

**U.S. DEPARTMENT OF STATE
U.S. EMBASSY ABIDJAN, PUBLIC DIPLOMACY SECTION
NOTICE OF FUNDING OPPORTUNITY**

Funding Opportunity Title: Combatting Information Manipulation through Game Jam

Funding Opportunity Number: PDS-SIV-100-FY24-NOFO

Deadline for Applications: August 5, 2024

Assistance Listing Number: 19.040 – Public Diplomacy Programs (Smith-Mundt)

Total Amount Available: \$100,000.00 USD

A. PROGRAM DESCRIPTION

The Public Affairs Section of the U.S. Embassy in Abidjan, Côte d'Ivoire, of the U.S. Department of State announces an open competition for a cooperative agreement to develop and implement a Public Diplomacy Initiative (PD) national workshop on "Unmasking Misinformation through Gaming," to be held in Abidjan, pending the availability of funding. Please carefully follow all instructions below.

The proposed workshop will focus on introducing existing and aspiring young game developers to the concept of designing games to combat misinformation and equipping them with the technical and narrative skill sets to create compelling interactive experiences. The program should also provide participants with nuanced background knowledge on critical issues related to misinformation that could be highlighted through a gaming medium. Proposals should seek to convene 60-70 skilled gaming industry professionals and game design students for a four-day program comprised of a two-day workshop led by American and local experts on designing games with social messages, followed by a two-day game jam during which participants form teams and conceptualize games that could address pressing misinformation issues in Côte d'Ivoire. Program proposals should also integrate a final pitching competition and budget funding that allows selected games to be developed to completion.

Note: To be eligible for funding consideration, proposals must demonstrate significant U.S. content. U.S. content can include, for example, the substantial participation of U.S. experts and/or alumni of U.S. government exchange programs, partnership with U.S. organizations or educational institutions, the involvement of U.S. companies present in Cote D'Ivoire, the application or adaptation of U.S. models and best practices, or learning materials related to

American history, society, culture, government, or institutions. Initiatives that promote sustained cooperation between the people of the United States and Cote D'Ivoire even after program funding has concluded are encouraged.

Priority Cities: Abidjan, Yamoussoukro, Bouaké, and Korhogo.

Proposed Title: Unmasking Misinformation through Gaming (proposals are encouraged to include a rebrand of the public-facing title of this project)

Proposed Program Dates: September 2024 to September 2025

Program Objectives: This Public Diplomacy Initiative aims to create a network of young Ivorian leaders who work across national borders to solve disinformation problems. Through a variety of programs and engagements, PD seeks to build the leadership capabilities of youth in the region, strengthen ties between the United States and Côte d'Ivoire, and nurture a community of leaders who work across borders to solve shared issues. This national workshop on "Unmasking Misinformation through Gaming" will advance themes related to countering misinformation, harnessing technology to tackle shared challenges, advancing human rights, and promoting civic engagement. The program will also address goals including innovating on science and technology, fostering shared interest in democracy and good governance, and expanding bilateral cultural exchanges and linkages.

The proposal should include workshop follow-on activities such as virtual collaborative work, projects funded through small seed grants, or ongoing mentorship. The final development of games selected following the game jam may be included in these follow-on activities. The follow-on activity should be included in the monitoring and evaluation plan.

The proposal should include a contingency plan to accommodate any unexpected event which hinders the program from running its original course.

The proposal should include a pre and post workshop survey to measure the overall effectiveness of the workshop as well as any changes to the participants' knowledge of the workshop topic.

The concepts of leadership, giving back, and strengthening an Ivorian identity based on shared values and shared challenges should be integrated into the program.

Workshop speakers/facilitators/mentors should be citizens of the United States or Côte d'Ivoire.

The recipient is expected to develop syllabus materials and an event program with participant and speaker biographies, as well as design banners, backdrops, and other printed materials. The recipient is expected to design a digital engagement strategy for workshop participants and social media audiences, including live video or live online engagement during the program.

Participants and Audiences: The recipient will coordinate with U.S. Embassy Abidjan to recruit and select 60-70 participants. Participants will be between the ages of 18 and 35 and have experience or demonstrated interest in game design, game development, storytelling, or in forwarding social messaging through games or other creative media.

Participants must be proficient in written and spoken English as the workshop will be conducted in English.

The recipient will be responsible for arranging and using cooperative agreement funds to cover all elements related to participant and staff travel including international and domestic flights, visas, travel to and from airports, accommodations, per diem, meals during the program, insurance, etc.

- B. **FEDERAL AWARD INFORMATION Length of performance period:** 12 months
- C. **Number of awards anticipated:** One Award. Amounts: award may range from a minimum of \$75,000 to a maximum of \$100,000, subject to availability of funding.
- D. **Total available funding:** \$100,000
- E. **Type of Funding:** FY24 Public Diplomacy Programs (Smith-Mundt)
- F. **Anticipated program start date:** September 2024

This notice is subject to availability of funding.

- G. Funding Instrument Type:** Cooperative agreement. The U.S. Embassy Abidjan will have substantial involvement in the development, content, and schedule of the workshop. In consultation with U.S. Embassy Abidjan, the award recipient must actively engage relevant U.S. embassies related to the recruitment and selection process as well as communication with the participants.

Working closely with U.S. Embassy Abidjan, the recipient of this cooperative agreement shall develop a robust program for the workshop; schedule the event at a mutually agreed upon location; manage the application and selection process through a secure portal; develop the agenda and content for the workshop; recruit speaker(s); manage all travel logistics for participants and speakers; and generate content for social media and other publicity. The recipient is expected to provide all design files, photos and video recorded, as well as a promotion-ready, U.S. Embassy-approved photo album and a video series of the workshop after completion.

Regular, transparent communication via email, phone, and video conference calls and face-to-face meetings (as appropriate) with the Grants Officer, Grants Officer Representative, and Program Officer throughout the period of performance is critical to the success of this cooperative agreement.

All major elements of the program and its content require advance approval by U.S. Embassy Abidjan, including, but not limited to:

- Choices of dates, venue, accommodations, and menus;
- Final selection of participants, mentors, and speakers;
- Titles, format, and content of workshop sessions and other program activities;
- Design and content of all marketing materials, publicity, and media products.

Program Performance Period: Proposed programs should be completed in 12 months or less. The workshop must be a minimum of four full days not including travel days.

PDS may entertain applications for continuation grants funded under these awards beyond the initial budget period on a non-competitive basis subject to availability of funds, satisfactory progress of the program, and a determination that continued funding would be in the best interest of the U.S. Department of State.

C. ELIGIBILITY INFORMATION

1. Eligible Applicants

The following organizations are eligible to apply:

- Registered not-for-profit organizations, including think tanks and civil society/non-governmental organizations with programming experience
- Individuals
- Non-profit or governmental educational institutions
- Governmental institutions

NOTE: U.S. organizations should demonstrate in country local expertise and have local experts to assist in project implementation.

2. Cost Sharing or Matching: Cost share is not required.
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 D.3 for more information. Individuals are not required to have a UEI or be registered in SAM.gov.

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.

Organizations must have a commitment to equal opportunity employment practices and to non-discrimination practices with regard to beneficiaries, without regard to race, religion, ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, or political affiliation.

D. APPLICATION AND SUBMISSION INFORMATION

1. Address to Request Application Package

Application forms required below are available at <https://www.grants.gov>

2. Content and Form of Application Submission

Please follow all instructions below carefully.

Proposals that do not meet the requirements of this announcement or fail to comply with the stated requirements will be ineligible.

Content of Application

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 Calibri font, with a minimum of 1-inch margins.

The following documents are **required**:

1. **Mandatory application forms**

- **SF-424 (*Application for Federal Assistance – organizations*)** at grants.gov.
- **SF-424A (*Budget Information for Non-Construction programs*)** at grants.gov.
- **SF-424B (*Assurances for Non-Construction programs*)** at gov.

2. **Summary Page:**

Cover sheet stating the applicant name and organization, proposal date, program title, program period proposed start and end date, and brief purpose of the program.

3. **Proposal (10 pages maximum):**

The proposal should contain sufficient information that anyone not familiar with it would understand exactly what the applicant wants to do. You may use your own proposal format, but it must include all the items below.

- **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.

- **Key Personnel:**

Names, titles, roles, and experience/qualifications of key personnel involved in the program. What proportion of their time will be used in support of this program?

- **Program Partners:**

List the names and type of involvement of key partner organizations and sub-awardees.

- **Program Monitoring and Evaluation Plan:**

This is an important part of successful grants. Throughout the timeframe of the grant, how will the activities be monitored to ensure they are happening in a timely manner, and how will the program be evaluated to make sure it is meeting the goals of the grant?

- **Future Funding or Sustainability**

Applicant’s plan for continuing the program beyond the grant period, or the availability of other resources, if applicable.

4. **Budget Justification Narrative:**

After filling out the SF-424A Budget (above), use a separate file to describe each of the budget expenses in detail. See section *H. Other Information: Guidelines for Budget Submissions* below for further information.

4. **Attachments:**

- 1-page CV or resume of key personnel who are proposed for the program
- Letters of support from program partners describing the roles and responsibilities of each partner
- If your organization has a Negotiated Indirect Cost Rate Agreement (NICRA) and includes NICRA charges in the budget, your latest NICRA should be included as a PDF file.
- Official permission letters, if required for program activities
- 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 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 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 decides 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.

4. Submission Dates and Times

Applications are due no later than *August 5, 2024*

5. Funding Restrictions:

The following activities and costs are not covered under this announcement:

- *Construction is not an allowable activity under this award.*
- *Activities that appear partisan or that support individual or party electoral campaigns.*
- *Direct support or the appearance of direct support for any religious organization, to include repair or building of structures used for religious purposes.*
- *Military assistance of any kind, including weapons buy-back or rewards programs.*

- *Purchase of firearms, ammunition, or removal of unexploded ordnances.*
 - *Payments for any partner government, military, or civilian government employee salary or pension.*
 - *Duplication of services immediately available through municipal, provincial, or national government.*
 - *Funds for market research, advertising (unless public service related to grant program), or other promotional expenses.*
 - *Expenses made prior to the approval of a proposal or unreasonable expenditures will not be reimbursed.*
 - *Fund-raising campaigns;*
 - *Lobbying for specific legislation or projects;*
 - *Projects intended primarily for the growth or institutional development of the organization;*
 - *Projects seeking funds for personal use;*
 - *Projects that require a participation fee.*
 - *Representation by Organization Regarding a Delinquent Tax Liability or a Felony Criminal Conviction: In accordance with section 7073 of Division K of the Consolidated Appropriations Act, 2014 (Public Law 113-76) none of the funds made available by that Act may be used to enter into an assistance award with any organization that – Was “convicted of a felony criminal violation under any Federal law within the preceding 24 months, where the awarding agency has direct knowledge of the conviction, unless the agency has considered, in accordance with its procedures, that this further action is not necessary to protect the interests of the Government”; or*
 - *Has any “unpaid Federal tax liability that has been assessed for which all judicial and administrative remedies have been exhausted or have lapsed, and that is not being paid in a timely manner pursuant to an agreement with the authority responsible for collecting the tax liability, unless the Federal agency has considered, in accordance with its procedures, that this further action is not necessary to protect the interests of the Government.”*
 - *For the purposes of Section 7073, it is the Department of State’s policy that no award may be made to any organization covered by (1) or (2) above, unless the Procurement Executive has made a written determination that suspension or debarment is not necessary to protect the interests of the Government.*
6. Other Submission Requirements

All application materials must be submitted by email to abidjanpds@state.gov.

E. APPLICATION REVIEW INFORMATION

1. Criteria

Each application will be evaluated and rated on the basis of the evaluation criteria outlined below:

- **a) Quality and Feasibility of the Program Idea – 25 points:** The project idea is well developed, with details about the 5Ws:
 1. What activities are being proposed
 2. Where will the project be located
 3. When will activities take place
 4. Who will be responsible for completing the activities, and
 5. Why this project should be funded/why is it important.

- **b) Goals and objectives – 20 points:** Goals and objectives are clearly stated, beneficiaries identified, and proposed approach is likely to achieve maximum impact. Objectives are SMART: Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Realistic, and Timebound.

- **c) Organizational capacity and record on previous grants – 15 points:** The organization has expertise in its stated field and has a financial management system, including an existing bank account or the ability to open a bank account. Organization demonstrates ability to identify potential risks associated with the proposed activities and includes a realistic plan to address potential risks.

- **d) Monitoring and evaluation (M&E) plan – 15 points:** The M&E Plan demonstrates the ability to measure indicators and milestones and shows how and when those will be measured. Indicators are SMART: Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Realistic, and Timebound.
- **e) Sustainability – 15 points:** The Sustainability Plan demonstrates how project activities will be sustained after the life of the grant is finished. Provides a reasonable plan for activities to become self-sustaining after the grant period and identifies potential risks.
- **f) Budget – 10 points:** The budget is realistic and reasonable, accounting for all necessary expenses to achieve proposed goals, and includes cost notes explaining the budget items.
 1. Review and Selection Process

A review committee will evaluate all eligible applications.

3. Responsibility/Qualification Information in SAM.gov (formerly, FAPIIS)

- i. 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);
- ii. An applicant, at its option, may review and comment on any information about itself that a Federal awarding agency previously entered. Currently, federal agencies create integrity records in the integrity module of the Contractor Performance Assessment and Reporting System (CPARS) and these records are visible as responsibility/qualification records in SAM.gov;
- iii. The Federal awarding agency will consider any comments by the applicant, in addition to the other information in the designated integrity and performance system, in making a judgment about the applicant's integrity, business ethics, and record of performance under Federal awards when completing the review of risk posed by applicants as described in §200.206 Federal awarding agency review of risk posed by applicants.

F. FEDERAL AWARD ADMINISTRATION INFORMATION

1. Federal Award Notices

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

Payment Method: Payment will be made by request of the recipient associated with project milestones (example: completing a course content; translations; printing; conference expenses). The cooperating agency must request payment under this award by completing the form SF-270 and submitting it to the Grants Officer.

2. Administrative and National Policy 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.

These include:

- 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

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: NOTE:

- Guidance for Grants and Agreements in Title 2 of the Code of Federal Regulations (2 CFR), as updated in the Federal Register's 85 FR 49506 on August 13, 2020, particularly on:
 - Selecting recipients most likely to be successful in delivering results based on the program objectives through an objective process of evaluating Federal award applications (2 CFR part 200.205),
 - Prohibiting the purchase of certain telecommunication and video surveillance services or equipment in alignment with section 889 of the National Defense Authorization Act of 2019 (Pub. L. No. 115—232) (2 CFR part 200.216),
 - 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 in whole or in part to the greatest extent authorized by law, if an award no longer effectuates the program goals or agency priorities (2 CFR part 200.340).

3. Reporting

Reporting Requirements: Recipients will be required to submit financial reports and program reports, including a mid-term and final narrative report. The award document will specify how often these reports must be submitted.

Foreign Assistance Data Review: 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). The FADR requires tracking of foreign assistance activity data from budgeting, planning, and allocation through obligation and disbursement. Successful applicants will be required to report and draw down federal funding based on the appropriate FADR Data Elements, indicated within their award documentation. In cases of more than one FADR Data Element, typically program or sector and/or regions or country, the successful applicant will be required to maintain separate accounting records.

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.

G. FEDERAL AWARDING AGENCY CONTACTS

If you have any questions about the grant application process, please contact: *abidjanpds@state.gov*.

H. OTHER INFORMATION

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 that 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 \$5,000 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 \$5,000 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 10% of modified total direct costs as defined in 2 CFR 200.68.

“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: Please note that award funds cannot be used for alcoholic beverages.

IMPORTANT DOCUMENTS TO DOWNLOAD:

- **SF424 2 1-V2.1 Application for Federal Assistance Organization**
- **SF424 Individual 1 1-V1.1 Application for Federal Assistance Individual**
- **SF424A-V1.0 Budget Information Non Construction Program**
- **SF424B-V1.1 Assurances – Non Construction Programs**
- **SF425 2 0-V2.0 Federal Financial Report**