

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF STATE
Secretary's Office of Global Women's Issues (S/GWI) Request for Statements of Interest:
SHE's GREAT! (SG!)

Statement of Interest (SOI) Deadline:	March 10, 2023 11:59 PM EST
Federal Agency Contact:	SGWIPROjectProposals@state.gov
Date Opened:	[insert date]
Questions Deadline:	February 10, 2023 11:59 PM EST
Funding Mechanism Type:	Cooperative Agreement
Estimated Number of Awards:	1-2
Estimated Funding Amount:	\$3,500,000
Cost Sharing:	Not required
Length of Project Period:	Up to 3.5 years
Fiscal Year of Funding:	FY 2022
Type of Funding	Economic Support Fund
CFDA Number	19.801
Anticipated Award Date:	September 2023
Estimated Program Start Date:	No later than September 30, 2023

1. Funding Opportunity Synopsis

S/GWI announces a Request for Statements of Interest (RSOI) outlining concepts and capacity to design, implement, manage, and evaluate a project to create and foster a supportive community for primarily secondary school-age youth, roughly between the ages of 13-19 years, with an objective of mitigating systemic barriers that limit the full economic and social participation of girls in all their diversity. Through these communities, these key populations will have access to more safe, equitable, and inclusive opportunities, with a focus on science, technology,

engineering, and mathematics (STEM) education and eventual careers. With this support and increased access, secondary school-age youth will be well-positioned to challenge harmful gender norms and contribute meaningfully to their communities.

This project is the successor to S/GWI's existing successful SHE's GREAT project.

Please carefully follow all instructions below.

Note: S/GWI strongly encourages applicants to immediately access [SAMS Domestic](#), the required system for submission, in order to obtain a username and password. For further instructions, please see Section IV below.

The submission of the Statement of Interest (SOI) is the first step in a two-step process. Applicants must first submit a SOI consisting of a concise, three-page concept note that clearly communicates a program idea and its objectives. This is not a full proposal. The purpose of the SOI process is to allow applicants to submit program ideas for evaluation prior to requiring the development of a full proposal application. Upon a merit review of eligible SOIs, selected applicants will be invited to expand on their program idea(s) by submitting a full proposal application. Full proposals will go through a second merit review before final funding decisions are made.

Each **prime** applicant may submit up to two SOIs. There is no limit to the number of SOIs on which an applicant may serve as a **sub**-awardee. Upon review of eligible SOIs, S/GWI will invite selected applicants to expand their ideas into full proposal applications. In the event that a prime applicant has submitted two SOIs and both are deemed competitive, the applicant will be asked to submit a full proposal for the more competitive of the two.

This notice is subject to availability of funding.

Priority Regions and Countries. Applicants must propose work equal to the planned funding amount (\$3,500,000) in no fewer than four countries with programming in each location planned for a minimum of two years. S/GWI recommends engagement in S/GWI's identified priority areas for this solicitation. Final country selection will be confirmed in consultation between the successful applicant and S/GWI. Country selections may be subject to additional approvals and/or vetting.

S/GWI's priority regions/countries include the following:

- AF: Sahel/West Africa
- MENA: all
- EUR: Balkans
- SCA: Nepal and Bangladesh

- WHA: Caribbean

Applicants to this RSOI should be aware of, complement, build on, and not overlap with existing in-country programming.

Cost Sharing or Matching: optional

Eligible Applicants:

Organizations submitting SOIs must meet the following criteria:

- Be a U.S.- or foreign-based non-profit and non-governmental organization (NGO);
- Have existing, or the capacity to develop, active and **equitable** partnerships with in-country partners, entities, and relevant stakeholders, including NGOs and private sector actors; and
- Have demonstrable experience administering successful and preferably similar programs in size, scope, and focus. S/GWI reserves the right to request additional background information on organizations that do not have previous experience administering federal awards. These applicants may be subject to limited funding on a pilot basis.

Public International Organizations (PIOs) are not eligible to apply as prime applicants under this RSOI, though they may partner on a proposal as a sub-awardee.

S/GWI maintains an anti-discrimination policy in all its programs and activities. S/GWI welcomes SOI submissions irrespective of race, ethnicity, heritage, color, creed, national origin, gender, age, sexual orientation, gender identity, disability, or other status. S/GWI is dedicated to promoting human rights, fundamental freedoms, and equality for all and seeks partners that will strive to inclusively implement these democratic values. S/GWI is dedicated to promoting human rights, fundamental freedoms, and equality for all and seeks partners that do as well.

S/GWI works to ensure the integration of gender equality and the advancement of women and girls in U.S. foreign policy. S/GWI programs are flexible, civil society-focused, and global in reach. They are designed to incubate locally informed and implemented civil society-based solutions, inspiring and providing promising practices to advance women's equality and empowerment as a keystone of U.S. foreign policy. Learning from this program will inform other U.S. policy, programs, and partnerships.

Required Registrations:

All prime 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 **before submitting an application**. DRL may **not** review applications from or make awards to applicants that have not completed all applicable UEI and SAM.gov requirements. 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 the 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), a Commercial and Government Entity (CAGE) code, 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 December 2022, 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 CAGE (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 to seek guidance on how to do so.

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 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):

<https://eportal.nspa.nato.int/Codification/CageTool/home>

For NCAGE help from within the United States, call +1 (888) 227-2423.

For NCAGE help from outside the United States, call +1 (269) 961-7766.

Or, email NCAGE@dlis.dla.mil for any problems in applying for an NCAGE code.

Step 2: After receiving an NCAGE code, proceed to SAM.gov to obtain a UEI and complete the SAM.gov registration process. SAM.gov registration must be renewed annually.

All prime organizations must also continue to maintain active SAM.gov registration with current information at all times during which they have an active Federal award or application under consideration by a federal award agency. 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 and to maintain that active registration. If an applicant has not fully complied with the requirements at the time of application, the applicant may be deemed technically ineligible to receive an award and use that determination as a basis for making an award to another applicant.

Please refer to 2 CFR 25.200 for additional information.

Note: SAM.gov is not the same as SAMS Domestic. It is free of charge to register in both systems, but the registration processes are different.

Information is included on the SAM.gov website to help international registrations, including “Quick Start Guide for International Registrations” and “Helpful Hints.” Navigate to www.SAM.gov, click “HELP” in the top navigation bar, then click “Explore” and “New to SAM.gov?” for general information. Please note, guidance on SAM.gov and the guidance on GSA’s website about requirement for registering in SAM.gov is subject to change and is currently being updated. Applicants should review the website for the most up-to-date guidance.

The attached “AQM Guidance for NCAGE-SAM.gov for Grant Applicants as of Dec. 2022” is a compilation of resources gathered by the Department’s Office of Acquisitions Management (AQM). Any content shown from SAM.gov is not owned by the Department of State. This guidance and instruction are to the best of our knowledge based at the time of posting this solicitation. **Where guidance in these attachments differs from the SAM.gov website, SAM.gov prevails and the applicant is encouraged to seek and document responses provided by the SAM.gov help desk.**

II. Requested Objectives for Statements of Interest

Background Information:

Harmful gender norms imposed on children and youth, especially girls and young women, have lifelong negative impacts on individual education, income, health, physical safety, and well-being.¹ When individual members of a community, including young people, face health, economic, and well-being challenges, so do their families and communities.² The Gender Equity and Equality Action (GEEA) Fund, which contributes to funding for this mechanism, advances economic security for women and girls by increasing their access to resources, services, and leadership opportunities and by addressing the barriers that limit their ability to participate fully in the economy.³ STEM careers often lead to well-paying quality jobs, but women remain under-represented in STEM employment. Supportive, inclusive employment in STEM careers also benefits STEM company success, promotes more inclusive technology development, and shifts negative social norms around women's aptitude for STEM, but requires that we address challenges that women face in the STEM field.⁴ This program seeks to address those challenges and behaviors starting with youth in secondary schools. S/GWI's existing five-year cooperative agreement with IREX, [*Support Her Empowerment – Girl's Resilience, Enterprise, and Technology Initiative! \(SG!\)*](#), has experienced positive results from engaging young people with their families, teachers, and community support networks to identify and transform harmful gender norms while providing access to STEM skills, leadership opportunities, and mentorship. This project aims to promote positive shifts in attitudes and behaviors related to gender equality and economic engagement for women and girls. Because the existing successful cooperative agreement ends in September 2023, S/GWI seeks to develop a follow-on cooperative agreement that will build on the evidence and learning from SG! by providing youth with additional STEM skills linked to emerging career sectors, mentorship, and economic engagement training to advance equitable economic security. Programming will support secondary school-age youth to recognize and address social and gender norms that contribute to gender-based violence (GBV) and limit economic opportunities.

This new cooperative agreement, based on the successes of the existing SG! project, will include requirements for community, family, and school engagement; evidence-based expert curricula that can be adapted to local concerns and issues; strong implementer policies on protection against sexual exploitation and abuse (PSEA) of project beneficiaries; and healthy supportive training for youth, in all their diversity, to contribute to a more positive future for their communities. It will also include economic empowerment and skills-building activities to amplify the synergy between countering harmful gender norms and economic STEM engagement for youth to further foster economic empowerment.

Policy Statement

¹ "It Begins at 10: How Gender Expectations Shape Early Adolescence Around the World," Journal of Adolescent Health; Blum, Mmari, & Moreau; 2017. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jadohealth.2017.07.009>

² [Global Early Adolescent Study \(geastudy.org\)](https://www.geastudy.org/): <https://www.geastudy.org/>

³ <https://www.state.gov/womens-economic-empowerment-3#geea>

⁴ Women in STEM: Challenges and determinants of success and well-being (apa.org); [The digital revolution: Implications for gender equality and women's rights 25 years after Beijing | Digital library: Publications | UN Women – Headquarters](#)

The project resulting from this RSOI will support S/GWI's implementation of the National Strategy on Gender Equity and Equality⁵ as well as the U.S. Strategy on Global Women's Economic Security⁶ and the U.S. Strategy to Prevent and Respond to Gender-Based Violence Globally⁷, and specifically its focus on girls and young women. It will also further the priorities of the Gender Equity and Equality Action (GEEA) Fund⁸, which advances the economic security of women and girls globally. The project supports human rights and inclusive democracy by furthering gender equity and equality. This project will also contribute to the Partnership for Global Infrastructure and Investment's gender equality pillar.⁹

Inclusive Programming Approach

S/GWI is committed to equity, equality, and respect for human rights. S/GWI programs are expected to foster and/or address:

- **Inclusive Environments**, which means programs that foster involvement, respect, and connection in which the richness of diverse ideas, backgrounds, and perspectives are valued for all individuals.
- **Social Inclusion**, which means improving how individuals and groups take part in society – enhancing the ability, opportunity, and dignity of those disadvantaged on the basis of their identity.
- **Intersectional** nature of power and identity, which means how intersecting aspects of identity (sexual orientation, gender identity, gender expression, sex characteristics, class, religion, race, ethnicity, age, disability, nationality, etc.) interact with overlapping systems of discrimination and the need to address the impact these have on systemic access.

RSOI Results Framework:

Theory of Change:

If youth, with particular emphasis on girls in all their diversity, are supported in accessing STEM skills linked to emerging career sectors, while they and their peers, families, and broader communities, including engaging men and boys, are made aware of and equipped to challenge harmful gender norms, **then** this population will gain greater professional access to STEM careers, help create safer futures, create an economically secure future, and lead the way to a more equitable society.

Goal:

⁵ NGS: <https://www.whitehouse.gov/wp-content/uploads/2021/10/National-Strategy-on-Gender-Equity-and-Equality.pdf>

⁶ <https://www.state.gov/reports/united-states-strategy-on-global-womens-economic-security/>

⁷ <https://www.state.gov/reports/united-states-strategy-to-prevent-and-respond-to-gender-based-violence-globally-2022/>

⁸ <https://www.state.gov/womens-economic-empowerment-3#geea>

⁹ [Memorandum on the Partnership for Global Infrastructure and Investment | The White House](#)

To create a supportive environment for secondary school age youth, with an emphasis on girls in all their diversity, to create a more safe, equitable, and inclusive future by increasing access to STEM careers and addressing harmful gender norms.

Objectives:

- **Girls and youth, in all their diversity, are supported in obtaining experiences, exposure, and training useful for STEM careers:** Provide access to STEM and future employment skills for youth to increase their agency, knowledge of the STEM field, and enhance their future employment options. Programming should include approaches to mitigate the digital and technology divide, bridge gender gaps, and build supportive pathways to tertiary/vocational education and mentorships, tailored to the circumstances of each benefitting country.
- **Youth are supported in challenging and overcoming harmful gender norms:** Provide training and activities for peers, teachers, parents, and community leaders in line with the implementation of a curriculum that supports youth in challenging harmful gender stereotypes, including those that contribute to gender-based violence.
- **Amplify community, school, and family/household support for positive peace and youth agency:** Create support systems that enable youth to achieve the goals they establish for themselves and build more equitable, productive futures in STEM careers in communities free from gender-based violence and with more equitable in access to resources/employment. This should include addressing other forms of intersectional identity and power that further contribute to exclusion, such as race, ethnicity, disability, LGBTQI+ identity, religion, and/or other aspects that contribute to/compound marginalization for girls and youth in a given location.

Intended Results:

Possible intended results may include:

- Youth access education and employment in STEM fields.
- Program participants develop long-term mentorship relationships with leaders in STEM fields
- Harmful gender norms that contribute to gender-based violence are countered through a holistic youth, family, school, and community approach.
- Peers are empowered to address harmful gender norms in their communities
- Girls and youth experience an enhanced sense of agency to support their future education, economic stability, and jobs.
- Youth, schools, families, and communities engage in multi-year behavior change interventions to better support equitable empowerment, leadership, and future STEM engagement for girls and youth.
- Girls and youth access technology and safe digital spaces in a sustainable, long-term manner.
- Families, schools, and communities are provided with support to prevent and respond to gender-based violence.

- Girls and youth express their concerns around safety, their futures, education, and full participation in their communities with support from family, school, and community members.
- Marginalized girls and youth are able to engage more fully in STEM careers.
- Harmful gender norms and harmful intersecting power and identity dynamics are countered to better include and support girls and youth in all their diversity.
- Girls and youth access a supportive pipeline through education to quality, well-paying STEM careers through mentoring and increased access to vocational and/or tertiary education.

Indicators:

Indicators for inclusion in a monitoring, evaluation, and learning (MEL) plan at the later full proposal stage should include at least some of the following as relevant:

- GNDR-2: Percentage of female participants in USG-assisted programs designed to increase access to productive economic resources (assets, credit, income or employment)
- GNDR-4: Percentage of participants reporting increased agreement with the concept that males and females should have equal access to social, economic, and political resources and opportunities
- GNDR-6: Number of people reached by a USG funded intervention providing GBV services (e.g., health, legal, psycho-social counseling, shelters, hotlines, other)
- GNDR-8: Number of persons trained with USG assistance to advance outcomes consistent with gender equality or female empowerment through their roles in public or private sector institutions or organizations.
- YOUTH-1: Number of youth trained in social or leadership skills through USG assisted programs
- YOUTH-3: Percentage of participants in USG-assisted programs designed to increase access to productive economic resources who are youth (15-29)
- YOUTH-5: Percentage of youth who participate in civic engagement activities following soft skills/life skills training or initiatives from USG assisted programs

Applicants may also propose other indicators relevant to the proposed activities for consideration. S/GWI eventually expects at least three outcome indicators, or one per each objective, in the final MEL plan to reflect the overarching logic model for the proposal, but respects that those will be finalized during the start-up stages of an award.

SOI Requirements:

Applicants should propose sufficient yet lean and scalable staffing structures that provide adequate oversight and central management, but maximize appropriate and local expertise and leadership (rather than defaulting to in-house experts). S/GWI welcomes creative partnership structures, such as rosters of smaller NGOs or technical experts that can serve as short-term consultants to complement existing local leadership and expertise. **As a general guideline however, at least 20 percent of funding under the award should go to local organizations and their activities—this may include Contractual and Other Direct Costs in**

support of local organizations, for example, but generally should not include prime grantee staffing, travel, overhead etc. Support for the establishment of new in-country offices is not envisioned under this RSOI.

While landscape assessments; gender and inclusion analyses; monitoring, learning, and evaluation (MEL) plans; risk assessment and mitigation plans including safeguards to support protection from sexual exploitation and abuse (PSEA) for project beneficiaries and their communities; provision of psychosocial support for staff and beneficiaries; and detailed sustainability plans are **not** required as part of the SOI, all organizations that are invited to submit a full proposal **will** be required to submit this information at that time. Full proposals, once solicited, should also seek to minimize the harmful effects of local competition for resources in their program designs. Please review this RSOI in full – including all annexes – to inform your SOI design and ensure your requested budget amount sufficiently covers these award requirements.

Applicants are advised that an award may be conditioned upon vetting to evaluate the risk that funds may benefit terrorists or their supporters.

Substantial Involvement:

Applicants submitting SOIs should be aware that if their application results in an award, S/GWI will be involved in the program and management performance of the grant in the form of a cooperative agreement, which allows S/GWI consultation and technical collaboration rights on specified project activities. Examples of substantial involvement can include:

- a) Approval of Recipient annual work plan, including planned activities for the following year and changes to any activity to be carried out under the agreement;
- b) Collaboration in identifying/developing/approving additional countries/projects for implementation in consultation with U.S. embassies, as relevant;
- c) Approval of sub-award recipients, concurrence on the substantive provisions of the sub-awards, and coordination with other cooperating agencies;
- d) Review of any notice of funding opportunities and selection of recipients;
- e) Approval of the MEL plan for the Recipient and sub-award recipients;
- f) Approval of Terms of Reference (TOR) for program evaluations;
- g) Approval of hiring/opportunity announcements and selection/assignment of technical experts in areas such as gender, including but not limited to key personnel;
- h) Collaboration in assessing progress and identifying issues that might affect the success of the program; and
- i) Other approvals that will be included in the award agreement.

Program Performance Period: 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.

III. Funding Restrictions

This cooperative agreement will be funded from money appropriated under the “Economic Support Fund” (ESF) heading in the Department of State and Foreign Operations Appropriations Act, 2022 (Div. G, P.L. 117-103) (SFOAA). ESF is available for foreign assistance programs supporting economic or political stability. Under section 531(e) of the Foreign Assistance Act of 1961 (FAA), as amended, ESF may not be used for military or paramilitary purposes. Given restrictions under section 660 of the FAA, assistance may be provided to law enforcement forces only under certain circumstances. Activities that involve assistance to law enforcement will be subject to vetting to ensure compliance with section 620M of the FAA (“[Leahy Vetting](#)”).

The recipient is reminded that funds provided under this agreement must be used in a manner fully consistent with U.S. law. The recipient agrees that none of the funds provided by this award shall be used to lobby for or against abortion. The recipient agrees that none of the funds provided by this award shall be used to pay for the performance of abortion as a method of family planning or to motivate or coerce any person to practice abortions.

All benefiting countries must be approved in advance by S/GWI.

The following activities and costs **will not** be entertained under this announcement in SOIs or in subsequent proposals submitted by applicants to S/GWI:

- Construction
- Activities that appear partisan or that support individual or party electoral campaigns.
- Engagement with religious leaders and communities is encouraged; however, direct support or the appearance of direct support for any religious organization for the sole purposes of promoting religious beliefs cannot be included for funding.
- 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.
- U.S.-based activities, study tours, scholarships, or exchange projects.
- Initiatives directed towards a permanent diaspora community as ultimate beneficiaries.
- Projects that have a predominant academic or basic research focus.
- Social welfare projects that purely provide service-delivery or humanitarian assistance.
- Costs incurred to complete activities begun with other funds.
- Medical and psychological research or clinical studies using human subjects.
- Projects exclusively of a commercial or profit-making nature.
- Cultural presentations, cultural research, cultural clubs, or festivals, etc. unless they have a specific programmatic purpose.
- Entertainment costs (e.g., receptions, social activities, ceremonies, guided tours) unless they have a specific programmatic purpose.

IV. Submission Instructions and Technical Eligibility

Required Documents:

Complete SOI submissions **must** include the following:

1. Completed and signed SF-424 and SF424B and SF-LLL, as directed on SAMS Domestic; and,
2. Program Statement (not to exceed three [3] pages in Microsoft Word) that includes:
 - a. A table listing:
 - i. Name of the organization;
 - ii. The target countries;
 - iii. The total amount of funding requested from S/GWI, total amount of cost-share (if any; cost share is NOT required), and total program amount (S/GWI funds + cost-share); and,
 - iv. Program length;
 - b. A synopsis of the program, including a brief statement on how the program will have a demonstrated impact and engage relevant stakeholders. The synopsis must address how the applicant will conduct gender and inclusion analysis and MEL as well as foster sustainability. The SOI should identify local partners as appropriate;
 - c. A concise breakdown explicitly identifying the program's objectives and the activities and expected results that contribute to each objective; and,
 - d. A brief description of the applicant(s) that demonstrates relevant organizational and staff expertise and capacity to implement the program and manage a U.S. government award.

As this program expects to work with girls and youth, S/GWI expects strong documentation of applicant policies on PSEA, referrals for GBV support services, and mental health/psychosocial support for project beneficiaries [and implementer staff].

Applicant Questions:

Questions must be submitted by the Questions Deadline to SGWIPROjectProposals@state.gov using the email subject line, "SG!: [Applicant Organization Name] Questions." To maintain fairness and transparency in competition, S/GWI will compile any substantive questions received along with the responses and post them in a document on grants.gov and SAMS Domestic. Substantive questions will not be fielded outside of this process or after the deadline.

With the exception of technical submission questions, during the solicitation period, U.S. Department of State staff in Washington D.C. and overseas will not discuss this competition with applicants until the entire proposal review process has been completed and rejection and approval letters have been transmitted.

Technical Eligibility:

S/GWI reserves the right to award more or less than the funds requested, including estimated individual award floor and ceiling amounts, under such circumstances as it may deem to be in the best interest of the U.S. government.

Technically eligible SOIs are those which:

1. Arrive electronically via SAMS Domestic (see below) by the deadline, under this announcement.
2. Are in English.
3. Heed all instructions and do not violate any of the guidelines stated in this solicitation

For all SOI documents please ensure:

1. All pages are numbered;
2. All documents are formatted to 8 ½ x 11 paper; and,
3. All documents are single-spaced, 12 point Times New Roman font, with 1-inch margins. Captions and footnotes may be 10-point Times New Roman font. Font sizes in charts and tables can be reformatted to fit within one page width.

SAMS Domestic automatically logs the date and time a submission is made, and the Department of State will use this information to determine whether it has been submitted on time. Late submissions are neither reviewed nor considered unless SGWIPProjectProposals@state.gov is contacted prior to the deadline and is provided with a screenshot or other evidence of a system error caused by SAMS Domestic (<https://mygrants.servicenowservices.com>) that is outside of the applicant's control and is the sole reason for a late submission. Applicants should not expect a notification from S/GWI upon receiving their SOI(s). It is the sole responsibility of the applicant to ensure that all material submitted in the SOI package is complete, accurate, and current.

Submission:

All application submissions must be made electronically via [SAMS Domestic \(https://mygrants.servicenowservices.com\)](https://mygrants.servicenowservices.com). S/GWI will **not** accept SOIs submitted via grants.gov, email, fax, the postal system, delivery companies, or couriers.

It is the responsibility of the applicant to ensure that it has an active registration in SAMS Domestic. Applicants are required to document that the application has been received by SAMS Domestic or Grants.gov in its entirety. S/GWI bears no responsibility for disqualification that result from applicants not being registered before the due date, for system errors in either SAMS Domestic or Grants.gov, or other errors in the application process. Additionally, S/GWI strongly encourages applicants to save a screen shot of the checklist showing all documents submitted in case any document fails to upload successfully.

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. Applicants must follow all formatting instructions in the applicable NOFO and these instructions.

S/GWI encourages organizations to **submit applications during normal business hours** (Monday – Friday, 9:00AM - 5:00PM Eastern Standard Time [EST]). If an applicant experiences technical difficulties and has contacted the appropriate helpdesk but is not receiving timely assistance (e.g., if you have not received a response within 48 hours of contacting the helpdesk), you may contact the S/GWI point of contact listed on page 1 of this RSOI. The point of contact may assist in contacting the appropriate helpdesk.

SAMS Domestic Applications:

Applicants using SAMS Domestic for the first time should complete their “New Organization Registration.” To register with SAMS Domestic, click “Login to <https://mygrants.servicenowservices.com>” and follow the “create an account” link.

Organizations **must** remember to save a screen shot of the checklist showing all documents submitted in case any document fails to upload successfully.

SAMS Domestic Help Desk:

For assistance with SAMS Domestic accounts and technical issues related to the system, please contact the ILMS help desk by phone at +1 (888) 313-4567 (toll charges apply for international callers) or through the Self Service online portal that can be accessed from <https://afsism.service-now.com/ilms/home>. Customer support is available 24/7.

V. Application Review and Selection Process

The Grants Officer will determine technical eligibility for all SOI submissions. All technically eligible SOIs will then be reviewed against the same five criteria by an S/GWI Review Panel: Organizational Capacity and Past Performance; Program Strategy; Gender Analysis, Inclusion and Do No Harm; Performance Monitoring, Learning, and Evaluation; and Sustainability.

Additionally, the Panel will evaluate how the SOI meets the solicitation request, U.S. foreign policy goals, and S/GWI’s overall priority needs. Panelists review each SOI individually against the evaluation criteria, not against competing SOIs. To ensure all SOIs receive a balanced evaluation, the S/GWI Review Panel will review each document up to the specified page limit and no further. All Panelists must sign non-disclosure agreements and conflict of interest agreements.

S/GWI Review Panels generally include representatives from S/GWI policy and program teams as well as other State Department offices. Once a SOI is approved, selected applicants will be invited to submit full proposal applications based on their SOIs. Unless directed otherwise by

the applicant organization, S/GWI may also refer SOIs for possible consideration for other U.S. government related funding opportunities.

The Panel may provide conditions and/or recommendations on SOIs to enhance the proposed program, which must be addressed by the organization in the full proposal application. To ensure effective use of limited S/GWI funds, conditions and recommendations may include requests to increase, decrease, clarify, and/or justify costs and program activities.

S/GWI reserves the right to make a final determination regarding all funding matters, pending funding availability.

Review Criteria:

The following criteria are listed in no particular order of importance:

1. Organizational Capacity and Past Performance (25/100 points):

- Applicant demonstrates an institutional record of successful relevant programs in areas such as:
 - Empowering youth, with a focus on girls in all their diversity, building and localizing curriculums for countering harmful gender norms, utilizing participatory approaches to youth engagement, preventing and responding to gender-based violence, building sustainable mentorship programming, STEM training and increasing access to STEM education and future employment, gender equity and equality, and addressing PSEA and mental health/psychosocial support across programming.

2. Program Strategy (25/100 points):

- Applicant proposes evidence-based approaches to addressing the objectives of the RSOI.
- Applicant demonstrates concrete approaches for equitable partnership with a range of existing women and/or girl-led or –serving civil society organizations to further their impact.
- Application complements / builds on / does not overlap with existing in-country efforts.
- Applicant proposes sufficient yet lean and scalable staffing structures that leverage appropriate internal and external expertise, but maximize support and funding for local leadership. At least 30 percent of funding goes to local organizations and their activities.

3. Gender and Inclusion Analysis, Do No Harm (20/100 points):

- Applicant demonstrates plans and capacity for effectively applying a gender and inclusion analysis to program design and implementation.
- Applicant describes sound approaches to inclusion, including but not limited to ethnic and religious minorities, individuals with disabilities, and other historically marginalized groups.

- Applicant demonstrates application of Do No Harm and conflict sensitivity principles.

4. Performance Monitoring, Evaluation, and Learning (MEL) (15/100 points):

- Applicant clearly describes the results to be achieved and demonstrates capacity to measure progress towards those results in a way that reflects local perspectives.
- Proposed outcomes are tangible and achievable within the grant program period.

5. Sustainability (15/100 points):

- Applicant articulates an approach to building local partner capacity to continue their work once funding from this program ends.

VI. Additional Information

S/GWI will not consider SOIs that reflect any type of support for any member, affiliate, or representative of a designated terrorist organization.

S/GWI may ask successful applicant(s) to incorporate coordination of an implementer and stakeholder meeting into the Scope of Work of the final project. S/GWI will discuss this possibility with particular applicant(s) during the proposal negotiation phase.

Organizations should be aware that S/GWI understands that some information contained in SOIs may be considered sensitive or proprietary and will make appropriate efforts to protect such information. However, organizations are advised that S/GWI cannot guarantee that such information will not be disclosed, including pursuant to the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) or other similar statutes.

The applicant/recipient of the award and any sub-recipient under the award must comply with all applicable terms and conditions, in addition to the assurance and certifications made part of the Notice of Award. Before submitting the SOI, applicants should review all the terms and conditions and required certifications which will apply if a full proposal application is requested and awarded, to ensure that they will be able to comply. These include: 2 CFR 200, 2 CFR 600, and the Department of State Standard Terms and Conditions which are available at: <https://www.state.gov/wp-content/uploads/2020/10/U.S.-Department-of-State-Standard-Terms-and-Conditions-10-21-2020.pdf>.

Organizations should be aware that if ultimately selected for an award, the Uniform Administrative Requirements, Cost Principles and Audit Requirements for Federal Awards set forth in 2 CFR Chapter 200 (Sub-Chapters A through F) shall apply to all non-Federal entities, except for assistance awards to Individuals and Foreign Public Entities. Please note that as of December 26, 2014, 2 CFR 200 (Sub-Chapters A through E) now applies to foreign organizations.

In addition, applicants/recipients of the award and any sub-recipient under the award must comply with the S/GWI-specific award provisions included in Annex B.

The information in this solicitation including its Annexes is binding and may not be modified by any S/GWI representative. **Explanatory information provided by S/GWI that contradicts this language will not be binding.** Issuance of the solicitation and negotiation of SOIs or applications does not constitute an award commitment on the part of the U.S. government. S/GWI reserves the right to reduce, revise, or increase proposal budgets in accordance with the needs of the program evaluation requirements.

This solicitation will appear on www.grants.gov and SAMS Domestic (<https://mygrants.servicenowservices.com>) although SOI submissions will only be accepted through SAMS Domestic.

ANNEX B: Bureau-Specific Award Provisions

I. Gender Analysis

Prior to implementing activities, the Recipient must document a gender analysis in consultation with local partners for each of the countries or geographic areas where they propose to program. The gender analysis must demonstrate how activities account for the different ways in which they might impact, and be impacted by men, women, boys, and girls¹⁰ of all backgrounds how this has been integrated into the program design in order to narrow existing gender inequities. S/GWI may approve the Recipient to do the initial gender analysis either before or during a project start-up / assessment phase.

The Recipient shall regularly monitor and reflect upon the gender analysis together with local partners and propose in writing any significant adjustments to the program design for S/GWI concurrence. This process shall take place at the frequency set out in the Recipient's proposal, unless otherwise agreed with S/GWI in writing.

Within its Quarterly Progress Reports (QPRs) and its final evaluation(s), the Recipient will report specifically on progress towards addressing the gaps and opportunities identified in the gender analysis.

II. Risk Assessments and Do No Harm

In line with Do No Harm principles, Recipient risk assessment and mitigation plans must address risk to project beneficiaries in addition to risks to staff and project implementation. These should explicitly address gender-related risks and mitigating actions, as identified in the gender analysis.

I. Prevention of Sexual Exploitation and Abuse

The recipient will take all practical steps in accordance with their internal controls and existing policies and procedures to address the prevention of sexual exploitation and abuse (PSEA). In accordance with the internal control requirements in 2 CFR 200.303, which require the recipient to establish standards of conduct for its employees, the recipient must ensure that all its

¹⁰ *This list is a starting point of people to include, but other communities or countries may have or prefer different titles or breakdowns, such as "youth," "children," "elders," "Kinnar," "fa'afafine" or many more groups/categories. This list is not meant to limit your analysis, but to be a helpful reminder to consult for the program context.*

employees adhere to these standards of conduct in a manner that incorporates safeguarding against the sexual exploitation and abuse of beneficiaries, including but not limited to updating internal policies and procedures, as applicable and appropriate, and conducting appropriate monitoring of beneficiaries, as required by 2 CFR 200.329, which stipulates that the “non-Federal entity must monitor its activities under Federal awards to assure compliance with applicable Federal requirements.” If the recipient determines that the conduct of any recipient employee is not in accordance with this requirement, the recipient must address the situation in accordance with the recipient’s internal policies and procedures.

II. Non-Discrimination

S/GWI policy requires that the recipient not discriminate against any beneficiaries in implementation of this award, such as, but not limited to, by withholding, adversely impacting, or denying equitable access to the benefits provided through this award on the basis of any factor not expressly stated in the award. This includes, for example, race, color, religion, sex (including gender identity, sexual orientation, and pregnancy), national origin, disability, age, genetic information, marital status, parental status, political affiliation, or veteran’s status. Nothing in this provision is intended to limit the ability of the recipient to target activities toward the assistance needs of certain populations as defined in the award.

III. Program Impact, Highlights, Success Stories

In quarterly reporting, the Recipient shall share success stories and/or highlights--or confirm that there were none for that quarter. Examples include program impact stories about (a) individual beneficiaries; (b) organizational, project, or program-level highlights; and (c) lessons learned and adapted to during implementation. The Recipient should indicate whether the information can be used in public communications by S/GWI and/or the broader U.S. Government. This may include, but is not limited to, use in remarks, social media, and website text. The privacy and safety of program beneficiaries is paramount; the Recipient shall ensure that appropriate permissions have been granted by those included in text and photos and that risks have been assessed and mitigated prior to including the information in quarterly reporting. The reporting should include high-resolution photos, photo credit information, and confirmation that appropriate permissions have been obtained from subjects/photographers for using the photos, where applicable.

IV. Program Evaluations

The Recipient is required to budget and arrange for independent program evaluations in accordance with its approved proposal and any subsequent changes agreed with S/GWI in

writing. In the spirit of the Evidence Act,¹¹ S/GWI ask that evaluation reports be written with the expectation that they will be made public. **S/GWI prioritizes the safety and security of partners, participants, and beneficiaries of its work.** The Recipient should therefore aim to limit the amount of sensitive, potentially sensitive, or personal identifying information (PII) in evaluation narratives to allow this information to be easily redacted. Alternatively, this type of information can be placed in an annex that can be withheld from publication. In the event that this is not feasible or there is any concern for partners', participants', or beneficiaries' safety, an evaluation will not be made public. S/GWI will make this determination on a case-by-case basis in consultation with the Recipient.

¹¹ <https://www.congress.gov/bill/115th-congress/house-bill/4174>