

Afghan Alumni Engagement (SCAKAB-23-CA-002-SCA-04252023)

Questions and Answer

Due Dates to Receive Questions was May 15, 2023

- 1) **Questions:** Please let us know whether the private universities are eligible or not.

Answer: This funding opportunity is open only to eligible non-profit organizations. Private, non-profit universities may qualify. Private, for-profit universities and other entities may serve as sub-award/contract, but only eligible non-profit organizations be the prime recipient of the award under this NOFO.

- 2) **Question:** I wondered about its requirements regarding the location of applicants as well as the locations where the grant will be executed. Is this funding open for applicants in the US, worldwide or somewhere?

Answer: The organization can be based in the U.S. or in Afghanistan or elsewhere. Please refer to section C of the NOFO for more details regarding the eligibility. We are considering proposal to support Afghan Alumni inside Afghanistan and those in diaspora communities.

- 3) **Question:** The NOFO states that the primary audience is “Afghan alumni of U.S. Embassy Kabul and U.S. Mission Afghanistan exchange programs who are in Afghanistan or a part of diaspora and refugee communities in third countries” (page 3). Are applicants able to propose alumni programming that exclusively targets Afghan alumni participants that are part of diaspora or refugee communities in a third country?

Answer: Yes, we are open to reviewing project ideas that only support participants who are outside Afghanistan., However, we strongly prefer to fund a project that include some level of in-country programing such as virtual engagement or small grants projects that will be managed by USG alumni.

- 4) **Question:** The NOFO states that “proposals should consider that programs will more effectively engage the needs of participants if they are categorized into two groups (Senior and Junior)” (on page 3). Are applicants able to propose alumni programming that exclusively targets Afghan alumni in the Senior category?

Answer: Though our goal is to provide an opportunity for all USG Alumni to participate but we are open to receive a proposal that supports only one category of the audiences listed in the NOFO.

- 5) **Question** Can the U.S. Mission to Afghanistan confirm that the applicant is required to implement all the activities in the Project Details section of the NOFO (pages 4-6) or able to select specific activities?

Answer: Activities listed in the NOFO are possible approaches and strategies to ensure a successful Afghan Alumni engagement, but it is not mandatory that the applicant propose plans for all the activities. Applicants may choose from these activities listed in the NOFO or may suggest other ideas that better address the program objectives.

- 6) **Question:** Due to the security situation, it will be challenging to have a presence in-country to engage Alumni in Afghanistan. Will the Mission find it feasible to conduct all activities in this program virtually, while Afghan participants are based in their homes, in-country?

Answer: The recipient of the award could propose to conduct only virtual programming in-country, but we encourage some in-person program activities for those USG Alumni who are located outside of Afghanistan.

- 7) **Question:** Could you please elaborate on the suggested budgetary allocation for the small grants program? We have a particular stake in learning the desired proportion or precise sum that should be allocated to alumni-led projects through the small grants.

Answer: There is no set amount or expected budget range for the small grants program. A small grants program can be included as one aspect of the overall program and should be combined with other activities that aim to achieve the program objectives. Successful proposals will include a narrative that explains how the allocation that is used towards small grants can be monitored and how it will contribute to the achievement of the overall goal/objectives.

- 8) **Question:** Is there a possibility for the ceiling amount of \$500,000, as mentioned in the RFP, to be expanded if necessary? In other words, is there flexibility to increase the funding beyond the specified ceiling amount to accommodate additional program requirements during the implementation of the project?

Answer: At this time, the total amount of funding we may have available for this NOFO is \$500,000 for a period of 24 months programming.

- 9) **Question:** How many small grants should the primary applicant be prepared to award each quarter, each year, and for the entire project period?

Answer: We defer to the applicant to provide recommendations on the number and mechanism of managing the small grants. Successful proposals will include a narrative that explains how the small grants can be monitored and how it will contribute to the achievement of the overall goal/objectives.

10) Question: Does the Department of State (DoS) or the U.S. Mission have an existing directory or database of alumni that can be utilized as a starting point for the proposed program?

Answer: Yes, Department of State, Public Diplomacy Section has a database of USG Alumni that can be utilized for this program.

11) Question: Could you please provide further elaboration on the mentorship program? Specifically, we would like to understand the proposed plan for identifying trainees and whether the expectation is for the alumni to exclusively serve as trainers for the trainees, or if there is room for involvement of other individuals with relevant expertise in the training process.

Answer: The goal of the mentorship is to connect senior Afghan Alumni of USG programs who may have greater experience and education with those junior Alumni who are in their early stage of career and/or education. Department of State, Public Diplomacy Section has identified over 7,000 Afghan Alumni who are the primary audience for this initiative, and we anticipate both mentors and mentees to be a USG Alumni.

12) Question: Considering the security perspective, are there any specific limitations or restrictions on the types of social activism activities that alumni based in Afghanistan can engage in?

Answer: We defer to the applicant to recommend program activities that support overall project objectives, but we do not anticipate this project to focus solely on social activism.

13) Question: Is there an incumbent organization that has been working on such a program?

Answer: Currently, U.S. Mission to Afghanistan, Public Diplomacy Section does not have an active award that works with USG Alumni. However, Public Diplomacy Section has previously funded an Afghan Alumni network and other programs for alumni.

14) Question: Can an institute outside Afghanistan apply for this grant opportunity?

Answer: This funding opportunity is open to eligible non-profit organizations including those outside Afghanistan.