Funding Opportunity Title: Counter ISIS Ideologies in Returnee Populations from Northeast Syria
Funding Opportunity Number: DFOP0017298
Deadline for Applications: 4 August 2025, at 11:59pm EST
Assistance Listing Number: 19.701
Deadline for Receipt of Questions: 3 July 2025, 5:00pm EST
Submission to: Cheyenne Arbogast at ArbogastC@state.gov

Question 1:

The mandatory application forms i.e., SF-424 (Application for Federal Assistance – organizations); SF-424A (Budget Information for Non-Construction programs); F-424B (Assurances for Non-Construction programs) online templates and do not have any information related to the actual proposal. Does this mean that we need to fill them online and then draft a separate document containing the full proposal and attach separately under the **'Application Uploaded Docs'** link? Or do we need to combine all above forms with the proposal and submit the file as single attachment under any of the attachment upload links?

Answer 1:

Proposals should be separate from additional forms required. Additionally, each SF form should be uploaded separately. There are slots marked for each SF form. The proposal details what should be included in the 12-page proposal document and what should be a separate attachment.

Question 2:

In addition to the budget information required on the SF-424A, applicants must provide the following three elements as part of the budget submission: A. Summary Budget, B. Detailed LineItem Budget (Direct and Indirect Costs), C. Budget Narrative. Both A and B are found in the Excel file **1.03.1 Budget Template Guidance for New Awards with MTDC Calculation (Nov 2024),** but I don't see the budget

narrative section. Can we use our own template for the narrative, or can you indicate where we can find it?

Answer 2:

There is no template for the Budget Narrative portion. Applicants should use a word document and provide explanation/justification for each budget expense.

Question 3:

Would entering the name of the signing official be sufficient when filling out the above forms since there is no option to insert or attach a digital signature?

Answer 3:

The signature should be from the POC who is responsible/can certify the provided information is correct. If unable to digitally sign or print and scan in, please input name.

Question 4:

Also, if during the application completion process, we encounter any issues where can we reach out to for assistance since the guidance note states that the deadline for Deadline for Receipt of Questions: Thursday, July 3, 2025, by 5:00pm EST.

Answer 4:

Applicants need to send questions to CT by stated Q&A deadline. All questions received thereafter will be answered at the discretion of the Grants Officer. They should be sent to ArbogastCT@state.gov.

If you encounter any system issues, you should reach out to the help desk of Mygrants or Grants.gov and submit a help ticket. CT cannot assist with system issues.

Question 5:

Content of Application (page 8): Could the Department of State (DOS) please consider allowing textboxes, tables, and graphics to be in 10-point Calibri font?

Answer 5:

Per the directions on page three of the NOFO, all Microsoft Word documents are to be single-spaced, 12-point Times New Roman font, with a minimum of 1-inch margins. This includes all text on the page, graphic elements (tables, graphs, other visual inserts) included.

Question 6:

Content of Application, 3. Proposal, Program Methods and Design, 5. Logic Model and Theory of Change (page 10): Could the DOS kindly consider placing/submitting the Logic Model as an Attachment?

Answer 6:

All documents under section D3 should be included within the 12-page proposal. Please note that your PMP and logic model are intended to be *preliminary* in nature – e.g., the applicant's PMP should contain *illustrative* indicators that sufficiently demonstrate its ability to develop an effective PMP but is *not* intended be exhaustive.

Question 7:

Content of Application, 3. Proposal, Program Methods and Design, 6. Performance Monitoring Plan (PMP) (page 10): Could the DOS kindly provide the CT PMP "How-To" guidance/template (Annex II) for the list of CT indicators?

Answer 7:

The PMP is expected to be preliminary at this point. Please note that the NOFO and PMP guidance ask applicants to include at least three CT standard indicators in their PMP, along with whatever other indicators they wish to include. Those standard CT indicators are listed in the PMP 'How-To' Guide (annex II).

The template and how to guide will be uploaded to the award file.

Question 8:

Content of Application, 3. Proposal, Program Methods and Design, 6. Performance Monitoring Plan (PMP) (page 10): Could the DOS kindly consider placing/submitting the PMP as an Attachment?

Answer 8:

Yes, all documents under section D.3 should be included within the 12-page proposal. Please note that your PMP and logic model are intended to be *preliminary* in nature – e.g., the applicant's PMP should contain *illustrative* indicators that sufficiently demonstrate its ability to develop an effective PMP but is *not* intended be exhaustive.

Question 9:

Content of Application, 3. Proposal, Proposed Program Schedule and Timeline (page 11), could the DOS kindly consider placing/submitting the timelines as an Attachment?

Answer 9:

All documents under section D.3 should be included within the 12-page proposal.

Question/Answer 10:

Content of Application, 6. Attachments (page 12): Could the DOS kindly confirm for each attachment (listed below) if it should be included in the technical application or budget application

- o 1-page CV or resume of key personnel who are proposed for the program. Attachment to the Technical Application
- o Letters of support from program partners describing the roles and responsibilities of each partner. Attachment to the Technical Application
- o If your organization has a Negotiated Indirect Cost Rate Agreement (NICRA) and includes NICRA charges in the budget, your latest NICRA should be included as a PDF file. Budget Application
- o Official permission letters, if required for program activities. Attachment to technical application
- o Risk analysis: Identify the internal and external risks associated with the proposed program, rate the likelihood of the risks, rate the potential impact of the risks on the program, and identify actions that could help mitigate the risks. Attachment to the Technical Application

Question 11:

Content of Application, 6. Attachments, Risk Analysis (page 12): Could the DOS kindly provide or recommend a template for the risk analysis attachment?

Answer 11:

There is no formal template for the risk analysis and any format may be used. The risk analysis should be an attachment to the technical application.

Question 12:

Guidelines for Budget Justification, Contractual (page 27): The instructions only mention sub-awards to non-profit partners. Could the DOS please clarify if only non-profit organizations are permitted as sub-awardees/subrecipients for this program?

Answer 12: As needed, a for profit organization may be selected as sub-awardee, if the purpose for that organization is to conduct part of the program.

Question 13:

Could the DOS please confirm whether applicants are able to use their own budget format, provided it complies with the other requirements in the NOFO?

Answer 13:

You must use the provided budget template as it mirrors the SF-425A Budget document form.

Question 14:

Do the logic model and PMP need to be included as part of the 12-page proposal narrative (as they are listed under the section Program Methods and Design)? If yes, can we reduce the size of font inside tables to something smaller than 12?

Answer 14:

All documents under section D.3 should be included within the 12-page proposal. Please note that your PMP and logic model are intended to be *preliminary* in nature – e.g., the applicant's PMP should contain *illustrative* indicators that sufficiently demonstrate its ability to develop an effective PMP but is *not* intended be exhaustive. Per the directions on page three of the NOFO, all Microsoft Word documents

are to be single-spaced, 12-point Times New Roman font, with a minimum of 1-inch margins. This includes all text on the page, graphic elements (tables, graphs, other visual inserts) included.

Question 15:

There are guidelines provided for the logic model but not the PMP, and the NOFO states that a template/guidance for the PMP will be provided. Where can we find guidance for the PMP?

Answer 15:

The PMP is expected to be preliminary at this point. Please note that the NOFO and PMP guidance ask applicants to include at least three CT standard indicators in their PMP, along with whatever other indicators they wish to include. Those standard CT indicators are listed in the PMP 'How-To' Guide (annex II).

The template and how to guide will be uploaded to the award file.

Question 16:

Could you please indicate where we can find Annex II or the list of CT indicators?

Answer 16:

Annex II: the list of CT indicators is at the bottom of the PMP how to guide.

Question 17:

Has this potential program been discussed with GoI and Al Amal staff, and if so, if they are in agreement with such support?

Answer 17:

DOS is in close coordination with the GOI.

Question 18:

Given the requirements of this NOFO, is it fair to assume that DoS is expecting the implementer to operate in both Iraq and Northeast Syria?

Answer 18:

The potential implementer will operate in Iraq only.

Question 19:

Does DoS have a sense of the number of beneficiaries they would like to see involved in the program? We recognize that large numbers would likely overwhelm attempts to apply best practice risk assessment tools and thus necessitate focusing on less resource-intensive approaches.

Answer 19:

DOS CT requests to see cost-effective proposals that reach the greatest number of returnees in a feasible, sustainable, effective way.

Question 20:

Is the expectation that the implementer builds the capacity of relevant actors (Al Amal staff, GoI, and local communities to program), or that the implementer actually implements a program themselves?

Answer 20:

The potential implementer should train Al-Amal staff and service providers, GOI personnel, and local community leaders on the tools and techniques needed to identify and address signs of radicalization. The program should also focus on providing Al-Amal staff and service workers, GOI personnel, and community leaders with the tools and techniques needed to reintegrate returnees into local communities.

Question 21:

Are there any specific key personnel positions that DoS expects to be included within the proposed program team, or does DoS expect applicants to devise/propose their own key personnel positions?

Answer 21:

The potential implementer should devise/propose their own key personnel positions.

Question 22:

The last paragraph on page 8 of the solicitation concerning the proposal section states that the proposal can be "no more than 12 pages, excluding title page, table of contents, attachments, mandatory application forms." Can DoS please confirm whether proposal subsections titled "Proposed Program Schedule and Timeline", "Key Personnel", "Program Partners", and "Future Funding or Sustainability" are included within the 12-page limit? Additionally, can DoS also please confirm that the sections titled "Budget Justification Narrative" and "Audits" are not included within the 12-page limit?

Answer 22:

As listed in section D.3, your 12-page proposal must include:
- Proposal summary
- Introduction to the organization applying
- Program Methods and Design (which must include):
    o Situation analysis
    o Problem statement
    o Alignment with U.S. Counterterrorism policies
    o Program Activities
    o Logic Model and Theory of Change
    o PMP
- Proposed program schedule and timeline
- Key Personnel
- Program Partners
- Future funding or sustainability

Separate from the 12-page proposal you must also submit the budget justification narrative and the Audits.

The following are allowed to be included as attachments:
- 1 page CV or resume of Key Personnel
- Letter of support from program partners describing the roles and responsibilities of each partner
- Negotiated Indirect Cost Rate Agreemenet (NICRA) - if applicable
- Official permission letters, if necessary
- Risk Analysis

Question 23:

Is it Eligible to have previous Fund from U.S agencies?

Answer 23:

Potential implementers are not required to have previously received funding from the USG.

Question 24:

Can we apply as a Consortium (3-4 local NGOs)?

Answer 24:

Yes, you may apply as a consortium. However, one organization needs to take lead as the prime and all other groups/organizations will be considered sub-grantees.

Question 25:

Are SAM and UEI registration available for any local NGOs? Can this process be done with System support Freely without any Charge?

Answer 25:

Sams.gov and UEI registration is available and free to everyone. You need to register to apply in accordance with the NOFO.

Question 26:

What do you mean if the organization has NICRA? If we do not have it? What are the options?

Answer 26:

A Negotiated Indirect Cost Rate Agreement (NICRA) is a document published to reflect an estimate of indirect cost rate negotiated between the Federal Government and a Grantee's organization which reflects the indirect costs (facilities and administrative costs) and fringe benefit expenses incurred by the organization. Public International Organizations do not have NICRA's and therefore do not need to submit this information.

Most organizations do not have a NICRA. If you do not have a NICRO, organizations may charge 15% of MTDC of indirect costs.

Question 27:

The project Locations are the places (Governorates) where the Returnees Back?

Answer 27:

Project locations are Al-Amal and local governorates where returnees are being sent.

Question 28:

Targeting all Returnees casts The Family (Children, Women, Men, Boys and Girls)? or there are special Targets groups?

Answer 28:

The project should target Iraqis returning from al-Hol to Al-Amal and their local communities.

Question 29:

Application forms are Electronic or applying Via email? I had a Download Guideline, Logic-Model and Budget Template, but there is

no Application template, only Instruction on Guideline, What should be included.

Answer 29:

All applications should be submitted through Grants.gov.
Please see question 22 on what needs to be included in the proposal.

Question 30:

Can we apply with a project that covers only one Intended CT Program Outcome, or is it obligatory to cover both?

Answer 30:

Potential implementers should cover both intended CT Program Outcomes.

Question 31:

Can you please elaborate more on "early detection techniques and strategies"? Correct us if we are wrong, but we believe this would be the job of a national security agency. What could be the role of a CSO here, then?

Answer 31:

The program should focus on providing Al-Amal staff and service workers, Government of Iraq personnel, and community leaders with the tools and techniques needed to identify signs of radicalization within Iraqis returning from northeast Syria. The program should also focus on providing Al-Amal staff and service workers, GOI personnel, and community leaders with the tools and techniques needed to reintegrate returnees into local communities.

Question 32:

Per the NOFO, page 16: "National Security Vetting: Key beneficiaries may be required to undergo national security vetting prior to program implementation." How are "key beneficiaries" defined, and what would the methodology be for vetting them?

Answer 32:

Vetting requirements will be further explained to the selected applicant.

Question 33:

Per the NOFO, page 7: "Under this cooperative agreement, the selected implementer will further work with and seek approval from the GOR on the following: [...] Selection of all beneficiaries." Can you please provide some clarity on the GOR's role in identifying and/or approving all targeting beneficiaries as part of this project, and what autonomy the implementing partner will have in making these selections?

Answer 33:

The project should target two sub-groups:
- Iraqis returning from al-Hol to Al-Amal and their local communities.
- Al-Amal staff and service workers, Government of Iraq personnel, and community leaders

In creating the formal obligation agreement, the chosen implementer will list/identify the beneficiaries of their planned engagement. During the life of the grant, if the grantee wishes to add or change any of the beneficiaries, they will need to first discuss with CT and get permission. The implementing partner will be able to recommend beneficiaries, but CT/P has the final say.

Question 34:

The application package on Grants.gov includes a Detailed Budget template, but the list of Application Contents appears to only include the SF-424, SF-424A, and SF-424B, as well as a Budget Justification Narrative, and not a Detailed Budget. Can you please confirm if this is true, or if the Detailed Budget should be submitted in the provided template?

Answer 34:

As listed in section D.4: The Detailed Budget (in the provided template) is required (it is the same document as SF-425A Budget). Along with the Budget Justification Narrative that describes each of the budget expenses in detail.

Question 35:

Is sub-granting to local partners permitted, and is there a limit in terms of quantity and scope?

Answer 35:

Yes, sub-granting to local partners is permitted. There is no set limit to the number of sub-grantees, however a significant use of sub-grantees can factor into the evaluation.

Question 36:

Are there specific sectors that are not eligible for this project within the technical scope identified in the NOFO?

Answer 36:

Please refer to the eligibility section of the Notice of Funding Opportunity.

Question 37:

The NOFO is clear on the services intended for service providers and relevant national authorities. However, regarding the returnees themselves, could you please advise on the expected proportions?

Answer 37:

All activities should be complementary to the service workers. The project should focus on the workers providing the services, not on directly providing services.

Question 38:

For the returnees, should the project prioritize individual deradicalization, community reintegration, or a combination of both?

Answer 38:
Project should focus on a combination of both.

Question 39:
Does the scope of the project require implementation within Al Amel camp only, or should activities target both camp and non-camp settings where returnees are residing?

Answer 39:
Project locations are Al-Amal and local governorates where returnees are being sent.

Question 40:
The NOFO mentions children, adolescents, and adults as target populations. Could you please advise on precise age brackets or expected proportions?

Answer 40:
There are no set proportions, CT is looking for the most sustainable approach.

Question 41:
To what extent does the Bureau anticipate structured MHPSS interventions as core to the proposal, versus a complementary role supporting deradicalization and reintegration?

Answer 41:
All activities should be complementary to the service workers. The project should focus on the workers providing the services, not on directly providing services.