

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF STATE

A NOTICE OF FUNDING OPPORTUNITY

Global Innovation through Science and Technology (GIST) Initiative in the South Caucasus

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**United States Department of State
Bureau of Oceans and International Environmental and Scientific Affairs**

Notice of Funding Opportunity (NOFO): Global Innovation through Science and Technology (GIST) Initiative for the South Caucasus

This is the announcement of funding opportunity number **SFOP0008972**

Catalog of Federal Domestic Assistance Number: 19.017

Type of Solicitation: Open Competition

Application Deadline: 11:59 PM EDT on 22 July 2022

Question Submission by: 11:59 PM EDT on 17 June 2022

Notification of Project Approval by: September 2022 (*tentative*)

Total Funding: \$395,000

Anticipated Number of Awards: 1

Type of Award: Cooperative Agreement

Period of Performance: October 01, 2022 – December 31, 2024

Anticipated Time to Award, Pending Availability of Funds: 26 months

A. PROJECT DESCRIPTION

A1. Background

The U.S. Department of State, Bureau of Oceans and International Environmental and Scientific Affairs (OES) Office of Science and Technology Cooperation (STC) announces an open competition for organizations interested in submitting applications for projects that foster science, technology, and innovation cooperation in the South Caucasus.

The OES-led Global Innovation through Science and Technology (GIST) Initiative catalyzes science, technology, and innovation (STI) activities that support the Administration's economic and national security goals. Over the last ten years GIST has engaged more than 27 million innovation community members from over 130 emerging economies, and GIST has mentored over 15,000 startups. These startups have gone on to generate more than \$250 million in revenue and over 6,000 jobs while creating business relationships with American companies like Coca-Cola, Expedia, and Amazon Web Services. Projects include in country trainings of startups, interactive online programs, online mentorship platforms, and global pitch competitions. For more information about the GIST initiative and all its programming, please refer to GISTNetwork.org.

This cooperative agreement will include a regional startup training and support for Innovation Hubs (IHubs) in the priority countries of Armenia, Azerbaijan, and Georgia.

The proposed activities are designed to leverage STI for economic growth and deepen connections to the U.S. business community. STI is globally recognized as a driver that generates economic capacity, leading to economic growth, stronger domestic and regional stability, and resilience.

A2. Program Goals

The goal of this cooperative agreement is to utilize GIST to strengthen the capacity of STI innovators and entrepreneurs in the South Caucasus region and the innovation ecosystems in which they operate. GIST aims to strengthen the economies of Armenia, Azerbaijan, and Georgia and form stronger U.S. business connections. Specifically, GIST in the South Caucasus region aims to:

- Identify and recruit the most talented and diverse STI entrepreneurs.
- Connect U.S. businesses and experts with global innovators.
- Catalyze participants' success and boost the confidence of participants through training, networking, and program structure.
- Promote GIST participants' innovations and stories to the public as role models for entrepreneurship and youth.
- Reinforce the role of American and scientific values, including integrity, ethics, merit-based competition, transparency, and scientific rigor.
- Engage participants, mentors, prominent U.S. entrepreneurs, and others to become and remain part of the broader GIST Network community.
- Ensure women and other underrepresented groups are well represented (experts, judges, participants, and mentors).
- Assemble participant and event information to support the identification of gaps and the monitoring and evaluation of the ecosystem.
- Deliver activities that address skill and resource gaps in priority entrepreneurial ecosystems.

A3. Main Activities

The proposal will be for a regional startup training for young innovators and entrepreneurs. The training should be inspired by NSF's I-Corp program. The GIST in-country training should address the needs of a local/regional innovation ecosystem and spur the creation of new businesses by offering aspiring and existing STI entrepreneurs tailored programs that provide them with the skills needed to create new or expand existing businesses. For maximum effect and sustainability, training and mentoring should be executed in partnership with a local organization and private sector, where possible. Follow up should occur to track participants' outcomes. Additionally, GIST in-country meetups (Innovation Hubs) and support for occasional "on demand" speaker travel to meetups and priority countries should connect U.S. embassies to innovators and sustain innovation ecosystem growth.

Specific activities should include, but are not limited to, the following:

- Promote GIST throughout the target innovation and entrepreneurship ecosystem(s).
- Identify and recruit the most talented young STI entrepreneurs and select them using a transparent merit-based selection process. Where applicable, support the regionalization of the event(s).
- Provide all participants with training that enhances their ability to advance their companies and expands their understanding of innovation and entrepreneurship. Tailor the content, level, etc. to the needs of the selected community.
- Recruit prominent U.S. and regional trainers, entrepreneurs, and partners to increase awareness of American businesses.
- Raise awareness for GIST and promote GIST participants as role models of innovation.
- Implement an energizing community “DEMO Day” event showcasing the participants, prominent U.S. entrepreneurs, or other catalyzing presentation to attract press and build awareness of the value of STI entrepreneurship and innovation broadly to ecosystem partners, U.S. embassies and consulates, and the public.
- Collect contact information for participant follow up and engagement through GIST Network. Evaluate pre-and post-event capacity of participants.
- Sustain engagement by seeding Innovation Hubs and/or providing follow-on speaker engagement and or mentorship to participants after training events.

Expected Results:

- Establish a stronger regional entrepreneurship ecosystem that develops ties with U.S. investors and businesses.
- Form strong businesses in Armenia, Azerbaijan, and Georgia that are able to build the economic capacity for the host country and the South Caucasus region.
- Develop the capacity of Armenia, Azerbaijan, and Georgia to engage in innovative STI-based entrepreneurship activities across all segments of society.

A4. Performance Indicators

Indicators should reflect key project outputs and/or outcomes that reflect on the primary goals and objectives of the project and that the implementer can collect with high quality data. The project should monitor and report on performance indicators (outputs and outcomes) that are specific, measurable, achievable, reasonable, and time-bound. Establish, where possible, performance baseline data and expected performance targets for each expected result and include details on what sources of data will be used to document progress and performance, how the indicators will be measured, frequency of measurement, and units of measure. Where possible, indicators should also allow for sex disaggregation. This detail should be provided to Department of State prior to funds being awarded.

- All applicable indicators should be included in the proposal and subsequent to the award, routine, periodic reporting of all indicators will be required. The implementer will be responsible for quarterly progress reporting on each performance indicator included in the award agreement as well as analysis of progress or impediments to

reach indicator targets.

The following are required indicators. Applicants are welcome to propose other indicators relevant to the primary objectives and expected results of the project.

Required Outcome Indicators & Targets

	<i>Outcome Indicators</i>
Output 1.	Person hours of training completed in science and technology workforce supported by the USG (EG.6.2 & 6.3)
Output 2.	Number of new businesses established based on a new technology or innovation (EG.5.2-2)
Output 3.	Number of in country institutions engaged (EG.5.2-2)
Output 4.	Sex of primary business owner (EG.6.2) Male Female
Output 5.	Number of people trained (EG.6.2 & 6.3) Men Women
Output 6.	Number of entrepreneurs mentored (Innovation Hubs)
Output 7.	Revenue generated
Output 8.	Jobs Created (EG.6.4)
Output 9.	Startup Investment received
Output 10.	American business partnerships

A.5. Substantial Involvement

OES anticipates awarding a cooperative agreement. A cooperative agreement is distinguished from a grant in that it provides for substantial involvement between the Federal awarding agency and the non-Federal entity in carrying out the activity.

Examples of substantial involvement for this project may include, but are not limited to, the following:

- Approval of work plan within 60 days of the start of period of performance
- Pre-approval of key personnel to recommend to Grants Officer for final approval
- Periodic scheduled check-in calls with implementer (frequency TBD in work plan between parties)
- Review, input, and approval of other proposed activities or products associated with this cooperative agreement.
- Assist in review and designs of curriculum for workshops and trainings.

The Recipient must ensure that all funds are used in a manner consistent with U.S. government laws on the use of foreign assistance funds, including any applicable restrictions on funding.

This notice is subject to availability of funding.

B. FEDERAL AWARD INFORMATION

Primary organizations can submit 1 application in response to the NOFO. If an applicant chooses to submit multiple applications to this NOFO, it is the responsibility of the applicant to demonstrate the competitiveness and uniqueness of each application.

The U.S. government may: (a) reject any or all applications, (b) accept other than the lowest cost application, (c) accept more than one application, and (d) waive irregularities in applications received.

The U.S. government may make award(s) on the basis of initial applications received, without discussions or negotiations. Therefore, each initial application should contain the applicant's best terms from a cost and technical standpoint. The U.S. government reserves the right (though it is under no obligation to do so), however, to enter into discussions with one or more applicants in order to obtain clarifications, additional detail, or to suggest refinements in the project description, budget, or other aspects of an application.

OES anticipates awarding a cooperative agreement depending on the needs and risk factors of the program. The final determination on award mechanism will be made by the Grants Officer. The distinction between grants and cooperative agreements revolves around the existence of “substantial involvement.” Cooperative agreements require greater Federal government participation in the project. If a cooperative agreement is awarded, OES will undertake reasonable and programmatically necessary substantial involvement. Examples of substantial involvement can include, but are not limited to:

- Active participation or collaboration with the recipient in the implementation of the award;
- Review and approval of one stage of work before another can begin;
- Review and approval of substantive provisions of proposed sub-awards or contracts beyond existing Federal policy;
- Approval of the recipient’s budget or plan of work prior to the award.

The authority for this funding opportunity is found in the Foreign Assistance Act of 1961, as amended (FAA).

To maximize the impact and sustainability of the award(s) that result from this NOFO, OES retains the right to execute non-competitive continuation amendment(s). The total duration of any award, including potential non-competitive continuation amendments, shall not exceed 54 months, or four and a half years. Any non-competitive continuation is contingent on performance and **pending availability of funds**. A non-competitive continuation is not guaranteed, and the Department of State reserves the right to exercise or not to exercise this option.

C. ELIGIBILITY INFORMATION

C.1 Eligible Applicants

OES welcomes applications from U.S. or internationally based non-profit/non-governmental organizations subject to section 501(c) (3) of the U.S. tax code; and private, public, or state institutions of higher education.

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

Please see 2 CFR 200.307 for regulations regarding program income.

C.2 Cost Sharing or Matching

Providing cost sharing, matching, or cost participation is not an eligibility factor or requirement for this NOFO and providing cost share will not result in a more favorable competitive ranking. However, providing co-share is encouraged. When cost sharing is offered, all cost share or matching must be included in detail in the line-item budget and noted in the budget narrative. It is understood and agreed that the applicant must provide the amount of cost sharing that it elects to stipulate in its proposal and that is later included in an approved agreement. Cost sharing may be in the form of allowable direct or indirect costs. For accountability, recipients must maintain written records to support all costs that are claimed as their contribution, as well as costs to be paid by the Federal government. Such records are subject to audit. The basis for determining the value of cash and in-kind contributions must be in accordance with [2 CFR 200.306 – Cost Sharing and Matching](#)

C.3 Other

Applicants must have existing, or the capacity to develop, active partnerships with local in-country partners, entities, and relevant stakeholders and have demonstrable experience in administering successful and preferably similar projects.

Any applicant listed on the Excluded Parties List System in the [System for Award Management \(SAM.gov\)](#) (www.sam.gov) and/or has a current debt to the U.S. government is not eligible to apply for an assistance award in accordance with the OMB guidelines at 2 CFR 180 that implement Executive Orders 12549 (3 CFR, 1986 Comp., p. 189) and 12689 (3 CFR, 1989 Comp., p. 235), “Debarment and Suspension.” Additionally, no entity or person listed on the Excluded Parties List System in SAM.gov can participate in any activities under an award. All applicants are strongly encouraged to review the Excluded Parties List System in SAM.gov to ensure that no ineligible entity or person is included in their application.

D. APPLICATION AND SUBMISSION INFORMATION

D.1 Address to Request Application Package

Applicants can find application forms, kits, or other materials needed to apply on www.grants.gov and SAMS Domestic (<https://mygrants.servicenowservices.com>) under the announcement title “(GIST) Initiative in South Caucasus Region” funding opportunity number “SFOP0008972” Please contact the OES point of contact listed in Section G if requesting reasonable accommodations for persons with disabilities or for security reasons. Please note that reasonable accommodations do not include deadline extensions.

D.2 Content and Form of Application Submission

For all application documents, please ensure:

- All documents are in English and all costs are in U.S. Dollars. If an original document within the application is in another language, an English translation must be provided (please note the Department of State, as indicated in 2 CFR 200.111, requires that English is the official language of all award documents). If any document is provided in both English and a foreign language, the English language version is the controlling version;
- All pages are numbered, including budgets and attachments;
- All documents are formatted to 8 ½ x 11 paper; and,
- 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, including the budget, can be reformatted to fit within 1 page width.

D.2.1 Application Requirements

Complete applications must include the following:

1. Completed and signed **SF-424**, **SF-424A**, and **SF-424B** forms. Please see SF-424 instructions in Section 2B of the PSI.
2. Organizations that engage in lobbying the U.S. government, including Congress, or pay for another entity to lobby on their behalf, are also required to complete the **SF-LLL** “Disclosure of Lobbying Activities” form (**only if applicable**). Please see SF-LLL guidance in Section 2B of the PSI.
3. **Cover Page/Executive Summary** (not to exceed one (1) page, preferably as a Word Document) that includes a table with the organization name, project title, target country/countries, and name and contact information for the application’s main point of contact and brief section that clearly outlines the (1) the problem statement addressed by the project (2) research-based evidence justifying the applicant’s approach, and (3) quantifiable project outcomes and impacts.
4. **Proposal Narrative** (not to exceed ten (10) pages, preferably as a Word Document). Please note the ten-page limit **does not include** the Cover Page, Executive Summary, Table of Contents, Attachments, Detailed Budget, Budget

Narrative, Audit, or NICRA. Applicants are encouraged to combine multiple documents into a single Word Document (i.e. Cover Page, Table of Contents, Executive Summary, and Proposal Narrative in one file). The Narrative must include the following:

- **Introduction to the Organization:** A description of past and present operations, showing ability to carry out the project, including information on all relevant or similar type projects from previous grants from the U.S. Embassy and/or U.S. government agencies.
- **Program Methods and Design:** A description of how the program is expected to work to solve the stated problem and achieve the goal.
- **Program Goal:** The “goal(s)” describe the larger outcome intended
- **Program Objectives:** The intermediate accomplishments and measurable targets to achieve a goal. Objectives of the program should be SMART:
 - **Specific:** Detailed and specifies what will be achieved
 - **Measurable:** have associated metrics or measurements of success
 - **Attainable:** appropriately challenging, objectives can be reasonably attained given the available resources
 - **Relevant:** align with the policy/program goal and appropriate within the country or beneficiary audience
 - **Time-Bound:** achievable within the timeframe of the program
- **Program Activities:** Describe specific actions taken under Objective. All activities should be clearly developed and sufficiently explain the resource and time requirements (inputs) and things done or produced (outputs). Activities should detail: target areas, participant groups or selection criteria for participants; how relevant stakeholders will be engaged; and actions taken by local partners as appropriate/relevant.
- **Future Funding or Sustainability** Applicant’s plan for continuing the program beyond the grant period, or the availability of other resources, if applicable. Include ways program activities will ensure sustainability
- **Risk Analysis** - identify the internal and external risks associated with the proposed project, rate the likelihood of the risks, rate the potential impact of the risks on the project, and identify actions that could help mitigate the risks.

5. **Budget** (preferably as an Excel workbook) that includes three (3) columns containing the request to OES, any cost sharing contribution, and the total budget. A summary budget should also be included using the OMB-approved budget categories (see SF-424A as a sample) in a separate tab. Costs must be in U.S. Dollars. Detailed line-item budgets for sub-grantees should be included as additional tabs within the Excel workbook (if available at the time of submission).

Please see attached *Budget Guidelines for FADR (Dec 2021)* for more information.

6. **Detailed Budget Narrative** (separate from the budget as a Word Document) Justify each line-item in the budget and explain how the amounts were derived, consistency with the applicant's documented policies, as well as the source and description of all proposed costs (and cost-share, if applicable). The narrative should

complement the budget rather than repeat information provided in the budget. For example, the narrative should provide details on the purpose of costs, reasonability of costs, cost price analysis, explain allocations, explain any yearly variances and tie expenses to program activities and/or objectives where appropriate. Sources of all cost-share offered in the application should be identified and explained in the budget narrative. See Tab 1 *Budget Guidelines for FADR (Dec 2021)* for more information.

7. Program Monitoring and Evaluation Narrative and Plan:

- An M&E Narrative (maximum one page) outlines how a project's M&E system will be carried out and by whom. It details how you will track your project's performance toward its objectives, over time. Provide a clear description of the approach and data collection strategies and tools to be employed (e.g., pre- and post-test surveys, interviews, focus groups). The description should include how the applicant will track and document whether activities occurred (outputs) and the results or changes caused by these activities (outcomes). If the project includes work with local partners or sub-partners, explain how M&E efforts will be coordinated amongst these organizations. Explain if an external evaluation will be included. Evaluations, internal or external, should be systematic studies that use research methods to address specific questions about project performance. They should provide a valuable supplement to ongoing monitoring activities. Evaluation activities generally include baseline assessments, mid-term and final evaluations.
- The M&E plan should draw on the objectives, activities and expected changes from the logic model, and link those areas to indicators. The M&E plan is generally structured as a table with output- and outcome-based indicators. It explains how data will be collected (data collection methods) to show that certain changes occurred. It outlines baselines (where your project is starting) and quarterly targets (what you would like to achieve) for each indicator.

8. Key Personnel (not to exceed two (2) pages, preferably as a Word Document). Include short bios that highlight relevant professional experience. Provides names, titles, roles and experience/qualifications of key personnel involved in the program. Given the limited space, CVs are not recommended for submission.

9. Timeline (not to exceed one (1) page, preferably as a Word Document or Excel Sheet). The timeline of the overall proposal should include activities, evaluation efforts, and program closeout.

10. Gender and Inclusion Analysis (not to exceed two (2) pages, preferably as a Word Document) that provides a concise analysis of relevant gender norms, equity and equality for underserved communities and marginalized populations, power relations, and conflict dynamics in target countries. Potential domains of analysis include institutional practices and barriers, cultural norms, gender roles, access to and control over assets and resources, and patterns of decision-making. Applicants should briefly explain how they have integrated findings from their analysis into project design and/or other proposal documents, including a plan for regularly

reviewing and updating the gender and inclusion analysis with local partners/beneficiaries, and making any necessary adjustments to program implementation.

11. Attachments:

- Letters of support from program partners describing the roles and responsibilities of each partner, if applicable/pre-identified
- Official permission letters, if required for project activities

Applications that do not include the elements listed above will be deemed technically ineligible. To ensure that all applications receive a balanced evaluation, the review panel will review from the first page of each section up to the page limit and no further.

D.2.2 Additional Information Requested For Those Receiving Notification of Intent

Successful applicants must submit, after notification of intent to make a Federal award, but prior to issuance of a Federal award:

- Written responses and revised application documents addressing conditions and recommendations from the review panel;
- A copy of the applicant's latest NICRA as a PDF file, if the applicant has a NICRA and includes NICRA charges in the budget;
- A completed copy of the Department's Financial Management Survey, if receiving USG funding for the first time;
- Submission of required documents to register in the Payment Management System managed by the Department of Health and Human Services, if receiving OES funding for the first time (unless an exemption is provided);
- Other requested information or documents included in the notification of intent to make a Federal award or subsequent communications prior to issuance of a Federal award;
- Applicants who submit their applications through Grants.gov will be required to create a SAMS Domestic account in order to accept the final award. Accounts must be logged into to every 60 days in order to maintain an active account.

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

All prime organizations, whether based in the United States or in another country, must have a Unique Entity Identifier (UEI), formerly referred to as DUNS, and an active registration with SAM.gov before submitting an application. OES 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.

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 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 NATO CAGE (NCAGE) code and UEI number prior to registering in SAM.gov.

All organizations applying for grants (except individuals) must obtain these registrations. All are free of charge:

- NCAGE/CAGE Code
- Unique Entity Identifier from SAM.gov
- SAM.gov registration

Step 1: Apply for a NCAGE Code

NCAGE application: Application page here:

<https://eportal.nspa.nato.int/AC135Public/scage/CageList.aspx>

Instructions for the NCAGE application process:

<https://eportal.nspa.nato.int/AC135Public/Docs/US%20Instructions%20for%20NSPA%20NCAGE.pdf>

For NCAGE help from within the U.S., call 1-888-227-2423

For NCAGE help from outside the U.S., call 1-269-961-7766

Email NCAGE@dlis.dla.mil for any problems in getting an NCAGE code.

Step 2: After receiving the NCAGE Code, proceed to register in SAM.gov by logging onto: <https://www.sam.gov>.

All prime organizations must, at all times during which they have an active Federal award or application under consideration by any Federal awarding agency, maintain an active SAM.gov registration with current information. SAM.gov requires all entities to renew their registration once a year 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.

Note: SAM.gov is not the same as SAMS Domestic. It is free 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 “International Registrants” in the left navigation panel. Please note, guidance on SAM.gov and the guidance on GSA’s website about requirement for registering in SAM.gov is subject to change. Applicants should review the website for the most up-to-date guidance.

D.3.1 Exemptions

An exemption from these requirements may be permitted on a case-by-case basis if:

- An applicant’s identity must be protected due to potential endangerment of their mission, their organization’s status, their employees, or individuals being served by the applicant.

Organizations requesting exemption from UEI or SAM.gov requirements must email the point of contact listed in the NOFO at least **two weeks prior to the deadline in the NOFO providing a justification of their request**. Approval for a SAM.gov exemption must come from the warranted Grants Officer before the application can be deemed eligible for review.

Note: Foreign organizations will be required to register with the NATO Support Agency (NSPA) to receive a NCAGE code in order to register in SAM.gov. NSPA will forward your registration request to the applicable National Codification Bureau (NCB) if your organization is located in a NATO or Tier 2 Sponsored Non-NATO Nation. As of September 2021, NATO nations included Albania, Belgium, Bulgaria, Canada, Croatia, Czech Republic, Denmark, Estonia, France, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Iceland, Italy, Latvia, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Montenegro, Netherlands, North Macedonia, Norway, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Slovakia, Slovenia, Spain, Turkey, United Kingdom, and the United States of America. As of September 2021, Tier 2 nations included Argentina, Australia, Austria, Brazil, Colombia, Finland, India, Indonesia, Israel, Japan, Republic of Korea, Malaysia, Morocco, New Zealand, Serbia, Singapore, Sweden, and United Arab Emirates.

*NSPA and/or the appropriate NCB forwards all NCAGE code information to all Allied Committee 135 (AC/135) nations, which as of September 2021 also included Algeria, Belarus, Bosnia & Herzegovina, Brunei Darussalam, Chile, Egypt, Georgia, Jordan, Oman, Pakistan, Peru, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, South Africa, and Thailand. **All organizations are strongly advised to take this into consideration when assessing whether registration may result in possible endangerment.***

D.4 Submission Dates and Times

Applications are due no later than **11:59 PM Eastern Standard Time (EST), on 15 JULY 2022** on <https://www.grants.gov/> or SAMS Domestic (<https://mygrants.servicenowservices.com>) under the announcement title “(GIST) Initiative in South Caucasus Region” funding opportunity number “SFOP0008972”

Grants.gov and SAMS Domestic automatically log the date and time an application submission is made, and the Department of State will use this information to determine whether an application has been submitted on time. Late applications are neither reviewed nor considered. Known system errors caused by Grants.gov or SAMS Domestic (<https://mygrants.service-now.com>) that are outside of the applicant's control will be reviewed on a case by case basis. Applicants should not expect a notification upon OES receiving their application.

D.5 Funding Limitations, Restrictions, and other Considerations

OES will not consider applications that reflect any type of support for any member, affiliate, or representative of a designated terrorist organization. Please refer the link for Foreign Terrorist Organizations: <https://www.state.gov/foreign-terrorist-organizations/> Project activities whose direct beneficiaries are foreign militaries or paramilitary groups or individuals will not be considered for OES funding given purpose limitations on funding.

The Leahy Law prohibits Department foreign assistance funds from supporting foreign security force units if the Secretary of State has credible information that the unit has committed a gross violation of human rights. Per [22 USC §2378d\(a\) \(2017\)](#), “No assistance shall be furnished under this chapter [FOREIGN ASSISTANCE] or the Arms Export Control Act [22 USC 2751 et seq.] to any unit of the security forces of a foreign country if the Secretary of State has credible information that such unit has committed a gross violation of human rights.” Restrictions may apply to any proposed assistance to police or other law enforcement. Among these, pursuant to section 620M of the Foreign Assistance Act of 1961, as amended (FAA), no assistance provided through this funding opportunity may be furnished to any unit of the security forces of a foreign country when there is credible information that such unit has committed a gross violation of human rights. In accordance with the requirements of section 620M of the FAA, also known as the Leahy law, project beneficiaries or participants from a foreign government's security forces may need to be vetted by the Department before the provision of any assistance. If a proposed grant or cooperative agreement will provide assistance to foreign security forces or personnel, compliance with the Leahy Law is required.

Organizations should be cognizant of these restrictions when developing project proposals as these restrictions will require appropriate due diligence of program beneficiaries and collaboration with OES to ensure compliance with these restrictions. Program beneficiaries subject to due diligence vetting will include any individuals or entities that are beneficiaries of foreign assistance funding or support. Due diligence vetting will include a review of open-source materials.

D.5.1 Combatting Sexual Exploitation and Abuse

(a) Policy. OES has zero tolerance for inaction regarding allegations of sexual exploitation and abuse (SEA) occurring in relation to a federal award, and advocates for a survivor-centered approach to addressing such misconduct. The Recipient, Recipient employees, and their agents must:

- (1) Not engage in sexual exploitation and abuse of award beneficiaries in the performance of this award;

- (2) Adopt a zero tolerance for inaction policy and take all reasonable and lawful measures to prevent and address sexual exploitation and abuse occurring under this award.
- (b) Recipient Requirements. To comply with the Policy in paragraph (a)(2), the Recipient shall:
- (1) Develop and adhere to a minimum set of organization-wide policies and internal controls necessary to reasonably prevent, detect, address, and resolve incidents of SEA, which must include:
 - (i) A zero tolerance policy for inaction in addressing SEA;
 - (ii) A readily available organizational policy or code of conduct for employees that includes safeguarding and IASC principles;
 - (iii) A safe, accessible, and confidential internal reporting mechanism, such as a hotline, for reporting SEA, with appropriate safeguards to protect whistle-blowers and survivors, including express protection against retaliation for reports of SEA;
 - (iv) Investigative procedures that provide due process to the accused;
 - (v) Hiring policies aimed at preventing re-circulation of perpetrators on successive government awards, including policies on the impact of misconduct on rehiring or transfer and referencing for subsequent employers
 - (2) Prohibit all personnel from engaging in SEA and notify employees of relevant policies, including remedies against employee perpetrators;
 - (3) Take appropriate action against perpetrators that commit SEA or fail to take reasonable steps to prevent it;
 - (4) Upon obtaining credible information of SEA, take prompt and reasonably appropriate action to stop harm occurring, investigate, and report to relevant authorities (for criminal matters) in a manner consistent with a survivor-centered approach. The Recipient must maintain appropriate standards that govern the conduct of its personnel and subrecipients and a suitable mechanism for complete and comprehensive reporting of such conduct.
- (c) Notification. The Recipient shall inform the Grants Officer (GO) and Grants Officer Representative (GOR) immediately of:
- (1) Any credible information it receives from any source (including host country law enforcement) that alleges a Recipient employee, sub-awardee, sub-awardee employee, or Recipient's agent has engaged in conduct included in paragraph (a) of this Combatting Sexual Abuse and Exploitation clause; and
 - (2) Any actions taken against a Recipient employee, sub-awardee, sub-awardee employee, or Recipient's agent pursuant to this Combatting Sexual Abuse and Exploitation clause.
 - (3) Each notification referred to in paragraph (c)(1) and (c)(2) will indicate, as reasonably available to Recipient: the agreement number, description of the alleged SEA, date of alleged SEA, date of first report to the Recipient, location, involvement of subrecipient, state of affairs concerning the investigation and the action that will be taken by the Recipient, and whether the case is referred to law enforcement. The Recipient will provide updates on the status of the case. The notice will be given in writing.
 - (4) It is understood and accepted that the Recipient's duty to report on SEA is subject to not compromising the safety, security, privacy, and due process rights of any concerned persons and limitations that may be imposed by applicable law. Any information or documentation provided in accordance with this Combatting Sexual Abuse and Exploitation clause will be treated by State Department with utmost discretion in order to ensure, inter alia, the probity of any investigation, protect sensitive information, ensure

the safety and security of persons or assets, and respect the due process rights of all involved. State Department will presume information/documentation to be confidential, deliberative, and investigatory and will ensure that information/documentation provided to State Department personnel will be available solely to those who strictly require access to such information/documentation. Any disclosure of such information/documentation beyond such personnel will require notification and consultation with the Recipient.

(d) Full Cooperation. Recipient will:

- (1) Fully cooperate with State Department in the event of investigation, audit, or corrective action, including by disclosing info, providing timely and complete responses, and providing reasonable access to facilities; and
- (2) Take measures designed to ensure that employees suspected of being victims of or witnesses to prohibited activities are not subjected to additional prohibited conduct, harassment or retaliation, and shall not prevent or hinder the ability of these employees from cooperating fully with Government authorities.
- (3) Full cooperation will have the meaning prescribed at 48 C.F.R. 52.203-13 and be subject to the applicable law.

(e) Sub-awards. The Recipient shall include the substance of this clause in all sub-awards and in all contracts with agents.

(f) Policies and Procedures and Oversight.

- (1) The Recipient shall provide copies of its Code of Conduct and related policies and procedures to S/GWI upon request and by no later than within 60 days of award, unless a different schedule is agreed in writing.
- (2) Should any change be made to the Recipient's code of conduct and related PSEA policies and procedures during the validity period of this agreement, the Recipient shall inform S/GWI in writing within thirty (30) days of the changes.
- (3) State Department or any of its duly authorized representatives may at all times carry out reviews, evaluations, or other oversight measures to verify the Recipient's zero tolerance for SEA. The Recipient will fully cooperate with State Department or any of its duly authorized representatives or agents to carry out such oversight measures.

(g) Termination. Failure to comply with the terms of this provision may result in termination of the award.

(h) Definitions. As used in this clause

- "Information" means any communication or representation of knowledge such as facts, data, or opinions, in any medium or form, including textual, numerical, graphic, cartographic, narrative, or audiovisual (Committee on National Security Systems Instruction (CNSSI) 4009);
- "Sexual Abuse" means any actual or threatened physical intrusion of a sexual nature whether by force or under unequal or coercive conditions. For child sexual abuse, it specifically includes but is not limited to fondling a child's genitals, penetration, incest, rape, sodomy, indecent exposure, and exploitation through prostitution or the production of pornographic materials;
- "Sexual Exploitation" means any actual or attempted abuse by Recipient or subawardee employees or agents of a position of vulnerability, differential power or trust, for sexual purposes, including profiting monetarily, socially, or politically from the sexual exploitation of another;

- “Survivor-centered approach” means an approach for which the survivor’s dignity, experiences, considerations, needs, and resiliencies are placed at the center of the process, from the initial award design to investigating and responding to potential incidents. Consistent with the UN Protocol on Allegations of SEA Involving Implementing Partners, the survivor should be informed, participate in the decisionmaking process, and provide consent on the possible use and disclosure of their information. Those interacting with the survivor and/or handling information regarding the allegation must maintain confidentiality, ensure safety of the survivor, and apply survivor-centered principles which are safety, confidentiality, respect, and non-discrimination. When the survivor is a child, the approach must consider the best - 24 - interests of the child and engage with the family/caregivers as appropriate. Staff and partners should comply with host country and local child welfare and protection legislation and international standards, whichever gives greater protection;
- “Credible information” - information that, considering its source and the surrounding circumstances, supports a reasonable belief that an event has occurred or will occur;
- “Zero Tolerance for Inaction” means that every allegation is treated seriously and appropriate action is pursued to resolve it.

Organizations should be cognizant of these restrictions when developing project proposals as these restrictions will require appropriate due diligence of program beneficiaries and collaboration with OES to ensure compliance with these restrictions. Program beneficiaries subject to due diligence vetting will include any individuals or entities that are beneficiaries of foreign assistance funding or support. Due diligence vetting will include a review of open-source materials.

D.6 Other Submission Requirements

All application submissions must be made electronically via www.grants.gov or SAMS Domestic (<https://mygrants.servicenowservices.com>). Both systems require registration by the applying organization. Please note that the Grants.gov registration process can take ten (10) business days or longer, even if all registration steps are completed in a timely manner.

It is the responsibility of the applicant to ensure that it has an active registration in SAMS Domestic or Grants.gov. Applicants are required to document that the application has been received by SAMS Domestic or Grants.gov in its entirety. OES 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, applicants must 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.

OES 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 OES point of contact listed in the NOFO in Section G. The point of contact may assist in contacting the appropriate helpdesk.

Note: The Grants Officer will determine technical eligibility of all applications.

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://afsitsm.service-now.com/ilms/home>. Customer support is available 24/7.

Grants.gov Applications:

Applicants who do not submit applications via SAMS Domestic may submit via www.grants.gov.

Please be advised that completing all the necessary registration steps for obtaining a username and password from Grants.gov **can take ten (10) business days or longer**.

Please refer to the Grants.gov website for definitions of various "application statuses" and the difference between a submission receipt and a submission validation. Applicants will receive a validation e-mail from Grants.gov upon the successful submission of an application. Validation of an electronic submission via Grants.gov can take up to two business days. Additionally, organizations **must** remember to save a screenshot of the checklist showing all documents submitted in case any document fails to upload successfully.

Grants.gov Helpdesk:

For assistance with Grants.gov, please call the Contact Center at +1 (800) 518-4726 or email support@grants.gov. The Contact Center is available 24 hours a day, seven days a week, except federal holidays.

See <https://www.opm.gov/policy-data-oversight/pay-leave/federal-holidays/> for a list of federal holidays.

E. APPLICATION REVIEW INFORMATION

E.1 Proposal Review Criteria

The OES review panel will evaluate each application individually against the following criteria, listed below in order of importance, and not against competing applications. Please use the below criteria as a reference, but **do not structure your application according to the sub-sections**.

Quality and Program Design – 20 points: The program idea is well developed and responsive to the policy and program objective of the NOFO. The applicant describes the project's potential contribution to solving the problem addressed in the problem statement. The application clearly defines the problem; its causes; stakeholders; and existing research/data; the approach taken to solve the problem; realistic milestones to indicate progress.

Organizational Capacity – 20 points: The applicant demonstrates an institutional record of successful projects in the content area proposed. The applicant demonstrates experience (e.g., has previously worked and/or has established contacts/partners) in the proposed country/territory/region. The organization has expertise in its stated field and has adequate staffing to manage the proposed project. The applicant demonstrates capacity for responsible fiscal management of donor funding (e.g., successful management of a previous grant or sub-award).

Program Planning/Ability to Achieve Objectives – 15 points: Goals and objectives are clearly stated and project approach is likely to provide maximum impact in achieving the proposed results. The applicant proposes activities that are feasible, and are also practical, and/or experiential in nature to encourage innovation. The applicant addresses how the project will engage or obtain support from relevant stakeholders and/or identifies local partners. Program logic is sound showing plausible pathways to achieve project outcomes. Key assumptions and risks have been identified and their potential influences described. The applicant acknowledges if activities similar to those proposed are already taking or have taken place previously, and provides an explanation as to how proposed new activities will not duplicate or merely add to existing/recent activities.

Budget & Budget Narrative – 10 points: The budget justification is detailed, accounting for all necessary expenses to achieve proposed activities. Costs are reasonable in relation to the proposed activities and anticipated results and provide detail of calculations, including estimation methods, quantities, unit costs, labor in-put and responsibilities, procurement practice and policy information, and other similar quantitative detail

Monitoring & Evaluation/Sustainability – 25 points: Applicant demonstrates it is able to measure program success against key indicators and provides milestones to indicate progress toward goals outlined in the proposal. The program includes output and outcome indicators, and shows how and when those will be measured and who will be responsible for them. The applicant clearly details how activities will result in benefits that will continue beyond the funding period.

Support of Equity and Underserved Communities – 10 points: Proposals should clearly demonstrate how the program will support and advance equity and engage underserved communities in program administration, design, and implementation.

E.2 Review and Selection Process

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

All applications that are deemed eligible will proceed to the Merit Review Panel consisting of U.S. government subject matter and/or country-specific experts and will be rated on a 100-point scale. OES reserves the right to request the assistance of non-US government Subject Matter Experts (SMEs), if appropriate to the solicitation. Point values for individual elements of the application are presented in Part VII, Section A. Panel Reviewers' ratings, and any resulting recommendations, are advisory. Panel Reviewers may provide conditions and recommendations on applications to enhance the proposed project, which must be addressed by the applicant before further consideration of the award.

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

F. FEDERAL AWARD ADMINISTRATION INFORMATION

F.1 Federal Award Notices

OES will provide a separate notification to applicants on the result of their applications. Successful applicants will receive a letter electronically via email requesting that the applicant respond to review panel conditions and recommendations. This notification is not an authorization to begin activities and does not constitute formal approval or a funding commitment.

Final approval is contingent on the applicant successfully responding to the review panel's conditions and recommendations; being registered in required systems; and completing and providing any additional documentation requested by OES or the Grants Officer. Final approval is also contingent on Congressional Notification requirements being met and final review and approval by the Department's warranted Grants Officer.

The notice of Federal award signed by the Department's warranted Grants Officers is the sole authorizing document. The recipient may only start incurring program expenses beginning on the start date shown on the grant award document signed by the Grants Officer. If awarded, the notice of Federal award will be provided to the applicant's designated Authorizing Official via SAMS Domestic to be electronically counter-signed in the system.

Payments under this award will be made through the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) Payment Management System (PMS). Unless otherwise stipulated, the Recipient may request payments on a reimbursement or advance basis. Instructions for requesting payments are available at: <https://pms.psc.gov/>.

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

F.2 Administrative and National Policy and Legal Requirements

OES requires all recipients of foreign assistance funding to comply with all applicable Department and Federal laws and regulations, including but not limited to the following: 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. Sub-Chapters A through E shall apply to all foreign organizations, and Sub-Chapters A through D shall apply to all U.S. and foreign for-profit entities. 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. The Department's Standard Terms and Conditions can be viewed at <https://www.state.gov/about-us-office-of-the-procurement-executive/>.

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](#)

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

- [Guidance for Grants and Agreements in Title 2 of the Code of Federal Regulations](#) (2 CFR), as updated in the Federal Register's 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).

F.3 Reporting

Applicants should be aware that OES awards will require that all reports (financial and progress) are uploaded to the grant file in SAMS Domestic on a quarterly basis. The Federal Financial Report (FFR or SF-425) is the required form for the financial reports and must be submitted in PMS, as well as a copy from PMS then uploaded to the grant file in SAMS Domestic.

Narrative progress reports should reflect the focus on measuring the project’s progress on the overarching objectives and should be compiled according to the objectives, outcomes, and outputs as outlined in the award’s Logic Model and in the Monitoring & Evaluation Narrative. An assessment of the overall project’s impact should be included in each progress report. Where relevant, progress reports should include the following sections:

- Significant activities of the period and how activities reflect progress toward achieving goals;
- Evaluation of progress on goals/objectives with quantitative and qualitative data, as appropriate;
- Any problems/challenges in implementing the project and a corrective action plan;
- Evaluation of accomplishments with quantifiable information on goals and objectives to date as available, including reporting on agreed upon indicators;
- An update on expenditures during the reporting period;
- Supporting documentation or products related to project activities (such as surveys, travel, etc.);
- Performance indicator results and supporting documentation; and
- Project Spotlight highlighting a significant area of progress under the agreement as well as photos of implementation.

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

Foreign Assistance Data Review: 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.

A final narrative and financial report must also be submitted within 120 days after the expiration of the award.

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

G. CONTACT INFORMATION

G1: Agency Contacts

For technical submission questions related to this NOFO, please contact **Alex Temple** (templeas@state.gov) and **Derrick Taylor** (taylordj@state.gov).

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.

Please note that establishing an account in SAMS Domestic may require the use of smartphone for multi-factor authentication (MFA). If an applicant does not have accessibility to a smartphone during the time of creating an account, please contact the helpdesk and request instructions on MFA for Windows PC.

For assistance with Grants.gov accounts and technical issues related to using the system, please call the Contact Center at +1 (800) 518-4726 or email support@grants.gov. The Contact Center is available 24 hours a day, seven days a week, except federal holidays.

For a list of federal holidays visit:

<https://www.opm.gov/policy-data-oversight/pay-leave/federal-holidays/>

Except for technical submission questions, during the NOFO period U.S. Department of State staff in Washington and overseas shall not discuss this competition with applicants until the entire proposal review process has been completed and rejection and approval letters have been transmitted.

G.2: Questions

Any prospective applicant who has questions concerning the contents of this NOFO must email them to the contacts listed above with the subject “[Applicant Name] [NOFO title].” To maintain fairness and transparency in competition, OES will not answer substantive NOFO questions except when posting questions and answers to the announcement page as described below.

All questions must be submitted via email to contacts listed above by 15 June 2022. OES will periodically create a document of submitted questions with answers and upload it to the announcement page in grants.gov. Prospective applicants are advised to review the announcement page in grants.gov for any updates. Note that once the NOFO deadline has passed, DOS staff in Washington, D.C. and overseas and U.S. Embassies/Missions may not discuss this completion with applicants until the review process has been completed.

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://afsitsm.service-now.com/ilms/home>. Customer support is available 24/7.

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For a list of federal holidays visit:

<https://www.opm.gov/policy-data-oversight/pay-leave/federal-holidays/>

Except for technical submission questions, during the NOFO period U.S. Department of State staff in Washington and overseas shall not discuss this competition with applicants until the entire proposal review process has been completed and rejection and approval letters have been transmitted.

H. OTHER INFORMATION

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

The information in this NOFO is binding and may not be modified by any OES representative. Explanatory information provided by OES that contradicts this language will not be binding. 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.

Background Information on OES

OES has the mission of providing American leadership, diplomacy, and scientific cooperation to conserve and protect the global environment, ocean, health, and space for the prosperity, peace, and security of this and future generations.

Additional background information on OES and its efforts can be found on

<https://www.state.gov/bureaus-offices/under-secretary-for-economic-growth-energy-and-the-environment/bureau-of-oceans-and-international-environmental-and-scientific-affairs/>

APPENDIX 1 – SAMPLE LETTER OF INSTITUTIONAL SUPPORT

Bureau of Oceans, and International Environmental and Scientific Affairs (OES)
U.S. Department of State
Room 2201 C Street, NW
Washington, D.C. 20520

[applicant Institution Letterhead]

Date:

[name of higher executive supportive of the proposal submission]
Street Address
State, and zip code

Attention: Maria Urbina
Bureau of Oceans, Environmental and International Affairs
U.S. Department of State

RE: Letter of support for Request for Applications # xxx

The [name of the applicant institution] is happy to endorse the proposal's entitled "XXXXXXX" in response to the NOFO# entitled XXXXXXXX. Our organization has been working in this area for the last X years and have developed extensive expertise in selected countries/region. (if you have established a long standing contacts describe those and briefly explain why you are interested in committing your organizational resources such as staffing and in-kind contribution in support of the NOFO goals.).

If your program intends to engage in collaborative efforts through sub-awards, please explain the rationale and your institution's objective for sub-awarding funds to local organizations. If you know the local institutions please indicate if relevant that you have worked with relevant staff and explain the areas of collaborative work if relevant.

Sincerely,

[Sr. officer of the institution]
Signature of President or
Executive Office