

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF STATE

U.S. EMBASSY KABUL PUBLIC AFFAIRS SECTION LOCAL GRANTS PROGRAM

Funding Opportunity Title: U.S. Embassy Kabul Connecting Women and Markets Program

Funding Opportunity Number: SCAKAB-12-AW-010-SCA-05232012

CFDA Number: 19.501

Date Opened: May 23, 2012

Federal Agency Contact: Ms. Cynthia Rafferty

Email: kabulpdproposals@state.gov

I. Funding Opportunity Description

The U.S. Embassy Kabul Public Affairs Section (PAS) of the U.S. Department of State is pleased to announce funding is available for programs of various scale to encourage collaboration between existing Afghan businesses with similar market positions. Please follow all instructions below carefully.

Purpose of Grant: This funding opportunity is to supportive collaborative efforts to bring existing small-scale women-owned and/or majority women-employing businesses together under cooperative umbrellas. Funds can provide support for training, product design, marketing, industry networking, central business advocacy support, and/or virtual and physical retail space for domestic and/or overseas markets. More than one project can be funded, depending on the scale, but all proposals should demonstrate how they plan to select beneficiaries. Projects that benefit a single business will not be considered.

Competitive proposals will include the following components:

- Clear outline of grantee's strategy to locate and connect Afghan businesswomen to one another, including evaluation of existing in-country capacity and/or identification of local partner(s).
- Commitment to principles of transparency in selection and operations and demonstrated ability to meet Fair Trade standards for labor and product sourcing.
- Assessment of sales potential in either domestic or overseas markets, or both.
- A plan for connecting producers to suppliers and/or markets.

Innovative mechanisms for connecting women to markets and developing their capacity throughout the value chain are encouraged. For internationally focused projects, letters of support from international associations and/or major buyers are desired.

II. Award Information

Funding Instrument Type: Grant

Floor of Individual Award Amounts: \$10,000

Ceiling of Individual Award Amounts: \$1,000,000

The U.S. Embassy Kabul Public Affairs Section reserves the right to award less or more than the funds described in the absence of worthy applications or under such other circumstances as it may deem to be in the best interest of the U.S. government.

Project and Budget Periods: Projects must be completed in twenty-four months or less.

III. Eligibility Information: Unrestricted

The U.S. Embassy Kabul Public Affairs Section encourages applications from all sectors: committed and organized civil-society organizations, private sector companies, local representatives of civil society, think tanks, non-governmental organizations, academic institutions, and individuals. U.S. NGOs may apply but preference is given to local NGOs or to partnerships that develop capacity with Afghan NGOs or employees and include plans to transfer programs to sustainable local management.

The U.S. Embassy Kabul Public Affairs Section encourages applicants to provide cost-sharing from additional sources in support of this project. The Public Affairs Section also encourages projects that use highly skilled volunteers as an element of cost-sharing. Applications should explain clearly other likely sources of funding and how the volunteers will be used.

IV. Application Submission and Deadline

Application Deadline: All applications must be submitted on or before July 30, 2012, 11:59 p.m, Kabul time. Applications submitted after 11:59 p.m. will be ineligible for consideration.

Application Submission Process: Applicants must submit proposals electronically using Grants.gov or submit proposals to PAS Kabul directly at: KabulPDProposals@state.gov. Applications are accepted in English only, and final grant agreements will be concluded in English.

Applicants opting to submit applications via email to KabulPDProposals@state.gov must include the Funding Opportunity Title and Funding Opportunity Number in the subject line of the email.

For those opting to apply through Grants.gov, thorough instructions on the application process are available at <http://www.grants.gov>. For questions relating to Grants.gov, please call the Grants.gov Contact Center at 1-800-518-4726.

Begin the application process early, as this will allow time to address any technical difficulties that may arise in advance of the deadline. There will be no exceptions to this application deadline. All applicants utilizing Grants.gov must register with Grants.gov prior to submitting an application. **Registering with Grants.gov is a one-time process; however, it could take as long as two weeks**

to have the registration validated and confirmed. Please begin the registration process immediately to ensure that the process is completed well in advance of the deadline for applications. Until that process is complete, you will not be issued a user password for Grants.gov, which is required for application submission. There are four steps that you must complete before you are able to register: (1) Obtain a Data Universal Numbering System (DUNS) number from Dun & Bradstreet (if your organization does not have one already) by calling 1-866-705-5711; (2) Register with Central Contractor Registry (CCR); (3) Register yourself as an Authorized Organization Representative (AOR); and (4) Be authorized as an AOR by your organization. For more information, go to www.grants.gov. Please note that your CCR registration must be annually renewed. Failure to renew your CCR registration may prohibit submission of a grant application through Grants.gov.

Questions: For questions about this solicitation, contact Cynthia Rafferty, Grants Manager, Public Affairs Section, U.S. Embassy, Kabul, Afghanistan, at: Email: KabulPDProposals@state.gov (*Preferred method of communication*).

V. Review and Selection Process

All applications must include the following:

- 1. Executive Summary:** Provide a summary of the project description (no more than two pages) with reference to the amount and duration of the funding request.
- 2. Narrative:** Outline a plan of action that describes the scope and detail of how the proposed work will be accomplished. Account for all functions or activities identified in the application. Cite factors that might accelerate or decelerate the work and state reasons for taking the proposed approach rather than alternatives. Describe any unusual features of the project, such as design or technological innovations, reductions in cost or time, or extraordinary social and community involvement.

Provide quantitative monthly or quarterly projections of the accomplishments to be achieved for each function or activity in such terms as the number of people to be served and the number of activities accomplished. When accomplishments cannot be quantified by activity or function, list them in chronological order to show the schedule of accomplishments and their target dates. List those organizations, cooperating entities, consultants, or other key individuals who will work on the project, along with a short description of the nature of their effort or contribution.

- 3. Budget:** Applicants must complete and submit a detailed budget spreadsheet and may also submit a budget narrative.
- 4. Standard Form 424:** applicants are required to include the Federal Assistance Application (Standard Form 424), which is available, along with guidance for completing this form, at: http://fa.statebuy.state.gov/content.asp?content_id=20&menu_id=68 or at www.grants.gov.

VI. Application Evaluation Criteria:

Each application submitted under this announcement will be evaluated and rated on the basis of

the following evaluation criteria. The criteria are designed to assess the quality of the proposed project, and to determine the likelihood of its success. The criteria are closely related and are considered as a whole in judging the overall quality of an application. Applications will be reviewed on the basis of their fullness, coherence, clarity, and attention to detail. Points are awarded only to applications that are responsive within the context of this program announcement.

Goals and Objectives – The project is likely to provide maximum impact in achieving the proposed results and the organization. Applicant demonstrates it is able to measure program success against key indicators and provide milestones to indicate progress toward goals. (30 points)

Strengths and Innovation – Applicant clearly describes how its proposal will address the requested program within the proposed time frame and articulates an innovative strategy or plan. The project builds civil society leadership and capacity, and demonstrates sustainable capacity building. (30 points)

Organizational Capacity – The organization has expertise and demonstrates the ability to perform the proposed activities. Where partners are described, the applicant details each partner's respective role and provides curriculum vitas (CVs) for persons responsible for the project and financial administration. Each key person responsible for the proposed project and its financial administration is listed and a CV for these persons is provided. (30 points)

Budget and Budget Justification – The budget and narrative justification are reasonable in relation to the proposed activities and anticipated results and the plan for services is realistic. (10 points)

VI. Award Administration

Award Notices: The grant award or cooperative agreement shall be written, signed, awarded, and administered by the Grants Officer. The Grants Officer is the U.S. government official delegated the authority by the U.S. Department of State Procurement Executive to write, award, and administer grants and cooperative agreements. The assistance award agreement is the authorizing document and it will be provided to the recipient. Organizations whose applications will not be funded will also be notified in writing.

Anticipated Time to Award: Applicants should expect to be notified of the recommended concepts within 90 days after the submission deadline.

Reporting Requirements: All awards issued under this announcement will require both program and financial reports on a frequency specified in the award agreement. The disbursement of funds may be tied to submission of these reports in a timely manner. All other details related to award administration will be specified in award agreement as well.