on the result of their applications. Successful applicants will be notified by EAP via email. This email may include a request for the applicant respond to panel conditions and recommendations. This notification is not an authorization to begin activities and does not constitute formal approval or a funding commitment.

Final approval is contingent on the applicant successfully responding to the panel's conditions and recommendations, being registered in required systems, including the U.S. government's Payment Management System (PMS), unless an exemption is provided, and completing and providing any additional documentation requested by the Department of State. Final approval is also contingent on Congressional Notification requirements being met and final review and approval by the Department's warranted Grants Officer.

The grant award or cooperative agreement will be written, signed, awarded, and administered by the warranted Grants Officer. The assistance award agreement is the sole authorizing document and it will be provided electronically to the recipient's authorized signatory for review and signature through SAMS Domestic. The recipient may only start incurring program expenses beginning on the start date show on the award document signed by the Grants Officer.

If a proposal is selected for funding, the Department of State has no obligation to provide any additional future funding. Renewal of an award to increase funding or extend the period of performance is at the discretion of the Department of State.

F.2 Administrative and National Policy Requirements

The Uniform Administrative Requirements, Cost Principles and Audit Requirements for Federal Awards set forth in 2 CFR Chapter 200 (Sub-Chapters A through F) shall apply to all non-Federal entities, except for assistance awards to Individuals and Foreign Public Entities. Sub-Chapters A

through E shall apply to all foreign organizations, and Sub-Chapters A through D shall apply to all U.S. and foreign for-profit entities.

The applicant/recipient of the award and any sub-recipient under the award must comply with all applicable terms and conditions, in addition to the assurance and certifications made part of the Notice of Award. The Department's Standard Terms and Conditions can be viewed at <https://www.state.gov/m/a/o/e/index.htm>.

Before submitting an application, applicants should review all the terms and conditions and required certifications which will apply to this award, to ensure that they will be able to comply.

F.3 Reporting

Recipients will be required to complete and upload regular financial reports and program progress reports to the grant file in SAMS Domestic. The award document will specify how often these reports must be submitted. EAP typically requests that reports are submitted on a quarterly basis. Please note that all substantiating documentation supporting reporting and data collected, including survey responses and contact information, must be maintained for a minimum of three years and provided to the Department of State upon request. All reports must be written in English.

1. **Financial Reports:** The recipient is required to submit quarterly financial reports through the project period. The Federal Financial Report (FFR or SF-425) is the required form for the financial reports. If the recipient will receive funds through the Payment Management System (PMS), the recipient will be required to complete financial reports in PMS. Financial reports are due 30 days after the end of the reporting period.

2. **Progress Reports:** The recipient is required to submit quarterly narrative progress reports in SAMS Domestic. Progress reports are due 30 days after the end of the reporting period. Narrative progress reports should reflect the focus on measuring the project's impact on the overarching objectives and should be compiled according to the objectives, outcomes, and outputs as outlined in the award's Scope of Work (SOW) and in the Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) Statement. An assessment of the overall project's impact, should be included in each progress report. Where relevant, progress reports should include the following sections:

- Relevant contextual information (limited);
- Explanation and evaluation of significant activities of the reporting period and how the activities reflect progress toward achieving objectives, including meeting benchmarks/targets as set in the Scope of Work (SOW) and Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) Statement. In addition, attach the SOW plan, comparing the target and actual numbers for the indicators;
- Any tangible impact or success stories from the project, when possible;
- Copy of mid-term and/or final evaluation report(s) conducted by an external evaluator; if applicable;

- Relevant supporting documentation or products related to the project activities (such as articles, meeting lists and agendas, participant surveys, photos, manuals, etc.) as separate attachments;
- Description of how the Recipient is pursuing sustainability, including looking for sources of follow-on funding;
- Any problems/challenges in implementing the project and a corrective action plan with an updated timeline of activities;
- Reasons why established goals were not met;
- Data for the required F Framework indicator(s) for the quarter as well as aggregate data by fiscal year using the SF-PPR-B: Project Indicators or other mutually agreed upon format approved by the Grants Officer. Evaluation indicators from the Foreign Assistance Framework can be found at <http://www.state.gov/f/indicators/> ;
- Proposed activities for the next quarter;
- Additional pertinent information, including analysis and explanation of cost overruns or high unit costs, if applicable.

3. **Final Report:** A final narrative report and financial report will be required within 90 days after the completion of the award. The final narrative should include an in-depth impact assessment and/or project evaluation.

Please note: delays in reporting may result in delays of payment approvals and failure to provide required reports may jeopardize the recipients' ability to receive future U.S. government funds.

EAP reserves the right to request any additional programmatic and/or financial project information during the award period of performance.

G. CONTACT INFORMATION

Any prospective applicant who has questions concerning the contents of this NOFO should email them to Jocelyn Roberts and Nicole Smolinske with the subject "[Applicant Name] Mekong Policy Dialogue Series." To maintain fairness and transparency in competition, EAP will not answer substantive NOFO questions except when posting questions and answers to the announcement page as described below.

All questions must be submitted via email to RobertsJD2@state.gov and SmolinskeNL@state.gov by June 8, 2020. **EAP will create a document of submitted questions with answers and upload it to the announcement page in grants.gov** no later than June 16, 2020. Note that once the NOFO deadline has passed, DOS staff in Washington, D.C. and overseas and U.S. Embassies/Missions may not discuss this completion with applicants until the review process has been completed.

For assistance with SAMS Domestic accounts and technical issues related to the system, please contact the ILMS help desk by phone at 1-888-313-4567 (toll charges for international callers) or through the Self Service online portal that can be accessed from <https://afsitsm.service-now.com/ilms/home>. Customer Support is available 24 hours a day, seven days a week, except federal holidays.

With the exception of technical submission questions, during the solicitation period U.S. Department of State staff in Washington and overseas shall not discuss this competition with applicants until the entire proposal review process has been completed and an award has been made.

H. OTHER INFORMATION

EAP understands that some information contained in applications may be considered sensitive or proprietary and will make appropriate efforts to protect such information. However, applicants are advised that EAP cannot guarantee that such information will not be disclosed, including pursuant to the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) or other similar statutes.

The information in this NOFO is binding and may not be modified by any EAP representative. Explanatory information provided by EAP that contradicts this language will not be binding. Issuance of the NOFO and negotiation of applications does not constitute an award commitment on the part of the U.S. government. EAP reserves the right to reduce, revise, or increase proposal budgets in accordance with the needs of the project evaluation requirements.

Issuance of this NOFO does not constitute an award commitment on the part of the U.S. government, nor does it commit the U.S. government to pay for costs incurred in the preparation and submission of proposals. The U.S. government reserves the right to reject any or all proposals received.

This NOFO will appear on www.grants.gov and SAMS Domestic (<https://mygrants.service-now.com>).

H1. Monitoring Site Visits

A monitoring site visit, at least once during the lifetime of a grant, is required by Department of State grant policy. The site visit is conducted to gather additional information on the recipient's ability to properly implement the project, manage EAP funds, and share substantiating document for programmatic, indicator, and financial reporting. Specifically, the site visit will involve the review of the programmatic progress (progress on activities, sub-recipient/consultant work, data quality, etc.) as well as administrative and financial management and controls.