

Catalyzing Job Creation for Women in Cybersecurity

Opportunity Number: *DFOP0014020*

Questions and Answers

Question: Could you please specify if there is a minimum number of countries that applicants are preferred or required to include from the list provided in their project proposals?

Answer: In this announcement, we seek to support projects in one or more of the following countries: Algeria, Bahrain, Egypt, Jordan, Iraq, Kuwait, Lebanon, Libya, Morocco, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, Syria, Tunisia, and Yemen. There is no minimum or maximum number of countries that applicants are required to include.

Question: Could you provide more details on the types of cybersecurity training programs that are considered most impactful for this initiative?

Answer: NEA/AC defers to the applicant's expertise on these types of details.

Question: What specific skills or certifications should the training programs aim to deliver to participants?

Answer: NEA/AC defers to the applicant's expertise on the specific skills or certifications that the program should deliver to participants.

Question: Are there specific guidelines for cost-sharing or matching funds that applicants should be aware of?

Answer: Please refer to Section V. Eligibility Information C. Additional Eligibility Considerations for Cost-Sharing or Matching and Appendix 3 *Application Guidance* for information on cost-sharing or matching funds.

Question: Is there a maximum allowable indirect cost rate, and how should it be justified in the budget narrative?

Answer: Please refer to Section VI. Application and Submission Information A. Application Documents and Appendix 3 *Application*

Guidance for information on Negotiated Indirect Cost Rate Agreement and indirect costs.

Question: In Annex 4, it is mentioned that 100 scholarships are required. Should the proposed budget cover the costs for these 100 scholarships in addition to the training programs for the cohorts of women? If so, could you provide more detailed guidance on how to allocate funds appropriately between scholarships and training within the budget?

Answer: That was an example provided in Annex 4 under the work plan section. Therefore, this not a requirement. NEA/AC defers to the applicant on the design of activities. If scholarships are part of the project design, then the project budget should cover the cost of scholarships and training programs for the cohorts of women.

Question: What are the key performance indicators (KPIs) that should be included in the Results Monitoring Plan (RMP)?

Answer: Please refer to Appendix 5 for a List of Suggested Standard Indicators. Applicants may add any additional indicators the applicant believes to be important to track.

Question: Could you provide examples of how to structure the Logic Model and Theory of Change statement for this specific program?

Answer: Please refer to Appendix 2 for a Logic Model Template.

Question: Are there specific key performance indicators (KPIs) related to the employability of program learners that we should include in our Results Monitoring Plan (RMP)?

Answer: The implementer should propose appropriate indicators based on their knowledge and prior experience in this area.

Question: Does the definition of employability encompass both freelancing and full-time job placements?

Answer: NEA/AC prefers full time job placements but are flexible depending on the applicant's proposal and project design.

Question: What level of involvement is expected from local partners versus international partners?

Answer: Please refer to Section V. Eligibility Information A.2. Local Partners for information.

Question: Are there any preferred types of partnerships or collaborations that the NEA/AC recommends?

Answer: NEA/AC highly recommends collaborating with corporate partners and the private sector.

Question: How should applicants approach contingency planning for potential security or political instability in the target countries?

Answer: NEA/AC defers to the applicant's expertise on how to approach contingency planning for potential security or political instability in the target countries.

Question: What are the expectations for the sustainability plan, and how should applicants demonstrate the potential for long-term impact beyond the initial grant period?

Answer: Please refer to Section VI. Application and Submission Information A. Application Documents for information on the Sustainability Plan. The Sustainability Plan should address each of the areas listed under the Sustainability Plan section of Appendix 3 *Application Guidance*.

Question: Are there specific strategies recommended for ensuring the continued employment and career growth of women trained under this program?

Answer: NEA/AC defers to the applicant's expertise to draft a proposed plan on how to ensure the continued employment and career growth of women trained under this program.

Question: Page 16 of the NOFO under A. Eligible Applicants states that small businesses with function and regional experience in the areas of cybersecurity in the MENA region are eligible, however, the NOFO

announcement states that eligible applicants are for profit organizations other than small businesses. Please confirm that small businesses are eligible to submit.

Answer: Please refer to Section V. Eligibility Information A. Eligible Applicants that says, “Eligible applicants include:

- U.S. or foreign
 - non-profit organizations;
 - For-profit organizations;
 - Private technology companies;
 - Private institutions of higher education;
 - Public or state institutions of higher education;
 - Public international organizations;
 - Small businesses with function and regional experience in the areas of cybersecurity in the MENA region.”

Question: Page 20 of the NOFO states under Project Narrative that the narrative may be no longer than 20 pages. The NOFO later lists page limit requirements for The Logic Model, Sustainability Plan, Gender & Social Inclusion Analysis, Project Timeline, Security, Risk Mitigation & Contingency, and Job Descriptions/Key Personnel Biographies that also total 20 pages. Do these pages count against the page limit of the project narrative?

Answer: The page limits described for the Logic Model, Sustainability Plan, Gender & Social Inclusion Analysis, Project Timeline, Security, Risk Mitigation & Contingency, and Job Descriptions/Key Personnel Biographies do not count against the 20-page limit for the Project Narrative.

Question: Page 21 of the NOFO states under Results Monitoring Plan (RMP) that the RMP shall be submitted as a separate document and has no page limit. Please confirm that it is not counted against the 20-page limit of the Project Narrative.

Answer: The pages of the Results Monitoring Plan do not count against the 20-page limit of the Project Narrative.

Question: Page 23 of the NOFO states, “More information on preparing the Sustainability Plan is provided in Appendix 3.” Appendix 3 is titled *Application Guidance* which includes the Sustainability Plan as a small section on page 14. Is that the example applicants should follow for their Sustainability Plan?

Answer: The Sustainability Plan should address each of the areas listed under the Sustainability Plan section of Appendix 3 *Application Guidance*.

Question: Page 26 of the NOFO states under B. Audit Requirements what is needed. Are such audit expenditures permitted as an allowable cost under the award?

Answer: Per the NOFO, “The cost of audits required under this policy may be charged either as an allowable direct cost to the award OR included in the organizations established indirect costs in the award’s detailed budget.”

Question: Page 31 of the NOFO under Budget & Budget Narrative of Section VIII. Application Review and Selection Process A. Application Evaluation Criteria, it is stated, “Additional sources (cost-share or matching) for project funding are proposed, as well as an explanation of how those additional sources will be used.” Can such contributions be identified and added to the project budget to spend on the implementation of project activities?

Answer: Cost-sharing or matching is required and shall be identified and added to the project budget. Please refer to Appendix 3 *Application Guidance* for more information.

Question: There are no instructions provided for local taxes due against expenditures within the MENA region where the project will be implemented, and most expenditures disbursed. Can budget figures and the budget narrative include local tax estimates as an allowable cost?

Answer: No, foreign assistance funds, by law, cannot be taxed, therefore local tax estimates are not an allowable cost.

Question – Are universities eligible to apply?

Answer: Please refer to Section V. Eligibility Information A. Eligible Applicants of the NOFO for information on eligible applicants.

Question: We are having trouble accessing the grant documents necessary for applying. Could you please provide us with the required documents at your earliest convenience?

Answer: Please refer to the full notice of funding opportunity on grants.gov or MyGrants to review application submission requirements and required documents. The announcement number is DFOP0014020.

- MyGrants Link: [DFOP0014020](#)
Please note you must have an account with and be logged into MyGrants to view and apply to the NOFO.
- Grants.gov Link: [DFOP0014020](#)

Question: Could you please let me know if we are required to have a SAM.gov account?

Answer: Please refer to Section V. B. REGISTRATION REQUIREMENTS of the NOFO for SAM.gov requirements for applicants.

Question: Are letters of commitment required from all subcontractors, or only from major ones?

Answer: Applicants proposing partner organizations and/or government bodies shall include Letters of Intent or Letters of Agreement from their proposed partners that illustrate the strength of their partnerships and the network of corporations the applicant is bringing to the project.

Question: Is a detailed budget necessary for each Sub-Recipient, Sub-Awardee, or Sub-Grantee, or just for the prime applicant?

Answer: A detailed budget is only necessary for the prime applicant however any proposed sub-recipients should be included in your detailed budget and budget narrative.

Question: Does the \$1 million funding ceiling pertain exclusively to grants-related activities?

Answer: Yes

Question: Could you define which entities qualify as local partners under this NOFO? Specifically, would an international tech company and/or international university with branches in one or more of the target countries be eligible as a local partner?

Answer: Applicants are strongly encouraged to submit projects that include partnerships with local organizations that would work together on specific programmatic objectives or priorities and that utilize local expertise. In particular, NEA/AC strongly encourages applicants not based in the MENA region to partner with local organizations.

Question: Can you confirm the anticipated start date for the program?

Answer: The estimated start date for this project is October 1, 2024

Question: What constitutes sufficient experience in the MENA region for a prime applicant?

Answer: The applicant will need to demonstrate the ability to create relationships/partnerships, capacity to operate across the MENA region, ability to accomplish the required activities. Please refer to the NOFO for further details.

Question: Are Memorandums of Understanding (MoUs) with partner organizations and/or government bodies acceptable as Letters of Agreement or Letters of Intent, or is there a specific format that we should follow?

Answer: Yes, MOU's with partner organizations and/or government bodies would be acceptable as Letters of Agreement or Letters of Intent.

Question: We need some indicators on number of women/girls that will be trained.

Answer: There is no limit on number of women/girls trained. NEA/AC defers to the applicant to propose appropriate target indicators. A successful project will result in:

1. Women with STEM backgrounds in the MENA region gain an increased knowledge of cybersecurity skills and thereby increase the talent applicant pool.
2. Women with cyber skills and training are placed in permanent and full-time cybersecurity jobs with public and private sector companies.

Question: We need an indicator/percentage on the number to be employed after graduation.

Answer: There is no set number or percentage stated in the NOFO. NEA/AC defers to the applicant to propose appropriate target indicators in accordance with the proposed project design.

Question: Is there any preference on what type of entity is the prime applicant? Can it be a university, private, or NGO?

Answer: There is no preference. The applicant will have to meet all the eligibility criteria detailed in Section V. Eligibility Information of the NOFO.

Question: Is SAM.gov a prerequisite for sub-recipients or just the prime applicant?

Answer: For UEI requirements for prime applicants, please refer to Section V. Eligibility Requirements B. Registration Requirements for information on SAM.gov requirements and creating a SAM.gov account. For UEI requirements for sub-awardees, please refer to Section IX. Administration Information F. UEI Number Requirements for Sub Awardees.