

Announcement Type: Open Competition Cooperative Agreement
Funding Opportunity Title: Building Community of Practice for Women in Strategic Trade
Funding Opportunity Number: SFOP0009644
NOFO Qs & As

Q1. There are two in-person workshops expected as deliverables: one workshop for the first round of mentor-mentee pairings, and the second workshop for completion of the first round of pairings and launch of second round of pairings. Is the implementer also expected to conduct a third workshop for completion of the second round of pairings, and if so, can this be conducted in a virtual format?

A1. There is no expectation that under this award the implementer will host a third workshop for completion of the second round of pairings.

Q2. Can honorarium (related to project completion for the mentees, or participation for the mentors) be provided to foreign government officials from Southeast Asia?

A2. There will be no honorarium for mentees or mentors. This award will cover their travel, lodging, and per diem.

Q3. Ref Section A: “Countries may include: Malaysia, Philippines, Vietnam, Thailand, Indonesia, Cambodia, and Laos”. Are any of these countries higher priority to your office? Any preference in order of engagement? May we provide multiple country plan options and pricing, and if so, how can we do so compliantly?

A3. In order of priority: Philippines, Laos, Thailand, Malaysia, Vietnam, Indonesia, Cambodia. EXBS’s preference is that at least four countries will be represented in the first and second round of mentorship.

Q4. Ref Preface/Section 0: Section According to TVPA: Malaysia is a “tier 3 country” and Indonesia is on the “tier 2 watch list” – can the sponsor either provide the list of countries or information about what assistance is permitted at what level?

A4. Regardless of watchlist level, EXBS works with government officials with strategic trade control-related responsibilities. All activities noted in the NOFO are assistance that are permitted in the listed countries.

Q5. Ref Section A: Section The solicitation describes mentee candidates as “Early to mid-career OFFICIALS” Please clarify if only government employees are eligible mentees? Or are other sector (academia, private sector, etc) professionals eligible?

A5. EXBS is focusing these engagements with government officials.

Q6. Ref: Sections D,E, and F: Please clarify what is included in the “12 page” narrative limit and do addenda, budgets, resumes, count toward that page count? We want to be sure we clearly understand what page limits for the components we must adhere to.

A6. The Proposal Narrative should NOT exceed 12 pages and include the following:

The proposal narrative should identify inputs, outputs, and outcomes of the proposal activities, timelines, and any qualitative or quantitative targets, and impact. A portion of the program should include compiling, analyzing, and disseminating program results and lessons learned. Applicants should outline a learning plan that demonstrates how the program will be monitored and how monitoring will be analyzed to adapt implementation to support effectiveness and avoid unintended consequences. Some form of independent evaluation must be included in proposals responding to this NOFO. Please elaborate on the type (quasi-experimental, developmental, outcome harvesting, process tracing, etc.). While the type of evaluation is flexible within Department of State guidance, it must be independent.

The Budget Narrative and Detailed Budget must be separately/independently attached documents not included in the Proposal Narrative document. Resumes, SME List, SOW and other documents not directly related to the Proposal Narrative document should also be attached/submitted separately/independently.

Q7. Ref: Section F: Can you please specify if a recognition/certificate event to honor the participants would be considered a “ceremonial cost”? Given that we are trying to build professional relationships, is a facilitation and logistic support for a modest “social/networking event” an allowable cost?

A7. Recognition/certificate is an allowable as long as the cost are reasonable.

§ 200.432 Conferences.

A conference is defined as a meeting, retreat, seminar, symposium, workshop or event whose primary purpose is the dissemination of technical information beyond the non-Federal entity and is necessary and reasonable for successful performance under the Federal award. Allowable conference costs paid by the non-Federal entity as a sponsor or host of the conference may include rental of facilities, speakers' fees, costs of meals and refreshments, local transportation, and other items incidental to such conferences unless further restricted by the terms and conditions of the Federal award. As needed, the costs of identifying, but not providing, locally available dependent-care resources are allowable. Conference hosts/sponsors must exercise discretion and judgment in ensuring that conference costs are appropriate, necessary and managed in a manner that minimizes costs to the Federal award.

§ 200.423 Alcoholic beverages.

Costs of alcoholic beverages are unallowable.

Q8. Ref: Sections D and F: Acknowledging a 1 page DEIA plan is a requirement, may we submit an additional DEIA plan as an annex that is outside the page limit?

A8. Yes.