U.S. DEPARTMENT OF STATE
Office of Global Partnerships (E/GP - formerly S/GP)
Notice of Funding Opportunity: Statement of Interest

Funding Opportunity Title: Climate Solutions and Sustainable Entrepreneurship
Funding Opportunity Number: SFOP0009848
Deadline for Questions: July 7, 2023, at 11:59 PM Washington, DC
Deadline for Applications: July 14, 2023, at 11:59 PM Washington, DC
CFDA Number: 19.301
Total Amount Available: $780,000

A. PROGRAM DESCRIPTION

The Office of Global Partnerships (GP) of the U.S. Department of State (DOS) announces an open competition for organizations to submit a statement of interest (SOI) to carry out a program (or programs) to expand and amplify the Department's response to the climate crisis and capitalize on the resources of GP's Coalition for Climate Entrepreneurship program (CCE). The Office of Global Partnerships (GP) of the U.S. Department of State (DOS) has launched the Climate Solutions and Sustainable Entrepreneurship Fund (CSSEF) to drive sustainability-focused programming in makerspaces, community centers, and technology labs in developing economies that strive to capacitate local entrepreneurs and increase their ability to scale climate solutions to market. GP hopes to help create local communities of entrepreneurs and entrepreneur-support organizations around these hubs that are more market-savvy, more resourced, more cooperative amongst each other, and better able to generate climate solutions.

The submission of the SOI is the first step in a two-step process. Please see appendix 1 for a visual of the complete process.

First, applicants will submit a concise not to exceed five [5] pages statement of interest (SOI) designed to clearly communicate program idea and objectives and a not to exceed four [4] pages Description of Climate Hub document certifying that the space in which they propose to conduct climate entrepreneurship programs qualifies as a "climate hub," as defined below. If applicants hold a subject matter expertise but do not own a physical hub in the targeted nation in which to convene students, applicants may submit joint proposals with a signed letter from the owner of the space. This is not a full proposal. The purpose of the SOI process is to allow applicants to submit program ideas for evaluation prior to requiring the development of a full proposal application.

Upon a merit review of eligible SOIs, selected applicants will be invited to expand on their program idea(s) by submitting a Full Proposal application. Full proposals will go through a second merit review before final funding decision(s) are made.

The DOS broadly categorizes the private sector to include: U.S. corporations; foreign corporations; foundations; faith-based organizations; non-governmental organizations; civil society groups; Diaspora groups; service organizations; and universities and other institutions of learning. The Climate Solutions and Sustainable Entrepreneurship Fund (CSSEF) is designed to support specific Administration and Department priorities and criteria for leveraging private sector led responses to the climate crisis. DOS defines a climate hub, for the purpose of the CSSEF, as a physical, tangible space dedicated to convening impact-driven entrepreneurs and small businesses and providing them reliable access to software, hardware, subject matter expertise and guidance in order to drive progress towards economic prosperity and social impact. Lastly, DOS defines "sustainability-focused" for this cooperative agreement as having a focus on clean energy, sustainable agriculture, climate finance, climate resilience and adaptation, and restorative ventures. This NOFO SOI will accept SOIs throughout the open period.

GP will determine priority regions and Economic Support Fund (ESF) eligible countries in consultation with Department of State stakeholders. Programming could take place in any of the following geographic regions: Sub Saharan Africa (AF), East Asia Pacific (EAP), Europe and Eurasia (EUR), Near East and North Africa (NEA), South and Central Asia (SCA), and Western Hemisphere (WHA). Programs in the following countries will not be considered eligible for this funding opportunity: Comoros, Eritrea, Guinea-Bissau, South Sudan, Burma, China (PRC), Malaysia, Russia, Algeria, Iran, Syria, Turkmenistan, Cuba, Nicaragua, Zimbabwe, Egypt, Venezuela.

Program Objectives:
The CSSEF seeks SOIs that will address the following three objectives, as outlined in the attached Draft Scope of Work for Climate Solutions and Sustainable Entrepreneurship:

1. Convene in a dedicated space sustainability-focused entrepreneurs and founders passionate about developing and scaling solutions to the climate crisis in order to provide educational services to relevant participants over the course of the program.
2. Measurably increase the capacity of entrepreneurs and founders to scale solutions, obtain finance, reach market deployment, and expand market share.
3. Foster a community of founders and entrepreneur-support organizations where additional partners seek to support emerging, sustainability-focused solutions.

The Department is specifically looking for SOIs that will enable people around the world to mitigate and adapt to climate change's effects on their societies by utilizing sustainability-focused makerspaces and labs. As part of the Coalition for Climate Entrepreneurship program, GP has partnered, and continues to partner, with private sector entities to operate and open a series of hubs around the developing world that provide the space, hardware, software, and community necessary to generate and scale climate solutions. GP seeks to fund SOIs that provide similar spaces and capitalize on the ability of hubs to convene climate-focused entrepreneurs.

SOIs that work to enable an economic response to the climate crisis, such as coaching and mentorship curriculum, capital-raising guidance, recruitment and education of environmentally-focused entrepreneurs, event management, and other economic engagement are welcome. These examples are only made for illustrative purpose and the Department welcomes hearing of the creativity from the private sector. The CSSEF is not intended to physically improve or enhance existing climate spaces (e.g., purchasing new computers, cleaning and repurposing spaces, adding additional rooms to spaces, etc.) or cover pre-existing operational expenses. Instead, SOIs must focus on providing relevant curriculum and programming from expert sources. The CSSEF may not be charged by an applicant for the use of a climate space, nor may the use of a space alone be considered "cost sharing."

The CSSEF will build upon private sector resources and capabilities in partnership with the funding opportunity's resources. GP believes makerspaces and labs provide a unique capability of convening the resources of established partners such as governments, large corporations, faith-based organizations, community-based organizations, etc. with the creativity and drive of entrepreneurs and small businesses while creating a community of collaboration, encouragement, and mutual support.

The Department of State seeks to initiate partnerships that feature leverage. "Leverage" is defined by the DOS as significant resources mobilized from non-U.S. government sources. DOS seeks the mobilization of resources of other actors on a 1:1 or greater basis (i.e., 50 percent of the proposed value of the award). DOS anticipates a leveraged average of 1:4 in total over the life of all awards made under this program. Leveraged resources may include grants/awards from non-U.S. government organizations and other donor governments. Leveraged resources are not subject to audit and are counted as aspirational resources.

Participants and Audiences:
SOIs should primarily target entrepreneurs and entrepreneur-facing support organizations that seek to generate new and scale existing sustainability solutions. These entrepreneur-support organizations do not need to be headquartered in the targeted priority region but should have a focus and active presence in the chosen market.

B. FEDERAL AWARD INFORMATION

Length of performance period: **12 to 36 months**
Number of awards anticipated: **Between 1 and 6**
Award amounts: awards may range from a minimum of **(*$50k)*** to a maximum of **(*$260k)***
Type of Funding: ***FY 22 Economic Support Funds under the Foreign Assistance Act***
Anticipated program start date: **September 2023**

This notice is subject to availability of funding.

Funding Instrument Type: The CSSEF will distribute awards in the form of cooperative agreements. Cooperative agreements are different from grants in that Department staff are more actively involved in the grant implementation ("Substantial Involvement"). If a cooperative agreement is awarded, substantial involvement may include the following at a minimum:

- Approval of key personnel;
- Approval of program implementation plans; and
- Communicating with Department staff

Program Performance Period: Cooperative agreements should be completed in 36 months or less. GP retains the right to execute non-competitive continuation amendment(s). Any amendment(s) is based on performance, pending availability of funds and is not guaranteed.

C. ELIGILIBITY INFORMATION

1. Eligible Applicants

The following organizations are eligible to apply*:*

- U.S. non-profit/non-governmental organizations;
- (NGOs) having a 501(c)(3) status with the IRS;
- Overseas-based non-profit/non-governmental organizations;
- U.S. and overseas private/state institutions of higher education; and
- for-profit and commercial firms.
- Applicants may partner with hub owners of public or private origin, such as the American Spaces program, so long as the hubs are not supported by a government deemed ineligible for the CSSEF.

GP will not accept applications from individuals.

For hubs around the world to be eligible for this grant, they must comply with the following standards:

- The hub must be hosted by an organization with the capacity and experience necessary to implement programming, as outlined in the Description of Climate Hub document;
- Must have physical presence in a target region;
- Hubs must have experience and expertise on helping entrepreneurs and small-to-medium enterprises develop and scale sustainability-focused solutions, products, and organizations;
- Hubs must have implemented programming (of any subject matter) in the last six months with five or more individual participants.
    - Hubs must submit brief documentation of their last program. No more than two pages will be necessary;

- Hubs must have at least two dedicated, local employees committed to managing the hub and providing educational services;
- The hubs must exist in a dedicated and enclosed physical space with access to internet and electricity. Hubs with electricity access in areas with common blackouts are acceptable; and
- Submissions must include a video capturing the entire layout of the hub or must provide enough photos to provide a complete picture of the space.
    - Video must be provided as a link, not a file. Pictures may be compiled into a pdf document;
- A functioning website (Working URL, up-to-date information, clear and cohesive information).
- If you are a third party, educational service provider that does not own/manage a physical hub space, you may still apply in partnership with a space that meets the requirements above. You will need to include a written letter of endorsement signed by the operator/owner of a hub that complies with the above criteria.
    - This letter must clearly state who it is from, what organization and climate-entrepreneurship hub they are representing and affirm that they are willing to work with the third party applicant on the implementation of this funding opportunity. Beyond this letter, third party applicants may submit the above information on behalf of their hub partners. The letter itself does not need to be more than one page and will not count towards the not to exceed four [4] pages Description of Climate Hub limit.
    - (If relevant) The letter of partnership and the photos document do not count towards the not to exceed four [4] pages limit on the Description of Climate Hub.

Please note that the U.S. Department of State does not allow profit to be earned on federal assistance awards.

2. Cost Sharing or Matching

Cost sharing is not required. However, GP encourages applicants to provide maximum levels of cost sharing in support of its programs.

3. Other Eligibility Requirements

In order to be eligible to receive an award, all organizations must have a Unique Entity Identifier (UEI) number issued via www.SAM.gov as well as a valid registration on www.SAM.gov. Please see Section E.4 for more information.

Applicants are only allowed to submit one proposal per organization. If more than one proposal is submitted from an organization, all proposals from that institution will be considered ineligible for funding.

D. APPLICATION AND SUBMISSION INFORMATION

1. Content and Form of Statement of Interest Submission

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

Content of SOI must include both of the following packages:

Statement of Interest (not to exceed five [5] pages in Microsoft Word) which must contain the following information:

- Proposed project descriptions;
- Country or region of countries where the program will be carried out;
- Amount of funding requested from DOS;
- The anticipated total budget amount (in U.S. dollars), including how much funds will be leveraged from which sources;
- Performance Indicators (see draft Scope of Work for examples); and
- Expected outcomes.

Description of Climate Hub (not to exceed four [4] pages in Microsoft Word) must include:

- An overview document (no more than two pages) detailing the scope, size, location, and brief history of the hub. Relevant information on hub partners and funders, as well as the space's mission and goals, should be included. This document should also include contact information of dedicated employees of the hub.
- Up to two-page written summary or recap document of the most relevant current and/or recent program implemented in the hub.
- A video tour (provided as a link) of the hub providing a complete understanding of the space and showing internet and electrical connections. A single document compiling photos that provides an overview of the space and captures the requested details will also be accepted.
- If you are a third part subject matter expert and wish to apply for the cooperative agreement in partnership with a space owner, you must additionally attach a one page letter of endorsement that details who it is from, what organization and climate-entrepreneurship hub they are representing, and affirm that they are willing to work with the third party applicant on the implementation of this funding opportunity. Beyond this letter, third party applicants may submit the above information on behalf of their hub partners.

SOI must also include:

- The SOI package must include both the Statement of Interest and the Description of Climate Hub;
- The anticipated total budget amount (in U.S. dollars);
- Documents fully in English

    - 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 documents are formatted to 8 ½ x 11 paper; and,
- All documents are single-spaced, 12 point Calibri font, with 1-inch margins. Captions and footnotes may be 10 point Calibri font. Font sizes in charts and tables, including the budget, can be reformatted to fit within 1 page width.

Applicants may reference the Draft Scope of Work for Climate Solutions and Sustainable Entrepreneurship Fund as a resource for drafting Statements of Interest. The Draft Scope of Work is not a required document for submitting a Statement of Interest.

2. Submission Dates and Times

GP will accept SOIs until July 14, 2023, at 11:59 PM Washington, DC. Grants.gov and SAMS Domestic both automatically log the date and time 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. Applicants should not expect a notification upon DOS receiving their application.

Upon a merit review of eligible SOIs, selected applicants will be invited to expand on their program idea(s) by submitting a Full Proposal application. If 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. Full proposals will include a detailed line-item budget and budget narrative, monitoring and evaluations plans, and other required forms and documentation. The deadlines may vary in each notification of intent and applicants must adhere to the stated deadline in the notification of intent. Full proposals will go through a second merit review before final funding decision(s) are made.

3. Funding Restrictions

GP 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.gov is eligible for any assistance. Programs in the following countries will not be considered eligible for this funding opportunity: Comoros, Eritrea, Guinea-Bissau, South Sudan, Burma, China (PRC), Malaysia, Russia, Algeria, Iran, Syria, Turkmenistan, Cuba, Nicaragua, Zimbabwe, Egypt, Venezuela.

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.

4. Other Submission Requirements

All application materials must be submitted electronically through either SAMS Domestic (https://mygrants.service-now.com) or Grants.gov (www.grants.gov). Both systems require registration by the applicant.

E. APPLICATION REVIEW INFORMATION

1. Criteria

Each SOI will be evaluated and rated based on the evaluation criteria outlined below.

- *Quality of Proposal*: - *40 points*
  - Proposal outlines a programmatic plan that aligns with, and will make progress towards, the three objectives of convening sustainability-focused entrepreneurs, increasing their ability to scale climate solutions to market, and building a community of support around the hub. Proposal reflects regional and industry expertise. Clearly defines major tasks and activities, timelines, proposed partners, and responsibilities, and discusses how progress towards objectives can be measured. Proposal makes efforts to include underrepresented demographics in local communities.

- *Capacity of Hub Space - 40 points*
  - Space meets and/or exceeds all criteria outlined in the Description of Climate Hub. The presented information gives a complete, unambiguous understanding of the physical space and its qualifications for this cooperative agreement. The SOI presents a clear picture of past programming that is relevant and well-executed with visible results. The hub has qualified staff with experience in relevant industries and has existing relationships with local entrepreneur support organizations.

- *Network of support – 20 points*
  - SOI is submitted with the endorsement of several industry and community organizations willing to collaborate. Past programming submitted under the Description of Hub reflects community engagement and collaboration with numerous partners. Proposed programming incorporates contributions from a number of partner/collaborating organizations, such as local universities, accelerators, and industry leaders.

Please note that Full Proposals will have a separate and more in-depth set of criteria by which they will be judged.

2. Review and Selection Process

The Office of Global Partnerships will review all SOIs and proposals for technical eligibility. SOIs will be deemed ineligible if they do not fully adhere to the guidelines stated herein. All eligible SOIs will be reviewed against the criteria listed above. SOIs are reviewed individually against the criteria and not against competing SOIs. For a fair review all panelists will review the first page of the SOI up to the page limit and no further. The panel may provide conditions and/or recommendations on SOIs to enhance the proposed program. Conditions must be addressed, and recommendations should be addressed, in a full proposal application.)

The selection committee, led by technical staff, will evaluate SOIs using the merit criteria. If an SOI is conditionally recommended by the committee, the applicant may be invited to submit a full application proposal. The full proposal will be reviewed by the selection committee using the criteria described in E.1. as well as additional information indicated in the letter of intent. If the full proposal is recommended for funding, the applicant's proposal will be referred to the responsible Grants Officer to begin negotiations.

3. Following the review, any successful SOI applicants will be contacted and instructed to submit Full Proposals. A Full Proposal will include the following required standardized forms:
    - **SF-424 (Application for Federal Assistance – organizations)** or **SF-424-I (Application for Federal Assistance --individuals)**
    - **SF424A (Budget Information for Non-Construction programs)**
    - **SF424B (Assurances for Non-Construction programs) for individual or organization exempted from registering in SAM.**

4. Unique Entity Identifier and System for Award Management (SAM.gov)

Required Registrations:

All organizations, whether based in the United States or in another country, must have a Unique Entity Identifier (UEI) and an active registration with the SAM.gov. A 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.

Note: As of April 2022, a DUNS number is no longer required for federal assistance applications.

The 2 CFR 200 requires that sub-grantees obtain a UEI number. Please note the UEI for sub-grantees is not required at the time of application but will be required before an award is processed and/or directed to a sub-grantee.

Note: The process of obtaining or renewing a SAM.gov registration may take anywhere from 4-8 weeks. Please begin your registration as early as possible.

- Organizations **based in the United States** or that pay employees within the United States will need an Employer Identification Number (EIN) from the Internal Revenue Service (IRS), and a UEI number prior to registering in SAM.gov.

- Organizations **based outside of the United States** and that do not pay employees within the United States do not need an EIN from the IRS but do need a UEI number prior to registering in SAM.gov.
- **Please note that as of November 2022 and February 2022 respectively, organizations based outside of the United States that do not intend to apply for U.S. Department of Defense (DoD) awards are no longer required to have a NATO Commercial and Government Entity (NCAGE) code or CAGE code to apply for non-DoD foreign assistance funding opportunities.** If an applicant organization is mid-registration and wishes to remove a CAGE or NCAGE code from their SAM.gov registration, the applicant should submit a help desk ticket ("incident") with the Federal Service Desk (FSD) online at www.fsd.gov using the following language: "I do not intend to seek financial assistance from the Department of Defense. I do not wish to obtain a CAGE or NCAGE code. I understand that I will need to submit my registration after this incident is resolved in order to have my registration activated."

Organizations based outside of the United States and that DO NOT plan to do business with the DoD should follow the below instructions:

Step 1: Proceed to SAM.gov to obtain a UEI and complete the SAM.gov registration process. SAM.gov registration must be renewed annually.

Organizations based outside of the United States and that DO plan to do business with the DoD in addition to Department of State should follow the below instructions:

Step 1: Apply for an NCAGE code by following the instructions on the NSPA NATO website linked below:

NCAGE Homepage:
https://eportal.nspa.nato.int/AC135Public/sc/CageList.aspx
NCAGE Code Request Tool (NCRT):

Exemptions
An exemption from the UEI and sam.gov registration requirements may be permitted on a case-by-case basis if:

- An applicant's identity must be protected due to potential endangerment of their mission, their organization's status, their employees, or individuals being served by the applicant.
- For an applicant, if the Federal awarding agency makes a determination that there are exigent circumstances that prohibit the applicant from receiving a unique entity identifier and completing SAM registration prior to receiving a Federal award. In these instances, Federal awarding agencies must require the recipient to obtain a unique entity identifier and complete SAM registration within 30 days of the Federal award date.

Organizations requesting exemption from UEI or SAM.gov requirements must email the point of contact listed in the NOFO at least two weeks prior to the deadline in the NOFO providing a justification of their request. Approval for a SAM.gov exemption must come from the warranted Grants Officer before the application can be deemed eligible for review.

F. FEDERAL AWARD ADMINISTRATION INFORMATION

1. Administrative and National Policy Requirements

Terms and Conditions: Before submitting the SOI, applicants should review all the terms and conditions and required certifications which will apply if a full proposal application is requested and awarded, to ensure that they will be able to comply. These include:
2 CFR 200, 2 CFR 600, and the Department of State Standard Terms and Conditions which are available at: https://www.state.gov/about-us-office-of-the-procurement-executive/.

G. FEDERAL AWARDING AGENCY CONTACTS

If you have any questions about the SOI application process, please contact the U.S. Department of State, Office of Global Partnerships (E/GP) at climatehubfund@state.gov.

Questions and Answers or FAQ will be posted on Grants.Gov. All questions must be received by July 7, 2023, at 11:59 PM Washington, DC.

Except for technical submission questions, during the NOFO SOI/NOFO 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 rejection and approval letters have been transmitted.

H. OTHER INFORMATION

DOS 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 GP 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 SOI is binding and may not be modified by any GP representative. Explanatory information provided by GP that contradicts this language will not be binding.

Issuance of this NOFO SOI 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.

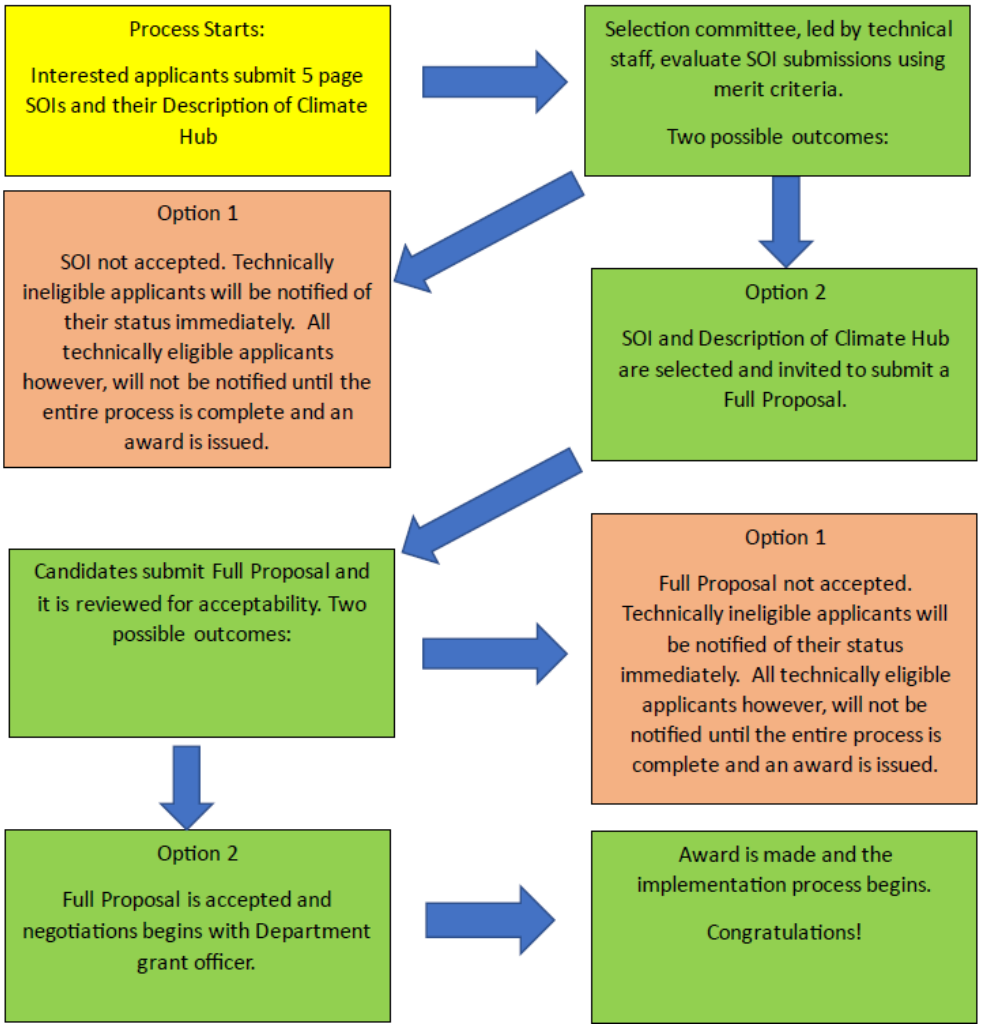
This NOFO SOI will appear on Grants.gov and SAMS Domestic.

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 GP 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.

APPENDIX 1

Appendix 1- Flow Chart of the Funding Opportunity Process



Attachment:

- **Draft Scope of Work for Climate Solutions and Sustainable Entrepreneurship**