Department of State's U.S. Mission to Maldives in Malé, Republic of Maldives
Notice of Funding Opportunity (NOFO)

Program Office: Public Diplomacy Section, U.S. Mission Maldives
Funding Opportunity Title: Programmatic Support – American Center in Maldives on promoting Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM) education in the Republic of Maldives
Announcement Type: Cooperative Agreement
Funding Opportunity Number: PD-USMM-2023-ASACM-01
Deadline for Applications: 25th August 2023 at 11:59 p.m. (Maldives time).
Assistance Listing Number: 19.441 - American Spaces Support Funding
Total Amount Available: up to US$ 26,000.00 [up to Twenty-Six Thousand U.S. Dollars]

CONTACT INFORMATION

- For questions relating to Grants.gov, please call the Grants.gov Contact Center at 1-800-518-4726.
- For assistance with the requirements of this solicitation, contact MaldivesPDGrants@state.gov
- To inquire about the process for obtaining a Negotiated Indirect Cost Rate Agreement (NICRA) contact Donald Hunter at HunterDS@state.gov.

In order to be eligible to receive an award under this NOFO, 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 begin the registration processes immediately to ensure the registrations are completed well in advance of the submission deadline**. The process can require several **weeks** for the registrations to be validated and confirmed. See Section D: Submission Requirements for further details.

Due to the volume of applicants and inquiries, Public Diplomacy Section (PDS) **does not** accept letters of intent, concept papers, or requests for meetings or phone calls prior to application.

It is the responsibility of the applicant to ensure that the application package has been received in its entirety. Incomplete applications will be considered ineligible. Applicants are urged to begin the application process well before the submission deadline. No exceptions will be made for organizations that have not completed the necessary steps.

A. PROGRAM DESCRIPTION

Executive Summary:

The U.S. Department of Public Diplomacy Section of U.S. Mission Maldives announces an open competition to solicit programmatic support for the American Center in Malé (ACM). The recipient of this award will be responsible for overseeing the STEM programming of the American Center Malé, to include planning, implementation, monitoring, reporting and logistics of this

specific thematic area. The recipient of this grant will be funded for up to 12 months to host workshops, awareness-raising sessions and trainings on:

- 1) Robotics and LEGO education.
- 2) Astronomy
- 3) 3D printing.
- 4) Computer coding.

The Successful applicant is expected to implement each core activity listed above with funds up to $6,000.

Background:

The American Center Malé is a cultural center with a target audience of youth between 15 and 35 years of age, from across the socio-economic spectrum, with the potential to become local and national leaders. This notice of funding specifically seeks to find a local implementing partner who can successfully deliver interactive and educational STEM programs on a hybrid model (in-person and virtually) at selected locations thereby improving the accessibility to and interest in STEM education across the archipelago in the long run. The successful implementing partner should also share details on how the proposed program activities would translate to a quantifiable increase in opportunities for STEM-related marketable skills and future career prospects among the selected target audiences.

Since June 2017, the American Center Malé has trained over 200 women and girls in basic and advanced computer coding and hosted over 15 motivational speaker programs with local and American experts on STEM. Additionally, e-resources available through the American Center Malé have provided access to extensive educational and entertainment resources on STEM for thousands of youths and students across Maldives through the U.S. State Department's E-libraryUSA site. Past American Spaces programming on coding for girls has helped strengthen many Maldivian female NGO leaders in nurturing the passion for STEM among the youth. Through the introduction of additional thematic areas in this year's funding scope, like astronomy and LEGO education, U.S. Mission Maldives hopes to make STEM education more accessible for different demographic audiences amongst Maldivian youth so that there is more equity in STEM education opportunities. Based on experience with past STEM programing, we underscore the vital role interactive teaching tools, such as Kahoot, TedEd and YouTube videos, Slido, and more, etc as well as U.S. educated Maldivian STEM expert speakers have played in addressing programmatic challenges like retention of knowledge and participant numbers during the implementation stage.

Project Audience(s): The primary beneficiaries for the four core activities mentioned in the executive summary may include but is not limited to the following:

- All direct recipients of the four core activities must be Maldivian youth between ages 15 to 35 years of age.
- Priority will be given to youth who have not previously participated in an American Center Malé funded courses.

- All workshops and trainings must have gender balance during participant selection stage, unless an evident programmatic advantage is communicated to Public Diplomacy Section regarding the allocation of more seats for a specific demographics
- Ideal number of participants for a workshop, training or info session should be 30 or more. Successful implementing partner has no cap in number of participants they can cater to for public events hosted for any of the 4 core activities under this funding opportunity
- Successful implementing partner can be offered space at American Center Malé for on-site programing based on availability
- Program proposals must have virtual teaching methods incorporated to reach potential audiences in outer islands.

Project Goal:

Contribute to Maldives economic growth and stability by engaging youth across Maldives in STEM programs to develop a more educated, skilled, and inclusive society, thereby promoting economic stability.

Project Objectives:

Objective 1: Increase interest in STEM education and careers among the target audience.

Objective 2: Equip a minimum of 120 youth, residing in islands away from local population hubs across the country, with basic computer coding, 3D printing, Astronomy, Robotics and LEGO education skills over a period of 10 to 12 months.

Objective 3: Increase the target audience's awareness of available, free online resources on computer coding, 3D printing, astronomy, robotics, and LEGO education.

Objective 4: Increase the target audience's operational familiarity with STEM equipment related to computer coding, 3D printing, astronomy, and robotics.

Objective 5: Increase number of STEM facilitators in Maldives through engagement in American Spaces programming.

Objective 6: Growing the Alumni network of American Center Male' programs, thereby ensuring networking opportunities between these participants previous STEM program participants.

B. FEDERAL AWARD INFORMATION

Length of performance period: 10 to 12 months
Number of awards anticipated: One award.
Award amounts: awards may range from a minimum of $22,400.00 to a maximum of $26,400.00.
Total available funding: $26,400
Type of Funding: FY23 Fulbright Hays Public Diplomacy Funds.
Anticipated programs start date: 30th September 2023

This notice is subject to availability of funding.

Funding Instrument Type: Cooperative agreement. The PD Section of U.S Mission Maldives would have a substantial involvement in the design, monitoring, evaluation and reporting cycle of this grant. PD Section of U.S. Mission Maldives may share existing tangible and intangible STEM equipment and resources at the American Center Malé to boost the output of the chosen implementing partner. Tangible equipment includes two 3D printers, filaments, 2 LEGO educations sets, 10 laptops, Multimedia projector and sound setup within American Center Male' and a portable speaker that can cater to 150 people during a beyond the building programs.

Program Performance Period: Proposed programs should be completed in 12 months or less. The Department of State will 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.

Support for Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Accessibility (DEIA): All programs should consider strategies for expanding the pool of individuals/organizations/beneficiaries to afford opportunities for as diverse and inclusive population as is feasible to bring diverse perspectives based on religion, sex, disability, race, ethnicity, national origin, and age to implementation of the program.

The Public Diplomacy Section reserves the right to award less or more than the funds described under circumstances deemed to be in the best interest of the U.S. government, pending the availability of funds and approval of the designated grants officer.

C. ELIGIBILTY INFORMATION

1. Eligible Applicants

   The following organizations are eligible to apply:

   - Not-for-profit organizations
   - Civil society/non-governmental organizations
   - Think tanks
   - Public and private educational institutions
   - Public International Organizations and Governmental institutions

   For-profit entities, even those that may fall into the categories listed above, are **not** eligible to apply for this NOFO. Organizations may sub-contract with other entities, but only one, non-profit, non-governmental entity can be the prime recipient of the award. When sub-contracting with other entities, the responsibilities of each entity must be clearly defined in the proposal.

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.

2. Cost Sharing or Matching

   Cost sharing or matching is not required for this funding opportunity.

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 for more information. Individuals are not required to have a UEI or be registered in SAM.gov.

4. This opportunity will not support:
   - Projects relating to partisan political activity.
   - Charitable or development activities.
   - Construction projects.
   - Projects that support specific religious activities.
   - Fund-raising campaigns.
   - Lobbying for specific legislation or programs
   - Scientific research or surveys.
   - Commercial projects.
   - Projects intended primarily for the growth or institutional development of the organization.
   - Projects that duplicate existing projects; or
   - Illegal activities

D. APPLICATION AND SUBMISSION INFORMATION

1. Address to Request Application Package

   Application forms required below are available at the U.S. Mission Maldives website, American Center Malé FB page and American Center Malé twitter handle and via 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.

Applicants must ensure:

- Proposal clearly addresses the goals, audiences, and objectives of this notice.
- All documents are in English.
- All budgets are in U.S. dollars.
- All pages are numbered.
- All Microsoft Word documents are single-spaced, 12-point Calibri font, with a minimum of 1-inch margins.
- All applicant authorized signatures are provided where indicated on the various, required forms.

The following documents and components are **required and must be included in the applicant's submission**:

Section 1. Mandatory application forms

- SF-424 (Application for Federal Assistance – organizations) or SF-424-I (Application for Federal Assistance –individuals – Attachment-1)
- SF-424A (Budget Information for Non-Construction programs- Attachment-2)
- SF-424B (Assurances for Non-Construction programs) (note: the SF-424B is only required for individuals and for organizations not registered in SAM.gov)

All submissions must include the SF-424 Application for Federal Assistance and the SF-424A Budget Information—Non-Construction. These forms and the instructions for completing them are available at http://www.grants.gov/web/grants/forms.html under the heading "SF-424 Family." NOTE: The SF-424B is required only for those applicants who have not registered in SAM.gov. An authorized signature by the applicant must be provided on this form.

Section 2. Technical Proposal (10 pages maximum- template labeled as Attachment 3): The proposal should contain sufficient information that anyone not familiar with it would understand exactly what the applicant wants to do. You must use the proposal format in the embedded hyperlink, and it must include all the items below.

- **Proposal Summary:** Short narrative that outlines the proposed program, including program objectives and anticipated impact.
- **Organizational Description and Capacity**: 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 as well as experience with and expertise in areas related to those described in the NOFO. You may use the attached Applicant Organization Information Survey form to provide this information (Attachment 4).

- **Program Methods, Design, Activities, and Deliverables**: A description of how the program is expected to work to solve the stated problem and achieve the goal. Describe the program activities and how they will help achieve the objectives.
- **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. Include the proportion of their time that will be used in support of this program.
- **Program Partners:** List the names and type of involvement of key partner organizations and sub-awardees, if applicable.
- **Support of Equity and Underserved Communities**: A description of how the applicant plans on incorporating principles of Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Accessibility (DEIA) and engaging underserved communities in their program's administration, design, and implementation. For more information, please reference section F. Federal Award Administration Information.
- **Monitoring & Evaluation:** Proposals must include a draft Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) Performance Monitoring Plan (PMP). The M&E PMP should show how applicants intend to measure and demonstrate progress towards the project's objectives and goals. Attachment 5 of this funding opportunity contains a template that may be used to fulfill this requirement. While the grantee is free to create their own template, completing Attachment 3 will ensure a thorough PMP.

  The key components to the PMP are as follows:

  a. **Monitoring and Evaluation Narrative:** In narrative form, applicants should describe how they intend to monitor and evaluate the activities of their award and collect data that tracks award performance. In addition, the applicant should describe any M&E processes, including key personnel, management structure (where M&E fits into the overall program's staff structure), technology, and as well provide a brief budget narrative explaining any line-item expenditures for M&E listed in the program's budget. Submission should demonstrate an ability to adjust project activities based on new information. If the proposal is from a prior grantee, the proposal discusses how the grantee has adapted, improved or otherwise modified their approach based on learning from previous experience. This narrative is limited to two pages.

  b. **Theory of Change Diagram:** Applicants will be expected to submit either a Theory of Change diagram or an If-Then Statement that illustrates how project activities will lead to intended outcomes. Attachment 5 includes a suggested format for these requirements.

  c. **Monitoring and Evaluation Datasheet:** The applicant must include their proposed activities and their expected outputs and outcomes as well as the goals and objectives as written in the NOFO. The datasheet's purpose is to explicitly illustrate how a project's activities lead to tangible results (such as increased beneficiary skills,

knowledge, or attitudes) that ultimately address a PDS objective. For more information, please see Attachment 6 for PMP instructions.

The selected applicant's M&E PMP is subject to review and approval before any award will be issued under this NOFO. The selected applicant will be required to work with PDS Monitoring and Evaluation Specialist to ensure the applicant's M&E PMP achieves an expected level of expertise and meets PDS objectives.

Expenses directly associated with monitoring and evaluation are considered allowable. The suggested template includes a space to list the portion of the total budget amount directly associated with monitoring and evaluation activities.

<u>Section 3.</u> — Detailed Budget and Budget Narrative:

- Detailed Budget - Applicants must submit a detailed line-item budget. Applicants are encouraged to utilize the template provided with the funding opportunity but are not required to do so (Attachment 7). Line-item expenditures should be listed in the greatest possible detail. The budget must identify the total amount of funding requested, with a breakdown of amounts to be spent in the following budget categories: personnel; fringe benefits; travel; equipment; supplies; consultants/contracts; other direct costs; and indirect costs. See Annex Section I for a description of the types of costs that should be included in each category. Personnel salaries should include the level of effort and the rate of pay, which should cover the percentage of time each staff member will dedicate to grant-based activities. If an organization is charging an indirect cost rate without a NICRA, it must apply it to the modified total budget costs (MTDC), refer to 2CFR§200.68. **Budgets shall be submitted in U.S. dollars** and final grant agreements will be conducted in U.S. dollars.

- Budget Justification Narrative (Attachment-8) – Applicants must submit a budget justification narrative to accompany the detailed line-item budget. The purpose of the budget justification narrative is to supplement the information provided in the detailed budget spreadsheet by justifying how the budget cost elements are necessary to implement project objectives and accomplish the project goals. The budget justification narrative is a tool to help PDS staff fully understand the budgetary needs of the applicant and is an opportunity to provide descriptive information about the requested costs beyond the constraints of the budget template. Together, the detailed budget spreadsheet, the budget justification narrative, and the SF-424A should provide a complete financial and qualitative description that supports the proposed project plan and should be directly relatable to the specific project components described in the applicant's proposal.

Additional Budget Notes:

- Audit Requirements: Please note the audit requirements for Department of State awards in the Standard Terms and Conditions https://www.state.gov/m/a/ope/index.htm and 2CFR200, Subpart F – Audit Requirements. The cost of the required audits may be charged either as an allowable direct cost to the award OR included in the organization's established indirect costs in the award's detailed budget.

- Visa Fees: Include all visa application and related fees in your budget as applicable. Please note DS-2019s for post-funded programs must be submitted directly by the award recipient. If you anticipate your program will include the DS-2019 visa processing, your organization must be a registered Designated Sponsoring Organization. For more information go to: https://j1visa.state.gov/sponsors/become-a-sponsor/

Section 4. - Required Attachments:

a. **Key Personnel Resumes**: A résumé, not to exceed one page in length, must be included for the proposed key staff persons, such as the Project Director and Finance Officer, as well as any speakers or trainers (if applicable). If an individual for this type of position has not been identified, the applicant may submit a 1-page position description, identifying the qualifications and skills required for that position, in lieu of a résumé.

b. **Letters of support from program partners:** Letters of support should be included for sub-recipients or other partners. The letters must identify the type of relationship to be entered into (formal or informal), the roles and responsibilities of each partner in relation to the proposed project activities, and the expected result of the partnership. The individual letters cannot exceed 1 page in length.

c. **Proof of Non-profit Status:** Documentation to demonstrate the applicant's non-profit status (e.g., U.S.-based organizations should submit a copy of their 501(c)(3) Internal Revenue Service determination letter, and non-U.S. organizations should provide evidence of non-profit status issued by a government entity).

d. **Proof of Registration:** A copy of the organization's registration should be provided with the proposal application. U.S.-based organizations should submit a copy of their IRS determination letter. Maldives-based organizations should submit a copy of their certificate of registration from the appropriate government organization.

Other items NOT required/requested with the application submission, but which may be requested if your application is approved to move forward in the review process include:

a. Copies of an organization or program audit within the last two (2) years
b. Copies of relevant human resources, financial, or procurement policies
c. Copies of other relevant organizational policies or documentation that would help the Department determine your organization's capacity to manage a federal grant award overseas.
d. Information to determine what financial controls and standard operating procedures an organization uses to procure goods and services, hire staff and track time and attendance, pay for grant-related travel, and identify other financial transactions that may be necessary to undertake the project activities
e. The Embassy reserves the right to request any additional programmatic and/or financial information regarding the proposal.

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

Required Registration: All organizations applying for grants (except individuals) must obtain a SAM.gov registration as well as a Unique Entity Identifier Number (UEI). Registration through www.SAM.gov is free of charge.

The Unique Entity Identifier (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. SAM.gov is the Federal government's primary database for complying with FFATA reporting requirements. OMB designated SAM.gov as the central repository to facilitate applicant and recipient use of a single public website that consolidates data on all federal financial assistance. Under the law, it is mandatory to register in SAM.gov.

Starting April 2022, the UEI will be assigned when an organization registers or renews its registration in SAM.gov at www.SAM.gov. To access SAM.gov an organization is required to have a Login.gov account. Organization can create an account at https://login.gov/. As a reminder, organizations need to renew its sam.gov registration annually.

www.sam.gov requires all entities to renew their registration once a year in order to maintain an active registration status in SAM.gov. It is the responsibility of the applicant to ensure it has an active registration in SAM.gov.

If an organization plans to issue a sub-contract or sub-award, those sub-awardees must also have a unique entity identifier (UEI number). Those entities can register for a UEI only at SAM.gov.

If an organization does not have an active registration in SAM.gov prior to submitting an application, the application could be deemed **ineligible.** All organizations applying for grants (except individuals) must obtain these registrations, the latter are free of charge.

Please note: Any applicant with an exclusion in the System for Award Management (SAM) 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."

5. Submission Dates and Times

Application Submission Process:

- **Submission Method A**: Submitting all application materials directly to the following Email address: MaldivesPDGrants@state.gov. Applicants **must** include the Funding Opportunity Title and Funding Opportunity Number in the subject line of the email.

- **Submission Method B**: Submitting all application materials through Grants.gov. For those opting to apply through Grants.gov, thorough instructions on the application process are available at http://www.grants.gov. For questions relating to Grants.gov, please call the Grants.gov Contact Center at 1-800-518-4726 or go to https://www.grants.gov/support.html. Please note that MaldivesPDGrants @state.gov is unable to assist with technical questions or problems applicants experience with Grants.gov.

Submission Deadline: All applications must be received by **11:59 p.m. (Maldives time) of 25th August 2023**. For the purposes of determining if an award is submitted on time, PDS will utilize the timestamp provided by Grants.gov. This deadline is firm and is not a rolling deadline. If organizations fail to meet the deadline noted above their application will be considered ineligible and will not be considered for funding.

6. Funding Restrictions:

   Pre-award costs are not an allowable expense for this funding opportunity.

7. Other Submission Requirements

   Applicants must acquire all required registrations and rights in the United States and Republic of Maldives. All intellectual property considerations and rights must be fully met in the United States and Republic of Maldives.

   Any sub-recipient organization must also meet all the U.S. and Republic of Maldives requirements described above.

E. APPLICATION REVIEW INFORMATION

1. Criteria: Each application submitted under this announcement will be evaluated and rated on the basis of the criteria enumerated below. The criteria are designed to assess the quality of the proposed project, and to determine the likelihood of its success.

- **Quality and Feasibility of the Program Idea – 30 points:** The program idea should be innovative and well developed, with sufficient detail about how project activities will be carried out. The proposals should demonstrate originality and outline clear, achievable objectives. The proposal includes a reasonable implementation timeline. The project scope is appropriate and clearly defined. Proposals should also demonstrate how the program will support diversity, equity, inclusion and accessibility (DEIA) principles and engage underserved communities in their program's administration, design, and implementation.

- **Organizational Capacity and Record on Previous Grants – 25 points:**
  - The project proposal demonstrates that the organization has sufficient expertise, skills, and human resources to implement the project.
  - The organization demonstrates that it has a clear understanding of the underlying issue in STEM Education that the project will address.
  - The organization demonstrates capacity for successful planning and responsible fiscal management. This includes a financial management system and a bank account.
  - Applicants who have received grant funds previously have been compliant with applicable rules and regulations.
  - Where partners are described, the applicant details each partner's respective role and provides curriculum vitae (CVs) for persons responsible for the project and financial administration. Proposed personnel, institutional resources, and partners are adequate and appropriate.

- **Project Planning/Ability to Achieve Objectives – 15 points:** The project plan is well developed, with sufficient detail about how activities will be carried out. The proposal specifies target audiences, participant recruitment, and geographic areas of implementation. The proposal outlines clear, achievable objectives. The proposal includes a reasonable implementation timeline. The project scope is appropriate and clearly defined.

- **Budget – 10 points:** The budget and narrative justification are sufficiently detailed. The budget demonstrates that the organization has devoted time to accurately determine expenses associated with the project instead of providing rough estimates. Costs are reasonable in relation to the proposed activities and anticipated results. The results and proposed outcomes justify the total cost of the project. Budget items are reasonable, allowable, and allocable.

- **Monitoring and Evaluation - 10 points:** There is a complete and thorough draft submission of a M&E Performance Monitoring Plan (PMP). This will include a list of

proposed project activities, corresponding milestone, output, and outcome indicators, a description of data collection methods, and a timeline for collecting such information. The proposal presents a clear theory of change on how the program will address that problem. Further, if the project requires selecting participants, or beneficiaries, the proposal should articulate how the selection will be done in an equitable way. Use of the suggested template (Attachments 5 and 6) will satisfy these requirements. Funded projects will have their plans finalized during the negotiation phase, and monitoring plans may be subject to periodic updates throughout the life of the project.

- **Sustainability – 10 points:** The project proposal describes clearly the approach that will be used to ensure maximum sustainability or advancement of project goals after the end of project activity.

2. Review and Selection Process

   a. Acknowledgement of receipt. Applicants will receive acknowledgment of receipt of their proposal.

   b. Review. All submissions are screened for technical eligibility. **If a submission is missing any required forms/documents listed above in Section D, it will be considered ineligible and will not be reviewed by the grants review committee.** A technical review panel will review eligible proposals based upon the criteria noted in this NOFO.

   c. Follow up notification. Applicants will generally be notified within 120 days after the NOFO deadline regarding the results of the review panel.

3. Responsibility/Qualification Information in SAM.gov (formerly, Federal Awardee Performance & Integrity Information System (FAPIIS)

   a. That 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 designated integrity and performance system accessible through SAM (currently FAPIIS) (see 41 U.S.C. 2313).
   b. That an applicant, at its option, may review information in the designated integrity and performance systems accessible through SAM and comment on any information about itself that a federal awarding agency previously entered and is currently in the designated integrity and performance system accessible through SAM;
   c. That 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

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 project 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.

The Federal government is not obligated to make any Federal award as a result of the announcement. 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. The U.S. government also reserves the right to make an award in excess of the award ceiling.

Administrative and National Policy Requirements

Terms and Conditions:

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).

Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Accessibility

The Bureau of South and Central Asian Affairs (SCA) prioritizes inclusive and integrated programs that address barriers to access for individuals and groups based on their religion, gender, disabilities, ethnicity, or sexual orientation and gender identity. In accordance with the Executive Order on Advancing Racial Equity and Underserved Communities, proposals should demonstrate how the program will advance principles of Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Accessibility (DEIA) related to race, ethnicity, religion, income, geography, , and/or disability.

Proposals should demonstrate how addressing racial equity and/or the status of underserved communities will enhance the program's goals and objectives, as well as the experience of participants.

The support of underserved communities will be part of the review criteria for this opportunity. Therefore, proposals should clearly demonstrate how the program will support and advance equity and engage underserved communities in the program's administration, design, and implementation phases.

Definitions:

Diversity:

The term "diversity" means the practice of including the many communities, identities, races, ethnicities, backgrounds, abilities, cultures, and beliefs of a community.

Equity:

The term “equity” means the consistent and systematic fair, just, and impartial treatment of all individuals, including individuals who belong to underserved communities that have been denied such treatment, such as ethnic minorities, and indigenous persons, persons with disabilities; persons who live in rural areas; and persons otherwise adversely affected by persistent poverty or inequality.

Inclusion:
The term “inclusion” means the recognition, appreciation, and use of the talents and skills of persons of all backgrounds.

Accessibility:
The term “accessibility” means the design, construction, development, and maintenance of facilities, information and communication technology, programs, and services so that all people, including people with disabilities, can fully and independently use them.

Underserved communities:
The term “underserved communities” refers to populations sharing a particular characteristic, as well as geographic communities, that have been systematically denied a full opportunity to participate in aspects of economic, social, and civic life, as exemplified by the list in the preceding definition of “equity.”

Reporting
Recipients are required to submit quarterly program progress and financial reports throughout the project period. The quarterly progress report should include an up-to-date copy of the PMP datasheet. Progress and financial reports are due 30 days after the reporting period. Final certified programmatic and financial reports are due 120 days after the close of the project period.

All reports are to be submitted electronically.

Awardees that are deemed to be high risk may be required to submit more extensive and frequent reports until their high-risk designation has been removed.

The Awardee must also provide the Embassy on an annual basis an inventory of all the U.S. government provided equipment using the SF428 form.

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.

G. FEDERAL AWARDING AGENCY CONTACTS

If you have any questions about this funding opportunity or the grant application process, please contact: MaldivesPDGrants@state.gov.

Question Deadline: For questions on this solicitation, please contact. MaldivesPDGrants@state.gov. Questions must be received on or before August 9th, 2023, at 11:59 p.m., Maldives Time. Applicants should not expect an email response to questions, as questions received before the deadline will be answered in a question-and-answer document and posted at http://www.grants.gov and U.S. Mission Maldives website.

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 the 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.

Branding Requirements

As a condition of receipt of a grant award, all materials produced pursuant to the award, including training materials, materials for recipients or materials to communicate or promote with foreign audiences a program, event, project, or some other activity under an agreement, including but not limited to invitations to events, press materials, and backdrops, podium signs, etc. must be marked appropriately with the standard, rectangular U.S. flag in a size and prominence equal to (or greater than) any other logo or identity. Note: Exceptions to the branding requirement are allowable under certain conditions. If an applicant is notified that their award has been chosen for funding, the Grants Officer will determine, in consultation with the applicant, if an exception is applicable.

Copyrights and Proprietary Information

If any of the information contained in your application is proprietary, please note in the footer of the appropriate pages that the information is Confidential – Proprietary. Applicants should also note what parts of the application, program, concept, etc. are covered by copyright(s), trademark(s), or any other intellectual property rights and provide copies of the relevant documentation to support these copyrights.

STEP Enrollment

U.S. citizens who travel to Republic of Maldives are encouraged to enroll in the Department of State's Smart Traveler Enrollment Program (STEP) available at: https://step.state.gov/step/. Enrollment enables citizens to receive security-related messages from the Embassy and makes it easier for us to locate you in an emergency. The Embassy also recommends that all travelers review the State Department's travel website at travel.state.gov for the Worldwide Caution, Travel Warnings, Travel Alerts, and Republic of Maldives Specific Information.