

U.S. Department of State

Notice Of Funding Opportunity (NOFO)

Program Office: Bureau of Arms Control and Nonproliferation,
Office of the Nonproliferation and Disarmament
Fund (ACN/NDF)

Assistance Listing: 19.224

Funding Opportunity Title: Mitigating Proliferation Risks Posed by Artificial
Intelligence Enabled Molecular Models and Leveraging
Nonproliferation Opportunities

Funding Opportunity Number: **DFOP0018449**

Announcement Type: Notice of Funding Opportunity (NOFO)

Award Type: Cooperative Agreement

Cost Sharing Requirement: Not Required

Period of Performance (Max): 24 Months

Deadline for Applications: **11:59 PM ET on 7/21/2026**

Anticipated Number of Awards: **2-5**

Available Funding: \$4,000,000

ELIGIBILITY

The following organizations are eligible to apply:

- Domestic Not for Profit Organizations
- Foreign Not for Profit Organizations
- Public Institutions of Higher Education
- Private Institutions of Higher Education
- Foreign Public Entities (FPEs)/Public International Organizations (PIOs)
- Other: U.S. Federal Government Entities, For Profit Organizations

CONTACT INFORMATION

For assistance with the requirements of this solicitation, please contact the ACN/NDF Grants Mailbox acn-ndf-grants@state.gov.

Table of Contents

Section A: Funding Opportunity Description	3
A.1 Executive Summary	3
A.2 Office Background	3
A.3. Project Background:	3
A.4. Project Objectives:	4
A.5. Expected Outcomes.....	5
A.6. Key Considerations	6
A.7. Substantial Involvement:.....	7
Section B: Federal Award Information.....	7
B.1. Available Funding	7
B.2. Award Management	8
Section C: Eligibility Information.....	8
C.1 Eligible Applicants	8
C.2 Cost-Sharing or Matching	8
C.3 Other Eligibility Criteria	8
Section D: Application and Submission Information	9
D.1 Solicitation Package.....	9
D.2 Content and Form of Application Submission.....	9
D.3 Required Registrations.....	12
D.4 Submission Details and Times.....	13
D.5 Funding Restrictions	13
D.5.1 Funding Restrictions for the United Nations Relief and Works Agency (UNRWA)	13
D.5.2 Prohibition on Funding Activities that Encourage Mass-Migration Caravans towards the United States Southwest Border):	13
D.5.3 Certification Regarding Compliance with applicable Federal anti-discrimination laws.....	14
D.5.4 Certification Regarding Compliance with 20 U.S.C. 1011f and any other applicable foreign funding disclosure requirements	14
D.5.5 Certification of Trafficking in Persons Compliance and Compliance Plan	14
D.5.6 Prohibition on Unmanned Aircraft Systems (UAS).....	15
Section E: Application Review Information.....	15
E.1 Proposal Review Criteria.....	15
E.2 Indirect Costs.....	16
E.3 Review and Selection Process	16
E.4 Risk Review.....	17
E.4.1 Risk factors	17
E.4.2 Responsibility/Qualification Information in SAM.gov	17
Section F: Federal Award Administration Information	17
F.1. Federal Award Notices	17
F.2 Administrative and National Policy and Legal Requirements.....	18
F.3 Reporting	19
F.4 Branding and Marking.....	21
F.5 Project Implementation Kickoff and Work Plan	21
G. Other Information	22
G.1 Guidelines for Budget Justification.....	22

Section A: Funding Opportunity Description

A.1 Executive Summary

The Department of State's Office of the Nonproliferation and Disarmament Fund (ACN/NDF) is pleased to announce an open competition for assistance awards through this Notice of Funding Opportunity (NOFO). ACN/NDF invites domestic non-profit/non-governmental organizations, educational institutions, and for-profit organizations to submit proposals for projects that will advance the mission of NDF's efforts to identify, evaluate, and develop safeguards to counter the misuse risks enabled by the proliferation of chemical and biological Artificial Intelligence (AI) models (CBAIMs). Proposals may not exceed the total availability of funds under this NOFO. ACN/NDF welcomes proposals that fully address all or a clearly articulated, targeted subset of the key objectives of this NDF line of effort (Section II). Please indicate whether the proposal involves collaboration with a partner organization that is separately responding to this solicitation.

Organizations that submit an application in response to this NOFO announcement acknowledge and accept all the requirements contained herein. The submission in response to this announcement is voluntary and does not obligate the Department of State to fund the proposal or proposal preparation costs. ***Please note: Receipt of this NOFO requesting a full application should not be construed as a guarantee of funding. All awards are subject to the availability of funds and the negotiation and finalization of the approved budget and award package.***

A.2 Office Background

The Office of the Nonproliferation and Disarmament Fund (NDF), part of the Department's Bureau of Arms Control and Nonproliferation (ACN), develops and executes projects in support of U.S. Government disarmament and proliferation threat reduction priorities. ACN/NDF efforts prevent the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction (WMD), missiles, and advanced or destabilizing conventional weapons to terrorists and other rogue entities; support bilateral and multilateral efforts to halt the proliferation of chemical, biological, radiological, and nuclear weapons, their delivery systems, related technologies, and other weapons; and secure, remove, or destroy WMD and its delivery systems.

A.3. Project Background:

The use of AI in the fields of chemistry and biology is ever-increasing and expanding. As interdisciplinary research has grown significantly in the last decade, AI has become widely used to process large amounts of data and to overcome challenges associated with modeling complex molecular structures. Furthermore, publications have started appearing in premier academic journals demonstrating that AI models used to identify new therapeutic drugs for further testing can also be used to identify new and potentially weaponizable chemicals and biomolecules with potencies similar to organophosphate nerve agents, lethal synthetic opioids, and biotoxins. While there have been great strides in the protein design field, awareness within the chemical research and development community of the potential for AI design models, systems, infrastructure, and associated data sets to enable the proliferation of weaponizable chemical materials remains even more limited. Therefore, it is vital that governments, private industry, research scientists, and other critical stakeholders ensure the secure development of AI models in

chemical and biological fields and promulgate international best practices on the legitimate use of such enabling technologies in order to mitigate the risk of misuse of these technologies.

A.4. Project Objectives:

NDF seeks to identify potential vulnerabilities and corresponding mitigation measures that can secure the research, development, and use of CBAIMs as well as associated systems, infrastructure, and data sets against exploitation by nefarious actors for WMD applications. This NOFO will support technical assessment, research and development, and foreign expert engagement that result in tangible deliverables including guidelines, codes of ethics, software tools or secure platforms for data sharing, methodological approaches, mitigation measures, and/or similar outputs toward the responsible use of AI for molecular design, synthesis, and related applications. NDF also encourages the submission of proposals that seek to bolster international chemical and biological weapons prevention, detection, and response efforts through beneficial applications of AI. Proposals may support all or a clearly defined, targeted subset of the following objectives and activities:

- Identify key foreign stakeholders involved in AI enabled molecular design and production. Examples include, but are not limited to, academic researchers in the chemical or biological sciences, pharmaceutical companies, researchers and developers of AI molecular models in academia or industry, and likeminded governments.
- Develop and conduct technical evaluations and risk assessments of training data sets, model architectures, computing systems, and related infrastructure used to develop AI molecular models for vulnerabilities and/or dual-use capabilities that could be exploited by nefarious actors for WMD purposes.
- Test established and develop new safeguards, mitigation measures, and best practices to secure sensitive data sets, computing systems, infrastructure, and molecular models to counter proliferation threats as the technology continues to advance that are (1) robust for open-weight models and (2) minimally adversely impact broader capabilities..
- Pilot new methodological approaches for evaluating and mitigating the risk of potential misuse of specialized CBAIMs including approaches that can be taken at different stages of the AI model lifecycle.
- Develop tools, methodologies, and other resources that leverage beneficial applications of AI to detect and counter illicit chemical and biological material acquisition, development, diversion, proliferation, weaponization, and use activities.
 - One such example could be "function-based screening for the pathogenicity and toxicity of nucleic acids, proteins, small molecules, and other biochemical products, as well as approaches to test the accuracy and reliability of such screening method." from the M-25-34 FY 2027 Administration Research and Development Budget Priorities and Cross-Cutting Actions:
- Publish forward-looking international guidelines, code(s) of ethics, software tools or platforms, proposals for institutional mechanisms, and/or similar deliverable(s) toward the responsible development and use of AI models, systems, architectures, infrastructure and associated data sets for molecular design and production.
- Organize interactive workshops or table-top exercises at the international, regional, bilateral, and sector specific levels to socialize and encourage adoption of key project deliverables for the responsible development and use of AI molecular models among the

broader community of stakeholders, including academia, industry, and government partners.

- As necessary, provide focused mentorship and trainer development support to empower foreign partners to serve as multipliers in amplifying the threat reduction objectives of this project.
- Set the conditions for routine evaluations and red-teaming exercises among the global community of practice to test, validate, and strengthen the efficacy of established best practices, mitigation measures, codes, guidelines, platforms, and tools for AI enabled molecular design and production to keep pace with technological advancements and emerging proliferation threats.

Efforts to research, develop, and evaluate AI molecular models are complex, and interact with both existing chemical synthesis and biotechnology industries as well as foundational AI research. As such, proposals should incorporate the perspectives of subject matter experts who broadly understand international approaches to AI research and development to ensure that key deliverables under this project protect national security.

Countries of impact may include, but are not limited to, Armenia, Australia, Azerbaijan, Canada, Denmark, France, Germany, Greece, India, Israel, Japan, the Netherlands, Poland, Saudi Arabia, Singapore, Republic of Korea, the United Arab Emirates, and the United Kingdom. Applicants are encouraged to specify individual countries of impact and rationale for their selection/prioritization in the proposal narrative.

A.5. Expected Outcomes

A successful project could have achieved all or a clearly defined, targeted subset of the following possible outcomes, with priority given to those demonstrating progress towards achieving administration priorities to make America safer, stronger, and more prosperous:

1. Enhanced Global Security Posture

- International stakeholders in CBAIMs possess heightened awareness of proliferation risks and actively implement mitigation measures
- Reduced vulnerability of AI systems, data sets, and infrastructure to exploitation by malicious actors seeking WMD capabilities

2. Concrete Tools and Standards

- Widely appreciated international guidelines, codes of ethics, and best practices for responsible AI molecular model development
- Functional software tools, secure platforms, or methodologies that researchers and industry can immediately implement at minimal cost
- Validated safeguards integrated into the AI model lifecycle from development through deployment that are minimally burdensome

3. Enhanced Detection and Response Capabilities

- Operational AI-powered tools that detect and counter illicit chemical and biological proliferation and use activities
- Improved capacity among partner nations to identify and respond to current and emerging threats

4. Enduring Impact

- Self-sustaining communities of practice in priority countries that continue threat reduction work beyond the project period
- Sector-specific action plans and national commitments addressing AI-enabled WMD proliferation risks

A.6. Key Considerations

All proposals must make a clear and compelling case for how the applicant will counter relevant proliferation challenges and/or leverage AI to reinforce nonproliferation priorities; how they will address partner-specific political, technical, and/or logistical realities; and how they will support the objectives of the NOFO and complement existing U.S. Government initiatives in this area. Sustainability is paramount to NDF's and the Department's long-term chemical, biological, and broader WMD nonproliferation objectives. NDF will view the following attributes favorably in the proposal consideration process:

- Proposals from organizations with experience conducting research or pilot efforts to test and evaluate models for the implementation of relevant safeguards, platforms for secure model testing and data handling, and practices to ensure the responsible use of AI molecular models.
- Comprehensive proposals that fully address the potential proliferation threats posed by AI and/or opportunities to leverage AI for the benefit of relevant WMD arms control and nonproliferation regimes and related international efforts.
- Efforts that lead to concrete deliverables including new tools, architectures, platforms, and approaches that can be easily adopted by the research community doing responsible R&D with AI molecular models.
- Informed prioritization of partner countries for engagement under this project, including those listed in the solicitation and others based on the applicant's experience and expertise.
- Outcomes that go beyond basic awareness raising and address complicated threats and vulnerabilities related to AI enabled molecular models and generalized models that could further WMD proliferation activities.
- Creative solutions that go beyond what is listed in the NOFO.
- Multifaceted technical assessments, exchanges, red teaming exercises, mentorship efforts, and other forms of stakeholder engagement that make an immediate and lasting threat reduction impact within the first year of funding availability.
- Effective mechanisms for long-term sustainment post-engagement, such as the cultivation of in-country champions, adoption of national and sector-specific action plans and commitments addressing AI enablement of WMD proliferation, and follow-on activities as part of other USG programs.
- Proposals that emphasize public outreach methodologies to build indigenous capacity within priority partner countries and establish relationships across relevant sectors and among regional partners.
- Nonproliferation benefits clearly evidenced by data-driven analysis and approaches targeted to current threat and vulnerability assessments.
- Multi-phase proposals to scope or validate vulnerabilities and develop country-, region-, and/or sector-specific solutions and engagements.

- Virtual or web-based activities to sustain partner engagement and maintain momentum on accomplishing threat reduction objectives between in-person dialogue sessions, technical exchanges, interactive exercises, and other sponsored events.

A.7. Substantial Involvement:

In response to this solicitation, ACN/NDF may award a Cooperative Agreement using the following envisioned terms of substantial involvement. ACN/NDF reserves the right to further adjust or add to these terms upon final award:

- ACN/NDF will regularly coordinate with and advise the implementer on the development of the best practices guide, activities, and sub-tasks outlined in the Statement of Work to ensure alignment with ACN and Administration priorities.
- On a quarterly basis, ACN/NDF will conduct a written and/or verbal review and assessment of major project milestones with the implementer's key personnel.
- Leveraging ACN, Department of State, and other U.S. Government relationships, ACN/NDF will collaborate with and advise the implementing project team on the identification of key partners and stakeholders, workshop participants, workshop locations, and other relevant issues.
- ACN/NDF will collaborate with the implementer and will conduct active facilitation of dialogue with key stakeholders to develop workshop input.
- ACN/NDF will socialize country level and regional activities with relevant Department of State personnel to ensure their awareness of the project, build support for programming priorities, and secure the approval of regional desk and local U.S. Mission POCs as required.
- Upon receipt, ACN/NDF will expeditiously review and either provide substantive feedback or confirm clearance in writing or verbally of project work plans, next steps, workshop materials, and other project deliverables and will give approval as necessary to proceed to the next phase of activities.

Section B: Federal Award Information

B.1. Available Funding

This notice is subject to availability of funding. The authority for this funding opportunity is found in Section 504 of the FREEDOM Support Act of 1992.

Organizations may form a consortium and submit a combined proposal. However, only one organization must be designated as the lead applicant, with the remaining organizations designated as sub-awardees. The lead applicant must meet the eligibility criteria listed in Section C.

The Department of State reserves the right to (a) fund any or none of the applications received; (b) reserves the right to reduce, revise, or increase the budget in accordance with bureau proprieties and the availability of funds; (c) accept other than the lowest cost application.

The U.S. government may make award(s) on the basis of initial applications received, without discussions or negotiations. Therefore, each initial application should contain the

applicant's best terms from a cost and technical standpoint. The U.S. government reserves the right (though it is under no obligation to do so), however, to enter into discussions with one or more applicants in order to obtain clarifications, additional detail, or to suggest refinements in the project description, budget, or other aspects of an application.

B.2. Award Management

The successful applicant will need to routinely collaborate with ACN/NDF through regular meetings and conference calls to discuss progress, challenges, emerging topics, etc. The successful applicant must ensure that all funds are used in a manner consistent with any applicable restrictions on funding. See Section D.5 below for funding restrictions.

Section C: Eligibility Information

C.1 Eligible Applicants

ACN/NDF welcomes applications from U.S.-based non-profit/non-governmental organizations with or without 501(c) (3) status of the U.S. tax code; U.S.-based private, public, or State institutions of higher education; U.S. for-profit organizations or businesses; and U.S. Federal Government Entities.

Applications submitted by for-profit entities may be subject to additional review following the panel selection process. Additionally, the Department of State prohibits profit to for-profit or commercial organizations under its assistance awards. Profit is defined as any amount in excess of allowable direct and indirect costs. The allowability of costs incurred by commercial organizations is determined in accordance with the provisions of the Federal Acquisition Regulation (FAR) at 48 CFR 30, Cost Accounting Standards Administration, and 48 CFR 31 Contract Cost Principles and Procedures.

Please see 2 CFR 200.307 for regulations regarding program income.

C.2 Cost-Sharing or Matching

The non-Federal share of costs, frequently called “cost share” or “matching costs”, refers to that portion of the project or program costs not borne by the Federal Government. This may include cash and third-party in-kind contributions. These costs must reflect the realistic capacity of the applicants and any third-party contributors.

Providing cost sharing, matching, or cost participation is not an eligibility factor or requirement for this NOFO and providing cost share will not result in a more favorable competitive ranking. Per 2 CFR §200.306, items that are proposed for cost share must be allowable per 2 CFR §200, Subpart E—Costs Principles.

Voluntary cost-share: Should the applicant choose to contribute voluntary cost-share but does not meet the minimum amount of the voluntary cost-sharing stipulated in the applicant’s budget, DOS’ contribution may be reduced in proportion to the applicant’s contribution.

C.3 Other Eligibility Criteria

Any applicant with an exclusion in the Exclusions section of the [System for Award Management \(SAM.gov\)](#) and/or has a current debt to the U.S. government is not eligible to apply for an

assistance award in accordance with the OMB guidelines at 2 CFR 180 that implement Executive Orders 12549 (3 CFR, 1986 Comp., p. 189) and 12689 (3 CFR, 1989 Comp., p. 235), “Debarment and Suspension.” Additionally, no entity or person listed in the Exclusions section of SAM.gov can participate in any activities under an award. All applicants are strongly encouraged to review the Exclusions section in SAM.gov to ensure that no ineligible entity or person is included in their application.

Section D: Application and Submission Information

D.1 Solicitation Package

Applicants can find application forms, instructions or other materials needed to apply on [grants.gov](https://www.grants.gov) and [MyGrants](https://www.mygrants.gov) under the announcement title “Mitigating Proliferation Risks Posed by Artificial Intelligence Enabled Molecular Models and Leveraging Nonproliferation Opportunities,” funding opportunity number “DFOP0018449.” Please contact the ACN/NDF Grants point of contact listed on the cover page if requesting reasonable accommodations for persons with disabilities or for security reasons. Please note that reasonable accommodations do not include deadline extensions.

D.2 Content and Form of Application Submission

Application Content: Applicants must follow the NOFO instructions and conditions contained herein and supply all the information required. **Failure to furnish all information or comply with stated requirements will result in disqualification from the competition.** Applicants must set forth full, accurate, and complete information as required by this NOFO. The penalty for making false statements in proposals to the U.S. government is prescribed on 18 U.S.C.1001.

Please ensure:

- The proposal clearly addresses the goals and objectives of this funding opportunity
- All documents are in English
- All budgets are in U.S. dollars
- All pages are numbered
- All documents are formatted to 8 ½ x 11 paper, and
- All Microsoft Word documents are single-spaced, 12 point Times New Roman font, with a minimum of 1-inch margins

The completed submission must consist of the following six parts. ***Please note that documentation submitted in excess of the below requirements will not be evaluated and may lead to disqualification from the competition.***

Section 1 - Application for Federal Assistance (SF-424) and Budget Information for Non-Construction Programs (SF-424A):

These forms are completed within the MyGrants portal. Completion instructions can be found on-line at: <https://www.grants.gov/forms/forms-repository/sf-424-family>

Organizations recognized as FPEs, PIOs, or U.S. Federal Government Entities are encouraged but not required to complete the SF-424 and SF-424A documents.

Section 2 – Project Proposal Narrative (10 pages maximum):

A recommended proposal template has been provided as part of the solicitation package. The proposal should contain sufficient information that anyone not familiar with it would understand exactly what the applicant wants to do. Applicants may choose to use their own proposal format, but it must include at a minimum the following components limited to 10 pages in length.

- **Proposal Summary:** Short narrative that outlines the proposed program, including program objectives and anticipated impact.
- **Introduction to the Organization or Individual applying:** A description of past and present operations, showing ability to carry out the program, including information on all previous grants from the U.S. Embassy and/or U.S. government agencies.
- **Problem Statement:** Clear, concise and well-supported statement of the problem to be addressed and why the proposed program is needed
- **Program Goals and Objectives:** The “goals” describe what the program is intended to achieve. The “objectives” refer to the intermediate accomplishments on the way to the goals. These should be achievable and measurable.
- **Program Activities:** Describe the program activities and how they will help achieve the objectives.
- **Program Methods and Design:** A description of how the program is expected to work to solve the stated problem and achieve the goal. Include a logic model as appropriate.
- **Proposed Program Schedule and Timeline:** The proposed timeline for the program activities. Include the dates, times, and locations of planned activities and events.
- **Program Partners (if applicable):** List the names and type of involvement of key partner organizations and sub-awardees.
- **Future Funding or Sustainability:** Applicant’s plan for continuing the program beyond the grant period, or the availability of other resources, if applicable.

Section 3 – Detailed Budget:

Applicants not recognized as FPEs or PIOs must provide detailed budget information according to the OMB cost categories as referenced in the SF-424A:

- Personnel
- Fringe benefits
- Travel
- Equipment
- Supplies
- Contractual services
- Construction
- Other direct costs
- Indirect costs
 - If the applicant organization has a Negotiated Indirect Cost Rate Agreement (NICRA) with the U.S. Federal Government, it must submit a copy of it as part of its application. This is considered an integral part of the detailed budget.

In addition to completion of the SF-424A within the MyGrants platform, applicants must use the attached template to break out expenses on a line-item basis. The detailed budget should be attached as a separate document from the proposal narrative. FPEs and PIOs are highly

encouraged but are not required to complete the SF-424A or use the provided template, though they are expected at a minimum to provide similarly detailed budget information.

Section 4 – Budget Narrative:

Applicants must provide a full and detailed budget narrative for each project. The budget narrative should include details on how figures/numbers were calculated if not clearly shown in the detailed budget as well as a narrative description of each line item in the budget.

Applicants must adhere to the requirements of the Federal Travel Regulation (FTR), including Fly America Act requirements, when proposing and conducting travel. For further information and current foreign per diem rates, please visit: https://aoprals.state.gov/web920/per_diem.asp

Section 5 – Key Personnel Documentation:

Applicants must provide a one-page (or less) resume or detailed position description for each key personnel position identified. These documents must be consolidated into a single document for submission. Proposed key personnel do not need to be final but must represent the appropriate level of expertise and qualifications that the applicant would require if funded.

Section 6 – Program Performance Monitoring and Evaluation: (3 pages maximum – not including tracking document)

Applicants should provide a description of their performance monitoring and evaluation (M&E) capabilities, including data quality assessments, preferably in no longer than a three-page Word or pdf document. Applicants should address how they will implement the monitoring, data collection and quality, and indicator requirements of [18 FAM 301.4, Department of State Program and Project Design, Monitoring, and Evaluation](#), including but not limited to:

- i) Detail how quantitative and qualitative performance indicators will be developed, and applicants are encouraged to suggest indicators in their narratives;
- ii) Detail how you will track the project's performance toward its objectives over time;
- iii) Provide a description of the possible approaches and data collection methods you will implement to determine whether the desired programmatic outcomes are being achieved;
- iv) Explain how you will logically link monitoring to program efforts and use performance data to inform course corrections during implementation.;
- v) If the project includes work with local partners or sub-partners, explain how M&E efforts will be coordinated with these organizations;
- vi) Explain how the program will be reviewed or assessed to ensure it is meeting its project goals;
- vii) Describe your capabilities for effectively addressing the requirements for data quality, performance indicator reference sheets (PIRS), and monitoring plans detailed in 18 FAM 301.4; and
- viii) Monitoring plans should include a tracking table for indicator data for outcome- and output-based indicators that link to the objectives, activities, and expected changes outlined in the proposal. Please include a populated Excel sheet or similar with proposed indicators and corresponding data that support this NOFO, using the Sample Performance Indicators Template in the Attachment as a reference.

Note: If recommended for funding, the panel, office, and/or bureau may negotiate the above to ensure fulfillment of 18 FAM 301.4 requirements, including the incorporation of Standard Foreign Assistance Indicators and publicly reported indicators as needed. More information on 18 FAM 301.4 and Standard Foreign Assistance Indicators is available on state.gov.

D.3 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 in 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. An applicant must maintain an active registration while it has a proposal under review by the Department and must continue to keep the registration active for the entire duration of the period of performance of any Federal award that results from this NOFO.

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

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 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 prior to registering in SAM.gov.
- **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 to apply for non-DoD foreign assistance funding opportunities.** If an applicant organization is mid-registration and wishes to remove an 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 an 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):

[NCAGE Code Request Tool \(nato.int\)](#)

Exemptions

An exemption from the UEI and sam.gov registration requirements may be permitted on a case-by-case basis. See [2 CFR 25.110](#) for a full list of exemptions.

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.

D.4 Submission Details and Times

Applications are due no later than 11:59 PM Eastern Time (ET), on **21 July 2026 on [MyGrants](#) under the announcement title “Mitigating Proliferation Risks Posed by Artificial Intelligence Enabled Molecular Models and Leveraging Nonproliferation Opportunities,” funding opportunity number “DFOP0018449.”**

Faxed, couriered, or emailed documents will not be accepted. Reasonable accommodations may, in appropriate circumstances, be provided to applicants with disabilities or for security reasons. U.S. Federal Government Entities are the only type of organization exempt from submission via [MyGrants](#) and must submit their applications via email to ACN-NDF-Grants@state.gov.

It is the responsibility of the applicant to ensure that it has an active registration in [MyGrants](#) and that an application has been received by the system in its entirety. Application submissions are automatically logged by date and time when made in [MyGrants](#), 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 ACN/NDF receiving their application.

ACN/NDF bears no responsibility for disqualification that results from applicants not being registered before the due date, for registration errors in either system, or other errors in the application process.

D.5 Funding Restrictions

D.5.1 Funding Restrictions for the United Nations Relief and Works Agency (UNRWA)

None of the funds awarded resulting from this Notice of Funding Opportunity may be made available for subawards, direct financial support, or otherwise used to provide any payment or transfer to United Nations Relief and Works Agency (UNRWA).

D.5.2 Prohibition on Funding Activities that Encourage Mass-Migration Caravans towards the United States Southwest Border):

None of the funds awarded under this grant may be made available to encourage, mobilize, publicize, or manage mass-migration caravans towards the United States southwest border.

Funds may not be made available for legal counseling on the United States asylum process; and/or for referrals to legal representation in the United States.

Funds may only be used for cash cards for use in the country in which they are provided or to facilitate assisted voluntary returns and other purposes that do not encourage, mobilize, publicize, or manage mass migration caravans towards the United States southwest border. The provision of humanitarian assistance is permitted.

D.5.3 Certification Regarding Compliance with applicable Federal anti-discrimination laws

If the place of performance or delivery of any award made under this NOFO will be **within the United States**, applicants are advised that they will be required to certify the following at the time of award:

- 1) Its compliance in all respects with all applicable Federal anti-discrimination laws is material to the government's payment decisions for purposes of section 3729(b)(4) of title 31, United States Code and;
- 2) It does not operate any programs promoting Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion that violate any applicable Federal anti-discrimination laws. A program promoting Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion means a program whose purpose is to promote preferences based on race, color religion, sex, or national origins, such as in training or hiring.

D.5.4 Certification Regarding Compliance with 20 U.S.C. 1011f and any other applicable foreign funding disclosure requirements

Applicants are advised that IHEs must certify the following at the time of award, and that this certification requirement must be included in any subaward agreements to IHEs:

- 1) Its compliance in all respects with section 1011f of title 20, United States Code, and any other applicable foreign funding disclosure requirements is material for purposes of section 3729 of title 31, United States Code, and for receipt of appropriate Federal grant funds.

D.5.5 Certification of Trafficking in Persons Compliance and Compliance Plan

Applicants are advised that they will be required to certify the following at the time of award for awards where the estimated value of services to be performed outside the United States exceeds \$500,000:

- To the best of the Recipient's knowledge, neither the Recipient, nor any subrecipient, contractor, or subcontractor of the Recipient or any agent of the recipient or of such a subrecipient, contractor, or subcontractor, is engaged in any of the activities described in [2 CFR 175.105\(a\)](#);
- The recipient has implemented a Trafficking in Persons compliance plan to prevent activities described in [2 CFR 175\(a\)](#) and is compliant with this plan; and the compliance plan must follow the minimum requirements described in 2 CFR 175(b)(5).
- That the Recipient has and will implement procedures to prevent activities described in [2 CFR 175.105\(a\)](#) and to monitor, detect, and terminate any subrecipient, contractor, subcontractor, or employee of the recipient engaging in these activities.

Recipients do not need to submit a copy of the plan. However, they must provide it to the Grants Officer upon request, and as appropriate, must post the useful and relevant contents of the plan or related materials on their website and at the workplace. Recipients must re-certify on an annual basis for the entire award period of performance.

D.5.6 Prohibition on Unmanned Aircraft Systems (UAS)

If your project involves the purchase or use of an UAS, see this [link](#) for requirements and information you must include in your application

D.5.7 Promoting Human Flourishing in Foreign Assistance (PHFFA)

Applicants for foreign assistance awards should be aware of requirements in 2 CFR Part 602, 603, and 604.

These policies are referred to collectively as the Promoting Human Flourishing in Foreign Assistance (PHFFA) Policy.

[602](#): The award term imposes certain abortion-related requirements on foreign nongovernmental organizations (NGOs), United States NGOs, public international organizations, foreign governments, and parastatals.

[603](#): The award term imposes certain requirements relating to gender ideology on foreign nongovernmental organizations (NGOs), United States NGOs, international organizations, foreign governments, and parastatals.

[604](#): The award term imposes certain requirements relating to discriminatory equity ideology on foreign nongovernmental organizations (NGOs), United States NGOs, international organizations, foreign governments, and parastatals.

The Department recognizes there are costs associated with these policies. Potential one-time and recurring costs the Department identifies for recipients and grantees are for familiarization with the policy, development and delivery of organizational training and implementation guidance, routine compliance monitoring, and recordkeeping and reporting requirements.

Section E: Application Review Information

E.1 Proposal Review Criteria

Applicants should note that the following criteria serve as a standard against which all project proposals will be evaluated and identify significant considerations that should be addressed in all proposals.

ACN/NDF will evaluate proposals against the stated criteria.

- **Proposed Activity or Activities:** Applications should be responsive to the program framework and policy objectives identified in the solicitation, appropriate in the country/regional and organizational context, and should clearly describe what they propose to do and how they will do it. The proposed project(s) should directly relate to meeting all specified objectives within at least one of the above lines of effort and applicants should include specific information on how these objectives will advance ACN/NDF's mission. ACN/NDF will evaluate the project proposal in terms of its

comprehension of the problem set, analysis of programmatic risks and mitigation measures, and identification of meaningful end states by project completion.

- **Organizational Capability:** Applicants must demonstrate how their resources, capabilities, and experience will enable them to achieve the stated goals and objectives in an international technical context. The proposal(s) must identify all key partners and organizations that will be involved in the implementation of this project. Finally, proposals should demonstrate how the applicant will manage all specified objectives within at least one of the above lines of effort.
- **Budget:** Proposed costs will be evaluated for realism, fiscal control practices, and efficiency. ACN/NDF must be able to determine that proposed costs are reasonable, allowable, and allocable to the proposed project activities. ACN/NDF will evaluate the budget to determine if the overall costs are realistic for the work to be performed, if the costs reflect the applicant's understanding of the allowable cost principles established by OMB Circulars A-122 and/or A-21, and if the costs are consistent with the project narrative.
- **Past Performance:** In reviewing proposals, ACN/NDF will evaluate the organization's past performance on other federal and non-federal grants and cooperative agreements. This will include a review of whether objectives for past awards were met; whether the organization complied with the terms of conditions of past awards, including reporting and financial management requirements; and the timeliness of project implementation.

E.2 Indirect Costs

If two or more applications receive equivalent scores based on the evaluation criteria outlined in this NOFO, preference will be given to the applicant with the lower indirect cost rate, as consistent with Executive Order 14332, Section 4(b)(iii). This preference will only be applied as a tie-breaking mechanism and does not supersede the primary evaluation criteria.

E.3 Review and Selection Process

The Department of State is committed to ensuring a competitive and standardized process for awarding funding. Applications will be screened initially in a Technical Eligibility Review stage to determine whether applicants meet the eligibility requirements outlined in section C and have submitted all required documents outlined in section D. Applications that do not meet these requirements will not advance beyond the Technical Eligibility Review stage and will be deemed ineligible for funding under this NOFO.

All applications that are deemed eligible will move forward to the Merit Review Panel consisting of U.S. government subject matter and/or country-specific experts and will be rated on a 100-point scale. ACN/NDF reserves the right to request the assistance of non-US government Subject Matter Experts (SMEs), if appropriate to the solicitation. Panel Reviewers will determine scores based on the strengths and weaknesses of the aforementioned categories and for consistency with the program goals and objectives outlined in this NOFO. Panel Reviewers' ratings, and any resulting recommendations, are advisory. Panel Reviewers may provide conditions and recommendations on applications to enhance the proposed project, which must be addressed by the applicant before further consideration of the award. To ensure effective use of US Government funds, conditions or recommendations may include requests to increase, decrease, clarify, and/or justify costs and project activities.

ACN/NDF reserves the right to make an award based on the initial application received with or without discussion or negotiations. Therefore, applications should contain the Applicants' best terms from both cost and technical standpoints.

Final selection authority resides with ACN/NDF senior level official. Final award decisions will be influenced by whether the application meets the Department of State's programmatic goals and objectives, how it supports the Department's overarching foreign policy priorities, and the geographic distribution of the top-ranking applications.

E.4 Risk Review

E.4.1 Risk factors

Under the merit review as required by 2 CFR 200.206, prior to making a Federal Award the Department will review and consider the following risk factors:

- a. Financial stability
- b. Management systems and standards
- c. History of performance
- d. Audit reports and findings
- e. Ability to effectively implement requirements

E.4.2 Responsibility/Qualification Information in SAM.gov

The Federal awarding agency, prior to making a Federal award with a total amount of Federal share greater than the simplified acquisition threshold, is required to review and consider any information about the applicant that is in the U.S. government designated integrity and performance system accessible through SAM.gov (see 41 U.S.C. 2313).

An applicant can review and comment on any information in the responsibility/qualification records available in SAM.gov.

Before making decisions in the risk review required by 2 CFR 200.206, the Department will consider any comments by the applicant, along with information available in the responsibility/qualification records in SAM.gov.

Section F: Federal Award Administration Information

F.1. Federal Award Notices

The award or cooperative agreement will be written, signed, awarded, and administered by the Grants Officer. The award agreement is the authorizing document, and it will be provided to the recipient for review and counter-signature. The recipient may only start incurring project expenses beginning on the start date shown on the award document signed by the Grants Officer.

If a proposal is selected for funding, the Department of State has no obligation to provide any additional future funding. Renewal of an award to increase funding or extend the period of performance is at the discretion of the Department of State.

Issuance of this NOFO 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. Further, the U.S. government reserves the right to reject any or all proposals received.

Additional information that successful applicants may be required to submit after notification of intent to make a Federal award, but prior to issuance of a Federal award, may include:

- Written responses and any revised application documents addressing any conditions or recommendations from the Review Panel and awarding bureau;
- Completion of the Department's Financial Management Survey, if receiving funding for the first time or requested by the Grants Officer;
- Submission of required documents to register in the Payment Management System (PMS) managed by the Department of Health and Human Services if receiving funding for the first time. PMS registration is bureau-specific;
- Other requested information or documents included in this funding opportunity or subsequent communications with the recommended applicant prior to issuance of a federal award.

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 \$1,000,000, or more, in federal assistance during the 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.

Unsuccessful applicants: Unsuccessful applicants will be notified via email.

Payment Method: Payments under this award will be made through the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) Payment Management System (PMS) or by completing form SF-270—Request for Advance or Reimbursement and submitting the form. Final determination will be made in conjunction with the Grants Officer. Unless otherwise stipulated, the Recipient may request payments on a reimbursement or advance basis. Instructions for requesting payments via PMS are available at: <https://pms.psc.gov/>. Instructions for requesting payments via SF-270 are available at: <https://www.grants.gov/forms/forms-repository/post-award-reporting-forms>.

Advance payments must be limited to the minimum amounts needed and be timed to be in accordance with the actual, immediate cash requirements of the Recipient in carrying out the purpose of this award. The timing and amount of advance payments must be as close as is administratively feasible to the actual disbursements by the Recipient for direct program or project costs and the proportionate share of any allowable indirect costs.

Recipients may not draw down funds without the affirmative authorization of the Department of State. In addition, recipients must submit, with each payment request, a detailed explanation justifying the request.

F.2 Administrative and National Policy and Legal Requirements

Before submitting an application, applicants should review all the terms and conditions and required certifications which will apply to this award, to ensure that they will be able to comply.

In accordance with the Office of Management and Budget’s guidance located at 2 CFR part 200, all applicable Federal laws, and relevant Executive guidance, the Department of State will review and consider applications for funding, as applicable to specific programs, pursuant to this notice of funding opportunity in accordance with the following:

- [Guidance for Grants and Agreements in Title 2 of the Code of Federal Regulations](#) (2 CFR), as updated in the Federal Register’s 89 FR 30046 on April 22, 2024, particularly on:
 - Selecting recipients most likely to be successful in delivering results based on the program objectives through an impartial process of evaluating Federal award applications (2 CFR part 200.205);
 - Promoting the freedom of speech and religious liberty in alignment with *Promoting Free Speech and Religious Liberty* (E.O. 13798) and *Improving Free Inquiry, Transparency, and Accountability at Colleges and Universities* (E.O. 13864) (§§ 200.300, 200.303, 200.339, and 200.341);
 - Providing a preference, to the extent permitted by law, to maximize use of goods, products, and materials produced in the United States (2 CFR part 200.322); and
 - Terminating agreements pursuant to the U.S. Department of State Standard Terms and Conditions, including, to the greatest extent authorized by law, if an award no longer effectuates the program goals or agency priorities (2 CFR part 200.340). For the avoidance of doubt, the Department has sole discretion over the determination that an award no longer effectuates program goals or agency priorities, and this provision permits awards to be terminated at the Department’s convenience, including when it determines that the award no longer advances the national interest.
- [2 CFR 25 - UNIVERSAL IDENTIFIER AND SYSTEM FOR AWARD MANAGEMENT](#)
- [2 CFR 170 - REPORTING SUBAWARD AND EXECUTIVE COMPENSATION INFORMATION](#)
- [2 CFR 175 - AWARD TERM FOR TRAFFICKING IN PERSONS](#)
- [2 CFR 182 - GOVERNMENTWIDE REQUIREMENTS FOR DRUG-FREE WORKPLACE \(FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE\)](#)
- [2 CFR 183 - NEVER CONTRACT WITH THE ENEMY](#)
- [2 CFR 600 – DEPARTMENT OF STATE REQUIREMENTS](#)
- [U.S. DEPARTMENT OF STATE STANDARD TERMS AND CONDITIONS](#)
- Recipients must comply with all applicable Executive Orders. A searchable list can be found in the Federal Register: <https://www.federalregister.gov/>

F.3 Reporting

Reporting is critical to effective program management and oversight. Reports are required as a means of evaluating the recipient’s progress and utilization of resources. They are divided between a performance progress report and a financial status report submitted on a quarterly basis or as determined by the grants officer. Applicants should be aware that ACN/NDF awards will require that all reports (financial and progress) are uploaded to the grant file in MyGrants.

Financial Reports

The Recipient is required to submit financial reports throughout the project period, using Form SF-425, the Federal Financial Report (FFR) form, as well as forms suggested by the Grants Officer Representative. If payment is made through the Payment Management System, all financial reports must be submitted electronically through the Payment Management System. The Recipient is also required to upload to MyGrants a pdf version of all financial reports (Federal Financial report) they have submitted in the Payment Management System. The SF-425 can be found on OMB's website forms tab: <https://www.grants.gov/web/grants/forms/post-award-reporting-forms.html#sortBy=1>.

Program Reports

The Recipient will be required to submit quarterly narrative progress reports (unless stipulated otherwise in the final Agreement) throughout the project period to the award file in MyGrants.

Narrative progress reports should reflect continued focus on measuring the project's progress in achieving the overarching goal. Explain and evaluate how activities reflect progress toward expected outcomes and outcomes towards achieving objectives. In addition, attach the M&E Tracker, comparing the target and actual numbers for the indicators. Reports should also include an update on expenditures during the quarter. Where relevant, progress reports should also include the following:

- Relevant contextual information (limited);
- Any tangible impact or success stories from the project, when possible;
- Copy of mid-term and/or final evaluation report(s) conducted by an external evaluator; if applicable;
- Relevant supporting documentation or products related to the project activities (such as articles, meeting lists and agendas, participant surveys, photos, manuals, etc.) as separate attachments;
- Description of how the recipient is pursuing sustainability, including looking for sources of follow-on funding;
- Any problems/challenges in implementing the project and corrective action plan with an updated timeline of activities;
- Reasons why activities have not been conducted or deliverables were not met in accordance with the timeline;
- Proposed activities for the next quarter; and,
- Additional pertinent information, including analysis and explanation of cost overruns or high unit costs, if applicable.

Final Reporting

A final financial and progress report is due no later than 120 calendar days after the expiration date of the award. The Final Progress Report shall include the following elements: executive summary, successes, outcomes, best practices, how the project will be sustained. Additional guidance may be provided prior to the award end date.

NOTE: Delays in reporting may result in delays of payment approvals and failure to provide required reports may jeopardize the recipients' ability to receive future U.S. government funds. ACN/NDF reserves the right to request any additional programmatic and/or financial project information during the award period of performance.

It is the Department of State's 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. The currency control is the US dollar. Financial reports must be submitted in U.S. dollars.

Applicants should be aware of the post award reporting requirements reflected in [2 CFR 200 Appendix XII—Award Term and Condition for Recipient Integrity and Performance Matters](#).

Foreign Assistance Data Review (FADR):

As required by Congress, the Department of State must make progress in its efforts to improve tracking and reporting of foreign assistance data through the Foreign Assistance Data Review (FADR). FADR requires tracking of foreign assistance activity data from budgeting, planning, and allocation through obligation and disbursement. Geographical and program area information is now coded within the subaccount/award number. Recipients will be required to report and draw down federal funding based on the appropriate FADR Data Elements, indicated within their award documentation. In cases where more than one FADR Data Element has been identified, typically program or sector and/or regions or country, the Recipient will be required to maintain separate accounting records and request expenses to each account separately.

F.4 Branding and Marking

The Department of State, its programs, and U.S. Government funding and assistance should be easily identifiable to the Department's global audiences.

Recipients of federal assistance awards must follow the branding guidance published at [Guidance for Contracts and Grants - U.S. Department of State Brand System](#). Branding policy exceptions are outlined in the U.S. Department of State Foreign Affairs Manual [10 FAM 416, Policy Exceptions](#).

For more information, visit: <https://brand.america.gov/>.

F.5 Project Implementation Kickoff and Work Plan

Project Implementation Meeting: The Recipient will have a pre-project implementation meeting with ACN/NDF within 30 days after the grant/cooperative agreement is awarded and before any work is performed for the award.

Project Work Plan: The Recipient shall submit to ACN/NDF within 30 days of award a draft project work plan (PWP), aligned with project management best practices, that includes a description of the project goal, discrete objectives, and planned activities; projected timeframes for accomplishing them; and performance indicators/metrics of success toward intended outcomes. ACN/NDF will review the plan in consultation with appropriate stakeholders and provide feedback to the Recipient detailing necessary revisions/adjustments to the plan to be made within 15 days of receipt.

G. Other Information

G.1 Guidelines for Budget Justification

Personnel and Fringe Benefits: Describe the wages, salaries, and benefits of temporary or permanent staff who will be working directly for the applicant on the program, and the percentage of their time that will be spent on the program.

Travel: Estimate the costs of travel and per diem for this program, for program staff, consultants or speakers, and participants/beneficiaries. If the program involves international travel, include a brief statement of justification for the requested travel.

Equipment: Describe any machinery, furniture, or other personal property that is required for the program, which has a useful life of more than one year (or a life longer than the duration of the program), and costs at least \$10,000 per unit.

Supplies: List and describe all the items and materials, including any computer devices, that are needed for the program. If an item costs more than \$10,000 per unit, then put it in the budget under Equipment.

Contractual: Describe goods and services that the applicant plans to acquire through a contract with a vendor. Also describe any sub-awards to non-profit partners that will help carry out the program activities.

Other Direct Costs: Describe other costs directly associated with the program, which do not fit in the other categories. For example, shipping costs for materials and equipment or applicable taxes. All “Other” or “Miscellaneous” expenses must be itemized and explained.

Indirect Costs: These are costs that cannot be linked directly to the program activities, such as overhead costs needed to help keep the organization operating. If your organization has a Negotiated Indirect Cost Rate (NICRA) and includes NICRA charges in the budget, attach a copy of your latest NICRA. Organizations that have never had a NICRA may request indirect costs of 15% of Modified Total Direct Costs as defined in 2 CFR 200.1.

“Cost Sharing” refers to contributions from the organization or other entities other than the U.S. Embassy. It also includes in-kind contributions such as volunteers’ time and donated venues.

Alcoholic Beverages: Award funds cannot be used for alcoholic beverages.