

Questions and Answers on Funding Opportunity SFOP0006548:
“Women, Peace, and Security: Supporting Women’s Networks to Prevent, Resolve, and Mitigate Conflict”

Q1) I would kindly ask you to specify (if applicable) if there is a geographical focus appointed for the grant opportunity SFOP0006548 “Women, Peace, and Security: Supporting Women’s Networks to Prevent, Resolve, and Mitigate Conflict Department of State Office of Global Womens Issues”. We are currently investigating Community Resilience against violent extremism in Northern Mozambique, and we would be eager to proceed with follow on research amongst the subgroup of females in the area based on our current findings. Please could you clarify whether the grant offer is confined by a utilization in specific countries?

A1) As noted on page 1 of the Notice of Funding Opportunity (NOFO), “Priority will be given to proposals that include women from Sudan and areas affected by extremist organizations.” However, the NOFO is open to all countries and world regions.

Q2) My organization is fairly new and very little or no track record, but as the founder, I have many years in the field of Women, Peace and Security specifically in the West African Region and would like to submit a grant application. Considering my organization size and a plan to partner with other National Organizations, would my organization be considered eligible for this grant?

A2) New organizations are eligible if they meet the requirements in the NOFO. In addition to the eligibility requirements on page 3, please note the following selection criteria on page 27:

"Organizational Capacity and Past Performance (30 / 100 points):

- Applicant has sufficient depth of experience, capacity, and talent to implement the proposed program as described in this NOFO.
- Applicant has the ability to analyze and program effectively for women’s leadership in preventing and transforming conflict by making decision-making more reflective and responsive.
- Applicant has the capacity to implement and monitor this program globally in partnership with local partners (women’s networks / organizations), including as needs arise.
- Applicant maximizes collaboration with, and support of, local entities. For every collaboration proposed, the applicant describes (a) the rationale for the collaboration; (b) each partner's respective role; and (c) how the partnership will enhance the accomplishment of the program goals.
- Applicant has experience implementing relevant program in multiple countries and regions of the world."

Q3) Is the gender analysis page limit limited to 5 pages total or 5 pages per country represented in the proposal?

A3) There is no page limit for the gender analysis.

Q4) Is there a minimum numbers of countries where S/GWI would like to see this project implemented?

A4) No, there is no minimum number of countries, although the applicant should demonstrate the capacity to implement the country in multiple countries and world regions (please also see Questions 2 and 3, above).

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Q5) As this is a globally focused call, it would be helpful to understand how S/GWI categorizes regions and whether S/GWI has a preference for how many regions are represented within the project idea.

A5) The major regional designations used by the U.S. Department of State are those included on NOFO page 1: the Western Hemisphere; Africa; the Middle East and North Africa; South and Central Asia; and East Asia and the Pacific. There is no minimum number of regions that must be represented in a proposal, but applicants should demonstrate the capacity to implement the country in multiple countries and world regions (please also see Questions 2, 3, and 4, above). Applicants may propose a phased approach to working in more than one country or region.

Q6) We understand the maximum allowed timeframe is five years. Does S/GWI have a minimum requirement for this project?

A6) No, there is no minimum timeframe.

Q7) Understanding that S/GWI funds are not meant to be used for IDPs/refugees as the primary beneficiaries, is S/GWI open for women groups or women who represent or work with IDPs/refugees to be included as beneficiaries, whether primary or secondary? We believe in the context of the countries being considered, it is important to allow for the voices of these women to be included and for women in these situations to be represented.

A7) Yes, applicants may propose work with these groups.

Q8) In the proposal checklist that S/GWI provided you requested the following: “A list of previous U.S. Government awards (grants or contracts) showing the name of the awarding agency and a point of contact within the agency for the last five years.” Our organization operates on average 300 grants per year. Would we be able to substitute its organizational audit or past performance listing 3-5 relevant projects and their points of contact instead of an exhaustive list?

A8) Yes, please list key relevant projects instead of an exhaustive list with a notation that additional project references are available.

Q9) We are interested to learn whether the Office currently anticipates COVID-19 limitations to have any effects on the timing, or overall availability, of these funds?

A9) We do not currently anticipate that COVID-19 limitations will affect the timing or overall availability of funds.

Q10) Can we target women (from targeted countries nationalities) outside the country or do all activities have to be implemented in-country?

A10) Yes, applicants may propose activities hosted in a third country and support to women from targeted nationalities who are residing elsewhere.

Q11) Can we do some activities to target women in camps affected by the conflicts and could contribute to the peacebuilding process i.e. NE of Syria (Al Hol camp).

A11) Applicants may propose any activities that align with the requirements of the NOFO and any applicable legal requirements. As noted on page 9 of the NOFO, funding for Syria may require additional approvals and vetting.

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Q12) Can we target Syria wide or is it restricted to North East of Syria?

A12) Please also see Question #11, above. Funding for Syria may require additional approvals.

Q13) The eligibility criteria states that you welcome applications from “U.S. not-forprofit/ non-governmental organizations (NGOs) subject to section 501 (c) (3) of the U.S. tax code, and foreign not-for-profits/NGOs/social enterprises.” We would be grateful for your clarification as to whether this includes international organisations such as ourselves – public international organizations?

A13) Given our limited resources and our close coordination with other USG donors which target public international organizations (PIOs), we defer to those entities on providing funds specifically available only to PIOs in order that we may provide opportunities to other civil society organizations. Therefore, PIOs are not eligible to apply to this NOFO as the prime applicant. Subrecipients and subcontractors however, can be any type of organization.

Q14) Our organization kindly requests clarification on the target countries that S/GWI envisions for the Women, Peace and Security: Supporting Women’s Networks to Prevent, Resolve, and Mitigate Conflict. Is S/GWI requesting a program that includes a certain amount of target countries, or a global program that can potentially operate in any of the countries listed below on a rapid-response basis? If S/GWI is requesting the former, how many target countries are required?

A14) The NOFO does not require rapid-response capability. Please also see Questions 1, 4, and 5, above.

Q15) Could you please clarify if Georgia is considered eligible for the call for proposals named "Women, Peace, and Security: Supporting Women’s Networks to Prevent, Resolve, and Mitigate Conflict"?

A15) Yes; the NOFO is open to all countries affected by conflict.

Q16) Based on the eligibility information, we were not sure if our organization is eligible to apply as a Public International Organization.

A16) Please see Question 13, above.

Q17) The NOFO Proposal Checklist states: "If an organization is requesting indirect costs, they must present an approval by NICRA." This indicates that the 10% de minimus rate (without a NICRA) is not an option with this funding opportunity, as it typically is with other US government grants. Is that correct?

A17) Thank you for confirming No, that was not the intention. Applicants may elect to charge the de minimus rate of 10% if all requirements of 2 CFR 200.414(f) are met.

Q18) I would like to know sam.gov and sam domestic. We already have sam.gov, can we use grant.gov to send the project?

A18) No; as stated on Page 25 of the NOFO: "Applications submitted in grants.gov will not be accepted; applications must be submitted in SAMS Domestic."

Q19) I want to know if Chad is eligible for the project?

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A19) Yes. Please also see Question 15, above.

Q20) Our organization is writing to submit a question for the Women, Peace, and Security: Supporting Women’s Networks to Prevent, Resolve, and Mitigate Conflict CFDA Number: 19.801 opportunity. Given the current COVID 19 global pandemic, will the Office consider revising the submission date to allow organizations additional time to develop responses as current efforts are focused on COVID 19 response and business continuity planning?

A20) Yes, thank you. In light of COVID 19, on March 20, 2020 we extended the overall application submission date by one week, to May 7, 2020.

Q21) In reference to the S/GWI Notice of Funding Opportunity, we'd like to ask the possibility of including Thailand, especially in the south, among the countries eligible for this call. We are aware, as per guidelines, that Thailand was not mentioned in the East Asia and the Pacific coverage. On the other hand, the S/GWI might consider and clarify this question as the peace dialogue process in southern Thailand is still ongoing between the Thai government and Malay-Muslim separatists. Given this situation, the role and participation of women are relevant in the peacebuilding efforts of said area.

A21) Yes. Please also see Question 15, above.

Q22) Is it possible to share list of organisations that have expressed interest in applying for this opportunity?

A22) In respect of applicants' privacy, intellectual proprietary information, and in light of competition requirements, this information is confidential and a part of the deliberative process.

Q23) Is an organisation suspended from priming if the organisation has not registered intent to apply by 20th March?

A23) No, the Notice of Intent to Apply is optional. Organizations who have not submitted a Notice of Intent to Apply can still apply.

Q24) Is it possible to apply for a lower amount or are all applicants expected to apply for the full budget amount under this opportunity?

A24) It is fine to apply for a lower amount. Please also see Question 2 above regarding global capacity.

Q25) Are applicants expected to propose projects in multiple countries or can an applicant propose a project in one country?

A25) Please see Questions 2, 4, and 5, above.

Q26) Can the independent evaluator be a named partner in a consortium application?

A26) Applicants proposing this type of arrangement should explain in their proposal how the evaluator's work is independent. At a minimum, to be independent, the partner implementing the work should not be the same partner evaluating it.

Q27) Is USAID considering an extension to the timeframe for applications given COVID-19?

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A27) This funding opportunity is made available by the U.S. Department of State Secretary's Office of Global Women's Issues, not USAID. Please see Question 20 above regarding COVID-19.

Q28) Should applicants propose contingencies for restrictions and delays that could impact proposed activities due to COVID-19?

A28) Yes, at a minimum this should be addressed in the required risk assessment described on NOFO page 19. Contingency planning is encouraged as a part of risk assessment process.

Q29) Is it mandatory to respond to all three objectives laid out by the NOFO or can the applicant choose one or two of the three objectives to respond to, depending on relevance, expertise, and experience of the applicant agency?

A29) As stated on NOFO page 9: "All proposals should address each of the three objectives."

Q30) Is the *Non-Binding Notice of Intent to Apply* mandatory?

A30) No, as stated on NOFO page 32: "The intent to apply is optional and will not be binding."

Q31) Will organisations which do not submit the *non-binding notice of intent to apply* be automatically disqualified?

A31) No. Please also see Question 30, above.

Q32) Should the *non-binding notice of intent to apply* be submitted by email or it needs to be uploaded to SAMS domestic.

A32): As stated on NOFO page 32: "The intent to apply is a notification to S/GWI via email."

Q33) Is there a format or template for the *non-binding notice to apply* which you can share with us, including the kind of information which is needed?

A33) As stated on NOFO page 32: "The notification does not require any specific format or template." A simple email stating the applicant's intention suffices. However, the notification was not mandatory.

Q34) For the initial expression of interest is it sufficient to send a brief email stating our interest and naming the prime and key consortium partners, or do you require a summary of the proposed work program?

A34) A brief email sufficed; a summary of the proposed work was not required.

Q35) Can a UK based academic institution be the prime? Does the fact that it is a non-US institution reduce our chances?

A35) Yes, a non-U.S. organization can be the prime applicant. The fact that an organization is a non-US institution does not reduce an organization's chances, as it does not factor into the selection criteria/scoring.

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Q36) Is a Norwegian NGO eligible to apply without any U.S. based partners? I see on the budget template that the personnel rows are labelled ‘US-based personnel’ and ‘field personnel’. Could this be modified for our individual proposal?

A36) Yes, applying without any U.S.-based partners is permitted under the NOFO. Applicants can modify the budget template for their purposes; it is provided as a sample.

Q37) I understand that this application has to be submitted through ‘SAMS Domestic’ and not grants.gov. Is this correct?

A37) Yes.

Q38) The call for proposal opened by the S/GWI seems highly relevant for the work we are carrying out in the country and we would like to understand if Guinea Bissau is considered an eligible country in the framework of this call for proposal.

A38) Yes. Please also see related questions on eligible countries, above.

Q39) What impact, if any, will the global COVID-19 pandemic have on the S/GWI Programs Division's review and evaluation of proposals submitted in response to this NOFO?

A39) No impact is expected at this time.

Q40) The NOFO Executive Summary states that "Priority will be given to proposals that include women from Sudan and areas affected by extremist organizations." Is the S/GWI Programs Division able to provide a definition of "extremist organization" and/or direct applicants to where they can review a list of organizations considered by the S/GWI Programs Division to be "extremist organizations"?

A40) “Extremist Organizations” refers to organizations which promote violent extremism. Applicants are encouraged to reference the U.S. Strategy to Support Women and Girls at Risk from Violent Extremism and Conflict and the U.S. National Strategy for Counterterrorism. Applicants are also reminded that proposed activities must align with the appropriations language for this opportunity's funding, as stated on NOFO page 26.

Q41) Given that both Sudan and the Central African Republic are classified as Tier 2 countries under the State Department's 2019 Trafficking in Persons (TIP) report, is it possible to specify what restrictions (if any) are to be expected with regards to grant implementation?

A41) As stated in Footnote 1 on NOFO page 1, "The TVPA restriction applies only to assistance to governments, activities proposed for those countries should not include government beneficiaries." S/GWI-funded programs typically assist civil society, rather than providing direct assistance to governments / government beneficiaries. We would also note that the TVPA restriction applies only to Tier 3 countries.

Q42) Does S/GWI prefer that applicants propose work in a single country or more than one country/region?

A42) Please see Questions 2, 3, 4, and 5 above.

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Q43) Can an applicant submit one proposal that addresses the two different areas of focus (Women’s Leadership, and Women and Girls at Risk from Extremism and Conflict) or does S/GWI want proposals to focus on only one of the areas of focus?

A43) Proposals must address both areas.

Q45) While we understand that this funding isn’t directed at IDPs and refugees, we also understand that in the context of Sudan there are important women’s groups both with ties to and within IDP camps. Would it be allowed for those groups to participate in consortium events organized under this grant as long as they aren’t the sole or primary beneficiary of the project?

A45) Yes, they can be proposed as participants or beneficiaries under the grant. Please also see Question 7.

Q46) Content and Form of Application Submission (NOFO p.23-24): Page number guidance has been given for the Proposal Narrative, Detailed Budget Narrative and Implementation Timeline. Please confirm that, while organizations are encouraged to be as concise as possible, there are no page number limitations for the MEL Plan, Risk Assessment and Gender Analysis.

A46) Yes, that is correct.

Q47) Page 13 of the NOFO states that “Priority will therefore be given to applicants that can demonstrate the ability to manage small projects in several different regions at the same time, and to scale-up should additional funds become available.” Please define “several different regions.” Are these regions identified within one country or regions that encompass more than one country?

A47) Please see Questions 2, 3, 4, 5, and 14 above.

Q48) Can applicants propose work in regions affected by conflict and extremism that are off limits to US Department of State and other US Agencies and Departments staff due to security risks? Or is there a preference to propose work areas in which USG can currently travel and/or operate?

A48) Applicants may propose work in areas to which USG staff cannot currently travel and/or operate. The challenges of operating safely and monitoring in such environments should be addressed in the proposal including in the required Risk Assessment and Monitoring, Evaluation, and Learning Plan.

Q49) Page 25 of the NOFO requires submission through the SAMS Domestic portal and by email. Please confirm whether the U.S. Dept. of State prefers whether applicants submit the individual pieces as required in the SAMS portal or compile them into one technical document to the extent possible and one cost document plus an Excel sheet for budget submission? Should organizations submit cost and technical pieces in separate emails?

A49) Thank you for asking. For the email submission, please submit the individual pieces using the same individual files that you have uploaded to SAMS Domestic. Please use a zip file where

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possible to minimize email size. Splitting the email submission into multiple emails due to file size is also fine.

Q50) Does S/GWI have a preference for the number of target countries for programming under this mechanism? Does S/GWI have a preference for the number of target regions for programming under this mechanism?

A50) Please see questions 2, 3, 4, and 5, above.

Q51) Will S/GWI accept applications that propose programming for less than five years, and, if so, what is the minimum duration? Will a proposed duration of fewer than five years impact the competitiveness of the application?

A51) There is no minimum duration. Proposing a duration of fewer than five years will not impact the competitiveness of the program.

Q52) Could S/GWI please provide a definition of "areas affected by extremist organizations"? How does S/GWI define violent extremism?

A52) Please see Question 40, above.

Q53) Can a Multicountry proposal include Burkina Faso and Niger, although these two countries are not on the list?

A53) Yes.

Q54) Can one organization be co-applicant on two applications?

A54) Yes.

Q55) Can one organization be co-applicant on one application, and lead on another application?

A55) Yes.

Q56) What are the guiding documents for gender analysis required in the application?

A56) Please see the NOFO attachment, "Sample Gender Analysis Questions."

Q57) Given the global COVID-19 crisis, is there a possibility that the deadline for this opportunity will be postponed? Are there any other COVID 19 related changes we should expect?

A57) Please see related questions (20, 28) above.

Q58) Is there a minimum number of CSOs/networks the lead organization is expected to work with?

A58) No.

Q59) Do women’s networks have to be established CSOs or can we also work with larger grassroots social movements?

A59) Applicants may propose work with social movements; the women's networks do not necessarily have to be registered / established as CSOs.

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Q60) Will the formation of or strengthening of women’s networks in areas where civil society is weak or under attack be considered as a viable activity?

A60) Applicants may propose this type of activity. Related risks and mitigations should be addressed in the project design and required Risk Assessment.

Q61) Will this award be issued regardless of COVID-19, or will it be delayed until global travel restrictions are lifted? If the former, should the contingency / risk mitigation and management plan assume these challenges remain by the project start date?

A61) Please see Questions 28 and 39, above.

Q62) Given S/GWI’s emphasis on innovative, scalable programs, would S/GWI prefer a targeted program, implemented in one country with a model that could be scaled to other countries, or projects occurring concurrently in multiple countries and across regions?

A62) S/GWI does not have a preference for one or the other of these approaches.

Q63) Given the emphasis on building networks, would S/GWI prefer programs that endeavor to build connections with women’s networks *within* countries or programs that aim to build-connections with women’s networks *between* countries, whether regionally or globally?

A63) Applicants may propose either approach.

Q64) Can applicants assume that the five year duration of the program is simply a maximum limit and that applicants can propose programs of shorter duration?

A64) Yes.

Q65) In the event that the State Department seeks to make multiple awards for this opportunity, is there a suggested financial limit for individual awards, or are applicants free to propose programs at the total amount of funding available?

A65) Applicants are free to propose programs at the total amount of funding available.

Q66) Given the recent spread of COVID-19 and the difficulties this places on meeting with local partners in the countries highlighted in the solicitation, we respectfully request the Office of Global Women’s Issues to extend the deadline from April 30 to May 14th, 2020. The additional two weeks would ensure applicants’ ability to submit more comprehensive and nuanced proposals.

A66) Thank you. Please see related questions above; the submission deadline has been extended by one week to May 7, 2020.

Q67) Given the current COVID 19 global pandemic, will the Office consider revising the submission date to allow organizations additional time to develop responses as current efforts are focused on COVID 19 response and business continuity planning?

A67) Please see related (20, 28) questions above.

Q68) The S/GWI Proposal Checklist document (Annex 1) states “FOR ORGANIZATIONS WHO HAVE RECEIVED PRIOR U.S. GOVERNMENT FUNDING - A list of previous U.S. Government awards (grants or contracts) showing the name of the awarding agency

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and a point of contact within the agency for the last five years.” For organizations with numerous projects, would it be possible to limit the number of previous U.S. Government awards to a maximum of 10?

A68) Yes, it is fine to list key relevant projects instead of an exhaustive list, including a notation that additional project references are available. Please also see Question 8 above.

Q69) Does the proposed project need to relate to every aspect listed under the 'Women's Leadership' and 'Women and Girls at Risk from Extremism and Conflict' appropriation language? Can it relate to just one of the streams or can it also relate to both? (This is assuming that the budgeted amounts align with the relevant earmarks)

A69) The proposed project should include activities that align with both of the appropriations (Women’s Leadership and Women and Girls at Risk from Extremism and Conflict). However, it does not need to include every type of activity that is listed under each of them in the appropriations language.

Q70) What qualifies as a sufficiently ‘evidence-based model’ for addressing the problem?

A70) Applicants should present evidence from research or past programming that supports their proposed designs. Applicants are also encouraged to note gaps in relevant evidence and explain how any proposed new / innovative activities would fill those gaps and test new models. While some assessments and research (including but not limited to participatory action research) can be included in program design, please note that the main focus of the proposals should be on activity implementation rather than on research.

Q71) Is it correct that women members of government in the relevant contexts listed cannot be beneficiaries of the project (as per TVPA restrictions)?

A71) For countries with TVPA restrictions, it is correct that members of government cannot receive assistance as beneficiaries of the project. However, it may be possible to include them in activities such as policy consultations.