

NOTICE OF FUNDING OPPORTUNITY
BUREAU OF ECONOMIC AND BUSINESS AFFAIRS (EB)

Announcement Type:	New Announcement
Funding Opportunity Title:	Telecommunications Training
Assistance Listings Number:	19.700
Award Amount:	\$1,975,309
Number of Awards:	One (1) award
Cost Sharing Requirement:	Not Required
Assistance Type:	Cooperative Agreement
Funding Type:	Discretionary
Authority:	Foreign Assistance Act of 1961 as amended
Source of Funding:	FY 2019 Economic Support Funds (ESF)
Funding Activity Category:	Economic Growth
NOFO Issuance Date:	April 24, 2020
Closing Date for Submission of Applications:	Complete proposal packages must be submitted through www.grants.gov by June 12, 2020, 11:59 pm EST
Electronic Requirement:	Yes. E-mailed, faxed or mailed proposal packages, or individual documents, will not be considered.
Deadline for Receipt of Questions:	June 1, 2020, 11:59 PM, EST
Eligibility Category:	• U.S. - based non-profit/non-governmental organizations having a 501(c)(3) status with the IRS. • U.S. private institutions of higher education (universities and colleges) • U.S. public and state-controlled institutions of higher education (universities and colleges) • Public International Organizations (PIOs)

For-profit and commercial firms are **not** eligible to apply in response to this NOFO. No exceptions.

Type of Applicant: Organizations. Individuals are not eligible to apply.

Number of Applications: One (1) per applicant organization
Note: Organizations may form consortia and submit a combined proposal. However, only **one** organization may be designated as the lead applicant. The lead applicant must meet the eligibility criteria listed in this NOFO.

Anticipated Award Date: The successful applicant will receive notification within approximately four-to-five weeks of the closing of this announcement. The U.S. Department of State is under no obligation to fund any of the proposals submitted under this funding opportunity.

Est. Project Start Date: August/September 2020
Est. Project End Date: August/September 30, 2023

Project Duration: 36 months

Pending availability of funds in subsequent fiscal years and successful performance and implementation of these programs, EB may renew the cooperative agreement for a period of two additional years. Each year adds new training requirements to the program; applicants will need to demonstrate the ability to handle multiple years of training requirements.

This funding opportunity is posted on www.grants.gov and may be amended. Answers to questions from potential applicants will be posted as an attachment to this NOFO. Applicants should regularly check the www.grants.gov website for the most recent information pertaining to this NOFO. **Department of State bears no responsibility for data errors resulting from transmission or conversion processes associated with electronic submissions via www.grants.gov. Incomplete application packages will NOT be considered.**

Applicants, including U.S. affiliates of international organizations must provide a valid Data Universal Numbering System (DUNS), and **completed** www.sam.gov registration when submitting application on www.grants.gov in response to this NOFO.

SAM.gov registration (www.sam.gov) is required. **Applicants that do not have a valid DUNS number and completed www.sam.gov registration will NOT be eligible for consideration.**

It is the responsibility of the Applicant to ensure that the application package has been received by Grants.gov in its **entirety**.

The decision for the final eligibility and award determination rests with the DOS Grants Office.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The United States Department of State's Bureau of Economic and Business Affairs (EB) announces a Notice of Funding Opportunity (NOFO) to conduct a series of training engagements and workshops on Information and Communications Technology (ICT) policy, Internet and telecommunications regulation, digital trade, and digital economy policy to appropriate developing country government officials. These officials will be in positions that enable, regulate, and oversee the telecommunications sector and digital economy in their countries, including for example, telecommunication regulators, trade ministers, and policymakers responsible for communications infrastructure and other relevant policy and regulatory functions.

Department of State reserves the right to fund any or none of the proposals submitted and reserves the right to reduce, revise, or increase the budget in accordance with the needs of the project and pending the availability of funds.

The Federal award signed by the State Department Grants Officer is the **only** authorizing document.

This NOFO consists of the cover page plus the following sections:

- I. Funding Opportunity Description
- II. Award Information and Application Submission Information, Review Information and Scoring
- III. Eligibility Information
- IV. Agency Contacts

Eligible organizations interested in submitting an application are encouraged to review this NOFO thoroughly to understand the type of project sought and the application submission requirements and review process as outlined in this NOFO.

I. FUNDING OPPORTUNITY DESCRIPTION

- **Background**

The purpose of this training program is to: promote U.S. models of ICT and digital economy management; promote the growth and expansion of open, interoperable, reliable and secure communications networks; encourage the adoption digital trade and ICT policies that support long-term, sustainable growth, private sector investment, and developing country self-reliance; improve the resilience and security of communications infrastructure; and create opportunities for increase trade for U.S. businesses.

This training program is part of the Digital Connectivity and Cybersecurity Partnership (DCCP). The DCCP is a multi-year, global initiative that provides credible alternatives to top-down, authoritarian approaches to internet governance, promotes the deployment of secure, next generation information and telecommunications technology (ICT) infrastructure, and builds the cybersecurity capacity of our partners in order to enable nations to realize the tremendous economic benefits of the digital economy.

This training program will provide specialized, technical ICT training to designated officials primarily from developing countries who enable, regulate, and oversee their national communications infrastructure and are responsible for managing and regulating the digital economy. This training program will serve to introduce and explain important concepts in ICT policy and regulation that impact the digital economy of those countries. The training program will be designed to clearly articulate to these officials the benefits of the fundamental pillars of U.S. international information policy: open, interoperable, reliable, and secure communications infrastructure connectivity; multi-stakeholder models of internet governance; pro-competitive, and light touch regulatory frameworks for telecommunications services; open data flows across borders; and risk-based approaches to cybersecurity.

These trainings will cover policy and technical topics including, but not limited to: (a) wireless technology and opportunities, including 5G; (b) spectrum management and policy; (c) national broadband or ICT plans; (d) national cybersecurity strategies; (e) pro-competitive, pro-investment regulatory frameworks that advance the growth of telecommunications and internet services, applications, and networks; (f) cloud service technologies and policy; (g) emergency communications plans; (h) infrastructure policies that accelerate internet expansion, (i) emerging technologies such as Artificial Intelligence (AI), Internet of Things (IOT), and blockchain along with others.

This training program will be designed to develop a cadre of current and future leaders in the relevant ministries that cover these topics, as to advance the U.S. policy interests.

- **Project's Goals**

Provide targeted training by relevant experts from the private sector, U.S. government, and academia to build the institutional capacity of partner countries' relevant government officials and representatives. This training program is meant to encourage participant government officials to adopt policy and regulatory environments that advance, or are aligned with, U.S. policy priorities to expand America's vision of an open, interoperable, reliable, and secure internet. The training is also meant to provide government officials with a common lexicon and foundation for engagement with partners or in multilateral fora, such as at the International Telecommunications Union (ITU).

- **Project's Description**

The Recipient will need to demonstrate dedication, commitment, and a successful track record of developing and providing high-quality training to professionals, government leaders, or industry on a broad range of technology, telecommunications, regulatory, internet-related, or other similarly complex policy topics. Courses must be taught by experts in the areas of policy listed above and should strive to provide a well-rounded perspective that includes industry, government, and academic perspectives. Courses must be taught at state-of-the-art, high-tech facilities, suitable to the course subject matter.

This training program is intended to take place in the United States and in other countries, depending upon partner country interest. While the training is for participants from every region of the globe, priority countries may include: Ethiopia, Gabon, Ghana, Guinea, Guinea Bissau, Guyana, Kenya, Lesotho, Liberia, Madagascar, Malawi, Mali, Mauritius, Mozambique, Namibia, Niger, Nigeria, Rwanda, Sao Tome and Principe, Senegal, Sierra Leone, Somalia, South Africa,

Tanzania, Uganda, Brunei, Cambodia, Indonesia, Laos, Malaysia, Philippines, Vietnam, Ukraine, Estonia, Poland, Bangladesh, India, Argentina, Brazil, Chile, Colombia, the Dominican Republic, Ecuador, Mexico, and Peru.

The Recipient will need to demonstrate a willingness to work closely with EB on all program requirements, including close coordination regarding participant selection and training format. The Recipient will need to have the capacity to conduct training on a global scale, with a priority placed on in-person training, and the ability to conduct online training or alternative training methods.

- **Project's Objectives**

The overarching objective of this training is to help inform and align foreign decision-makers with pro-market U.S. approaches to economic and information and communication technology (ICT) policies, thereby reducing barriers to trade, and creating greater export opportunities for U.S. businesses. In addition, this training should inform and align foreign decision makers with U.S. approaches to secure ICT network deployments, emerging technologies, and cybersecurity best practices to support our shared economic and national security.

The key objectives of this project's training program include:

- i. Develop and implement intensive, short (one day to three weeks) training sessions on a range of ICT issues for government officials and/or representatives to encourage strong telecommunications policy and regulatory foundations in developing countries.
- ii. Develop and implement intensive, short (one day to three weeks) training sessions for government officials and/or representatives on preparing for fifth generation (5G) technology, to encourage strong telecommunications policy and regulatory foundations that promote the deployment of secure 5G networks in developing countries.
- iii. Provide in-region trainings to the Western Hemisphere (WHA) region on: secure, open, and interoperable 5G; spectrum management; telecommunications regulation; cybersecurity; data privacy; cloud computing and data localization; broadband connectivity and telecommunication regulation; digital infrastructure policy and other topics to be determined in consultation with EB.
- iv. Provide senior-level, initiation only, U.S.-based, two-week long training programs, targeting participants from the WHA region participants. Themes may include: e-commerce; preparing for 5G; spectrum management; telecommunications regulation; and data management. These 50 participants are included as part of the 250 participant total.

- **Additional Guidelines**

Proposed Schedule

The Recipient will provide a proposed schedule of activities in order to meet the aforementioned participant totals, broken down by quarter and training sequence and must include: course titles, course providers, brief course summary, course location, and estimated course dates.

The Recipient should prepare a proposed sequence of courses, to allow for progressive, on-going engagement with particularly interested partner country officials. These courses might include, for example, a course in mobile network technology that is followed by a course in spectrum management or emergency communications.

Potential courses can include:

Telecommunication Policy and Regulation: An overview of telecommunications policymaking, and an introduction to U.S. government policy interests in regulation, internet governance, and policymaking.

Mobile Broadband: Technology oriented and policy frameworks that foster the deployment of broadband networks.

Spectrum Management: Spectrum planning, auctions, and policymaking, including the various elements required to plan, organize, manage, and control and effective spectrum management agency.

Satellite Communications: Technical and regulatory fundamentals of satellite communications and services.

Emergency Communications: Courses that cover telecommunications needs for mitigating the effects of natural and man-made disasters.

Cybersecurity Policies and Strategies: A sequence of courses that will focus on strategy level instruction regarding key questions of policy and implementation related to cyber security.

5G Networks: Courses that encourage telecommunications policy and regulatory frameworks that promote secure, trusted 5G and other next generation networks in developing countries.

Standards Development: Courses that cover how to promote a private industry-led approach and strategy, including multi-stakeholder engagement with international Standard Development Organizations (SDOs).

Multilateral Conferences: The Recipient will also need to be able to host specialized seminars for priority countries in preparation of key International Telecommunications Union (ITU) conferences, assemblies, and relevant meetings.

Language Translation

As necessary, the Recipient will ensure that all training content be translated into relevant languages for regionally focused trainings. As appropriate, the Recipient will need to provide training sessions in both English and the relevant language, either by means of translator or by offering language-specific courses on the same topic.

In-Person and Distance Learning Ability

The Recipient must describe and demonstrate how it can successfully implement both in-person and remote training.

Participant Recruitment and Selection

The Applicant will select participants for review and consent by the Department of State. The Applicant will collaborate closely with EB to identify and select well-placed government officials, representatives, and/or industry leaders from around the globe to participate in these training programs. The Applicant must demonstrate an ability to manage the participant application and selection process. The Applicant should describe how prospective students will be recruited, how they will apply for the trainings, outline the selection criteria and who will review each application process. The Applicant must demonstrate the ability to recruit diverse candidates, screen and select high-caliber candidates from all regions of the globe, and do so in close coordination with EB.

Travel and Logistics

The Applicant will describe how it will manage candidates' visas, airfare, accommodation, meals and incidentals for the training. The Applicant will also describe how it plans to fulfill the overseas training components.

Project Monitoring Plan

The Applicant should produce performance monitoring plans, including quantity and quality of the curriculum, participants' progress reports, and post-training communications.

Program Management Personnel

The Applicant will summarize who is responsible for managing the day-to-day operations of the program, including support staff. The Applicant will list any sub-recipients it plans to use.

II. AWARD INFORMATION AND APPLICATION EVALUATION AND SCORING

Department of State/Bureau will issue an award to the applicant whose proposal represents the best value to the U.S. Government on the basis of technical merit, efficient use of U.S. Government funds, and satisfactory organizational capacity.

The Department of State reserves the right to make an award on the basis of initial application received with or without discussion or negotiations. Therefore, applications should contain the Applicants' best terms from both cost and technical standpoints.

This NOFO will be funded out of Foreign Assistance (FY 2019 Economic Support Funds) and several funding restrictions apply, to include country-recipient restrictions. This potential award will be a cooperative agreement requiring substantial involvement on the part of the Department of State (DOS), such as but not limited to, close collaboration and approval of every phase of the project to include participant selection.

It is Department of State policy that English is the official language and U.S. dollar is the controlling currency. Proposal and related supporting documents must be English and accompanying budget in U.S. dollars.

Eligible applications will be evaluated by an independent review panel consisting of subject matter experts from other DOS bureaus/or offices or other USG agencies.

Bureau will conduct a merit review of all eligible applications as outlined in this NOFO. Applications will be reviewed by an independent review panel consisting of qualified subject matter experts from other DOS bureaus and offices, U.S. Embassies, or other USG agencies. Final approval resides with the DOS Grants Office.

The following criteria will serve as a standard which all **eligible** applications will be evaluated against. Each eligible application will be evaluated and scored on the review criteria using a 100-point scale. The review panel will apply the following criteria when rating proposals:

Quality of Project Idea

- The proposal responds to the NOFO and demonstrates the Applicant's knowledge of the policy topics discussed above and the appropriate context for those policy topics in developing countries, particularly those highlighted as priority countries;
- The proposal demonstrates an interdisciplinary approach to the training, which includes experts from industry, academia, and government;
- The proposal directly connects proposed activities with the desired outcomes (goals and objectives). **25 points**

Project Planning/Ability to Achieve Objectives

- The proposal provides a detailed work plan of proposed project activities and includes a clear articulation of how these activities will contribute to the overall project's goals and objectives;
- The proposal-articulated the project activities are specific, measurable, attainable, and placed in a reasonable time frame (SMART). **30 points**

Organizational Capability and Record of Performance

- Demonstrated ability to manage successfully programs of this magnitude and complexity.
- Demonstrated ability to recruit, engage, and retain a diverse array of experts from the private sector, academia, and U.S. government to contribute to interdisciplinary training, technical assistance, or similar activities. **10 points**

Budget and Cost Effectiveness

- The administration of the proposal budget, including salaries and honoraria, are explained and justified for the work involved;
- Proposed costs are reasonable, necessary, linked to program objectives, and demonstrate efficient use of U.S. Government funds. **10 points**

Project Management and Evaluation

- The Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) Plan includes narrative explaining how monitoring and evaluation will be carried out. The plan should summarize the Applicant's recruitment,

implementation and evaluation plans and how they will be used to achieve program goals.
15 points

Sustainability of Impact

- Applicant's clear articulation of how desired objectives will be generated and methods used to ensure sustainability of the program clearly delineating how impact will be sustainable beyond the life of the grant. **10 points**

APPLICATION SUBMISSION INFORMATION:

Please refer to the Proposal Submission Instructions (PSI) for more information and complete instructions on how to apply to this NOFO, including information on proposal's content and formatting. Please use both the PSI and the NOFO to ensure that the proposal submission is in full compliance with the requirements. Proposal submissions that do not meet all of the requirements outlined in the NOFO and PSI will NOT be considered.

FEDERAL AWARD ADMINISTRATION INFORMATION:

The Federal award signed by the Grants Officer is the only authorizing document.

Issuance of this NOFO does not constitute a commitment on the part of the Department of State to issue an award nor does it commit the U.S. Government to pay for costs incurred in the preparation and submission of an application. Furthermore, award cannot be issued until funds have been fully appropriated, allocated, and committed through internal DOS procedures. While it is anticipated that these procedures will be successfully completed, potential applicants are hereby notified of these requirements. All preparation and submission costs are at the Applicant's expense.

Pursuant to 2 CFR 200.400 g, it is U.S. Department of State policy **not** to award profit under assistance instruments.

2 CFR §200.501 requires domestic/US non-federal entities that expend \$750,000, or more, in federal assistance during organization's fiscal year to have a single or program-specific audit conducted for that year. In addition, the entity must report the collected audit data elements on the form SF-SAC and submit it to the FAC. Any findings such as material weaknesses, significant deficiencies, or material noncompliance are reported on the SF-SAC.

The Federal award signed by the Grants Officer is the only authorizing document.

REPORTING REQUIREMENTS:

Recipient will be required to submit Quarterly Progress and Quarterly Financial Reports (SF-425), unless special conditions apply, describing key activities undertaken during the reporting period towards accomplishment of the stated objectives. Financial Reports provide a means of monitoring expenditures.

NOTE: It is the Department of State policy that English is the official language of all award documents. If reports or any other supporting documents are provided in both English and a foreign language, it must be stated in each version that the English language version is the

controlling version. U.S. dollar is the controlling currency. Financial reports must be submitted in U.S. dollars.

OTHER INFORMATION:

Mandatory disclosures (2 CFR 200.113)

Non-federal entity, recipient or applicant for a federal award must disclose, in a timely manner, in writing to the federal awarding agency or pass-through entity all violations of federal criminal law involving fraud, bribery, or gratuity violations potentially affecting the federal award. Non-federal entities that have received a Federal award including the term and condition outlined in Appendix XII of the 2 CFR 200—Award Terms and Conditions for Recipient Integrity and Performance Matters -- are required to report certain civil, criminal, or administrative proceedings to www.sam.gov.

Failure to make required disclosures can result in any of the remedies described in §200.338 Remedies for Noncompliance, including suspension or debarment.

Federal Awardee Performance and Integrity Information System (FAPIIS)

A federal awarding agency, prior to making a federal award, will review and consider any information about the Applicant that is in the designated integrity and performance system accessible through www.sam.gov. (currently FAPIIS) (see 41 U.S.C. 2313). Applicant, at its option, may review information in the designated integrity and performance systems accessible through www.sam.gov 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 www.sam.gov. Federal awarding agency will consider any comments by the Applicant, in addition to the other information in the designated integrity and performance. Applicant organizations must demonstrate adherence to equal opportunity employment practices and commitment to non-discrimination with respect to beneficiaries. Non-discrimination includes equal treatment without regard to race, religion, ethnicity, gender, and political affiliation. Applicants are reminded that U.S. Executive Orders and U.S. law prohibits transactions with or support to individuals or organizations associated with terrorism.

- **Proposals that reflect any type of support for any member, affiliate, or representative of a designated terrorist organization or narcotics trafficker, including elected members of government, will NOT be considered. This provision must be included in any sub- awards/sub-contracts issued under this award.**
- **U.S. Applicant organizations must demonstrate adherence to equal opportunity employment practices and commitment to non-discrimination with respect to beneficiaries. Non-discrimination includes equal treatment without regard to race, religion, ethnicity, gender, and political affiliation.**
- **Recipients under DOS-funded projects are responsible for complying with all applicable tax treaties and federal, state, and local laws on tax withholding and reporting for project participants.**

ADMINISTRATIVE AND NATIONAL POLICY REQUIREMENTS:

This federal award is subject to the following standard administrative policy requirements. The Department of State's Standard Terms and Conditions for Domestic Federal Assistance Awards will be incorporated into the Notice of Award. The Recipient and any sub-recipient, in addition to the assurances and certifications made part of the Notice of Award, must comply with all applicable terms and conditions during the project period. The requirements are as stipulated in 2 CFR 200. PIOs are exempt from this requirement.

DISCLAIMER:

The Department of State has no obligation to provide any additional future funding in connection with the award. Renewal of an award to increase or decrease funding or extend the period of performance is at the total discretion of the Department of State and availability of funding.

III. ELIGIBILITY INFORMATION

See the cover page, Eligibility Category.

Applicants should demonstrate expertise training individuals from diverse backgrounds. Applicants should also demonstrate in-depth understanding of a wide range of governance structures.

IV. AGENCY CONTACT

Any prospective applicant desiring an explanation or interpretation of this NOFO must request it in writing by the deadline for questions specified on page 1 (cover page). Information given to a prospective applicant concerning this NOFO will be furnished promptly to all other prospective applicants as a 'Questions and Answers' attachment to this NOFO.

Any questions concerning this NOFO must be submitted in writing by email to Rebecca Williams, Department of State Bureau of Business and Economic Affairs via email to WilliamsR5@state.gov, cc'ing Ashton Davis (DavisAB3@state.gov) along with the project's title as outlined in the NOFO; the funding opportunity number; and applicant's legal name and organizational status.