U.S. Department of State
Bureau of Near Eastern Affairs
Office of Assistance Coordination

Catalog of Federal Domestic Assistance (CFDA) Number: 19.500

Strengthening Women's Contribution to the Formal and Informal Economies in the Middle East and North Africa

Opportunity Number:*SFOP0005852*

Key Information:

Announcement Type:	**New**
Date Opened:	**5/6/2019**
Deadline for Questions:	**5/22/2019**
Application Deadline:	**6/20/2019**
Expected Date of Notification:	**9/30/2019**
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Funding Opportunity Synopsis

The Department of State's Bureau of Near Eastern Affairs Office of Assistance Coordination (NEA/AC) announces a Notice of Funding Opportunity (NOFO) for projects designed to support women's economic empowerment initiatives in the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) region.

The gender gap in the MENA region remains the highest in the world with only 16 percent of working-age women in the region employed (68 percent in the formal sector) compared to 46 percent globally. The majority of women – 84 percent – remain outside the labor force or participate in the informal economy. Women's entrepreneurship has been a key subject for several studies and assistance programs. Conversely, assistance programs have not focused on women employed in the formal sector and those working in the informal sector.. Isolated initiatives have started to emerge in the region among companies, governments, and civil society organizations to mainstream gender in policies and increase women's participation and promotion in the workforce. However, these initiatives fall short of being cross-cutting or providing a comprehensive picture of women's participation in the formal sector. Aside from the percentage of women participating in the workforce and limited data on their earnings in some countries, little is known about women's contribution to the economy at the local and national levels.

To address this gap in knowledge and assist economic stakeholders in identifying opportunities for increasing women's contribution to the economy, a comprehensive analysis of the status of women in the MENA economies is critical. NEA/AC is currently engaging in a quantitative and qualitative information collection and comparable analysis of regional information on women's economic participation in the formal sector, categorized by sector, profession, wage, education level, hours of work, employment tenure, employment level (early, mid, and management), age, marital status, union/association membership, and disability status.

This funding opportunity seeks to build a parallel process by exploring how they are recruited, retained, and promoted in the formal sector and what role they play in the informal economy. For the first component, funds will support the development of recommendations and action plans for economic stakeholders on areas of improvement in policies, regulations, laws and/or practices that address barriers to the recruitment, retention, and promotion of women in the identified sectors of the formal economy. The second component will assess the extent of women's involvement in the informal economy and what measures, policies, and practices control this economy, and how to improve conditions for the women involved.

Applicants must demonstrate the ability to partner with governments, private business, international organizations, international financial institutions, national statistics offices, trade unions, professional women's associations, regional think tanks, universities, and/or civil society organizations within targeted MENA countries to increase the pool of available information and leverage the best data collection expertise. Applicants should also carefully consider how their efforts would complement any ongoing country-specific efforts, to ensure there is no duplication.

This multi-year project directly supports the Department of State's Strategy for Women's Economic Empowerment by addressing legal, regulatory, and policy barriers to women's economic empowerment and promoting gender-inclusive economic development. The project also directly supports NEA/AC's Strategic Framework to promote economic growth through increasing women's participation in economic activities and reducing the gender income and employment gap.

Eligible Countries and Territories:

In this announcement, we seek to support projects with activities in the broader MENA region. Locations of activities and project beneficiaries will be determined through project design and implementation. While no physical activities may take place inside Egypt, Kuwait, Qatar, Syria, Oman, Saudi Arabia, Yemen, or the United Arab Emirates, available data on these countries should be included in the comprehensive index. No activities – including the collection of available data – may be permitted to take place in the West Bank and Gaza. The final countries for programmatic activities included in any award made as a result of this announcement will be determined through negotiations with NEA/AC.

Proposals should detail research and analysis plans for both the countries where in-country activities are allowed and for those where physical activities are not permitted but where available data can be included. As a project intended to benefit MENA actors, the majority of activities should take place in the MENA region.

All applications must be submitted in English. Applicants may submit only one (1) application. Complete information on how applicants can submit proposals for this opportunity can be found in Section VI below.

Background Information about NEA/AC: The U.S. Department of State's Bureau of Near Eastern Affairs, Office of Assistance Coordination (NEA/AC) offers Economic Support Fund (ESF) assistance to groups and individuals striving to bring about positive change in the Middle East-North Africa region. The Assistance Coordination Office works in 20 countries and territories, partnering with governments, civil society organizations (CSOs), community leaders, youth and women activists and private sector groups to advance their efforts. Competitively selected projects aim to foster participatory governance, economic reform, and educational advancement in response to local interest and needs.

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I. FUNDING OPPORTUNITY DESCRIPTION

The Department of State's Bureau of Near Eastern Affairs Office of Assistance Coordination (NEA/AC) invites applicants to submit proposals that will support women's economic empowerment in the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) region. The MENA region is ranked last globally on the overall gender gap index as having the highest gender gap in economic participation and opportunity, according to the Global Gender Gap Report – an annual World Economic Forum publication. MENA countries can close the identified gender gap if specific gender dynamics targeting women's economic participation within each country are identified and addressed by increasing the understanding of how women contribute to the economy.

The objective of this multi-year opportunity is to:

- Increase women's contribution to the economy in the MENA region;
- Empower women to assume a more active role in the economy and society; and
- Increase economic stakeholders' knowledge of gaps, possibilities, and opportunities for increasing women's participation in the workforce and contribution to the economy.

With comparable information across the region, this NOFO seeks proposals for funding of a multi-year project to assist economic stakeholders develop action plans that seek to recruit, retain, and promote qualified women in the formal sector and explore ways to improve measures, policies, and practices that control the informal economy in which women are heavily involved.

Proposals must clearly and succinctly outline a detailed plan for how each activity will be completed and how information will be strategically shared with stakeholders. Applications must demonstrate a strong capacity to work with networks and partners in the MENA region.

A. PROBLEM STATEMENT

The gender gap in labor market participation in the MENA region remains the highest in the world at about 40 percent, according to World Economic Forum estimates. Despite upward trends of female representation in higher education, 75 percent of Arab women are still excluded from the formal labor market, according to the World Bank. Many educated women either do not go on to work or cannot gain access to the opportunities to enter or remain in the workforce. When they do enter the workforce, comparable information that identifies where women are specializing and succeeding is lacking. Furthermore, the region has a 'leaking pipeline' of highly educated women leaving the workforce, especially during their childbearing years. In most MENA countries, women are more likely to be unemployed as their level of education increases, as opposed to men who benefit from advanced degrees.

By not providing sufficient opportunities for women to gain access to the formal sector workforce, MENA countries are missing the economic benefit that having a higher number of women in the workforce could bring. A McKinsey Global Institute (MGI) study found that supporting women's economic advancement could add 12 trillion dollars to the global GDP by 2025 and grow the region's economy by as much as 85 percent. However, the International Labour Organization reports that only 16 percent of working-age women in the region are employed compared to 46 percent across the world. Of that percentage, an average of 38 percent of working women in the MENA region are self-employed and typically earn much less than any other group.

Scholars suggest that the number of people seeking jobs may be ten times the number of officially unemployed, and two-third of the estimated two billion unemployed people globally are women. Women are disproportionally represented in the informal sector, especially in the Middle East and North Africa. Across the MENA region, the informal economy forms a significant part of employment, production, and income. Individuals engaged in the informal economy do not have explicit written contracts of employment and are not subject to labor legislation, social security regulations, or collective agreement benefits. Though increasing in volume and prevalence, little remains known about women's contribution to the formal and informal economies.

Several initiatives have tried to close the gender gap by focusing on leveling the playing field for women entrepreneurs. Other localized initiatives have started to emerge in the region among companies, governments, and civil society organizations to consider gender in workplace policies and promote women's access to employment opportunities and pay parity. Yet, there is little scholarship and few programs targeting women working in the informal sector, private companies, or the public sector and how they are recruited, retained, and promoted.

B. ACHIEVABLE OBJECTIVES

NEA/AC invites applications that focus on promoting women's economic empowerment through data-driven initiatives that seek to recruit, retain, and promote women in MENA in the formal and informal sectors. Funding seeks to support proposals that will result in:

1. Economic stakeholders in the MENA region increasing their knowledge of comparable information specific to women's contribution to the economy and workforce participation in the formal and informal sectors;
2. Economic stakeholders being able to identify barriers and develop action plans to implement effective initiatives to recruit, retain, and promote women in the formal sector; and
3. Women in the MENA region increasing their engagement with economic stakeholders on issues/initiatives related to their contribution to the economy.

C. PROJECT DESIGN

NEA/AC seeks to support projects that will increase women's contribution to the economy in the MENA region through two components.

All proposals must include the following project **activities/deliverables**:

Component One: Formal Sector Action Plans

1. The development of country-specific initiatives that specifically assist economic stakeholders in implementing initiatives that recruit, retain, and promote women in the formal sector.
2. The development of recommendations for private and public sector economic stakeholders policies, regulations, and practices that address barriers and promote recruitment, retention and promotion of women.
3. A compilation of information collected into a regional comparison assessment to identify best practices of gender empowerment.
    a. This must include a barrier analysis conducted using qualitative methods (including interviews and content analysis) on challenges to recruitment, retention, and promotion of women in identified sectors.

Component Two: Informal Sector Action Plans

1. A comprehensive analysis of the status of women in the informal economies through a detailed and triangulated information collection plan, including desk review, public records, private and public sector human resource information, and/or interviews/surveys.
    a. Data should be collected from women in the workforce (at all employment levels), women that are not employed but want to be, and women that have left the workforce.
2. A compilation of information collected into a regional comparison assessment to identify best practices of gender empowerment.
    a. This must include a barrier analysis conducted using qualitative methods on challenges to recruitment, retention and promotion of women in identified sectors.

Successful applications will provide a detailed plan for how activities for each of the two components will be completed, and must demonstrate a strong capacity to work with networks and partnerships of local organizations and institutions of higher education in the MENA region.

Applicants may submit one (1) proposal to conduct activities in ***as many countries as feasible*** and eligible as detailed above. Successful applications will demonstrate the capacity to implement all of the activities described in the proposed countries. As needed, programmatic elements may be broadened or limited to address most precisely the needs of each country context throughout the negotiation process.

As this is an incremental funding project, please provide a complete proposal that includes total project funding of $6,000,000. The proposal narrative and budget should clearly specify the activities, budget breakdown, and timeframes for each funding increment. Additionally, the applicant should ensure that the project is severable after the completion of the first increment. In other words, the proposal should clearly demonstrate the value delivered at the end of the first increment which could stand on its own merits should funding for a second increment be unavailable.

Gender Integration
NEA/AC requires that all activities fully address gender considerations, ensuring that both men and women benefit from support where applicable, and that gender awareness is a built-in

component of project activities. This should be documented through gender analysis in the project narrative that identifies any relevant gender gaps and ways the proposed activities will address those gaps. Proposals should demonstrate how addressing relevant gender gaps will enhance the project's goals and objectives. Applicants who are unfamiliar with integrating gender in foreign assistance programing should view the training video located here. Recipient Gender Integration E-course.

Note: Applicants should read this NOFO in its entirety before writing their proposal, and should **refer to the full Evaluation Criteria provided in Section VII** while drafting all materials.

The following activities and costs are **NOT ALLOWED** under this announcement:

- Exchange activities with other countries or territories;
- Social welfare projects;
- Paying to complete activities begun with other funds;
- Activities that appear partisan or that support individual or party electoral campaigns;
- One-time events, such as stand-alone conferences and one-off round tables;
- Medical and psychological research and clinical studies;
- Projects of a commercial or profit making nature;
- Cultural presentations, cultural research, cultural clubs, or festivals, etc.; and
- Entertainment costs (e.g., receptions, social activities, ceremonies, alcoholic beverages, guided tours).

NOTE: Applications that include any of these activities or costs above may be eliminated at the Technical Eligibility Review stage and will not advance to the Merit Review Panel.

D. DEFINITIONS

The following are **definitions** of activities accepted under this announcement:

Economic Stakeholders:
Stakeholders include governments, employers, workers and their representative organizations, multilateral organizations, civil society organizations, universities, and other representatives that contribute to the development and growth of economies. Labor ministries, employer organizations, and trade unions are also considered key stakeholders.

Formal Sector:
The formal sector encompasses all jobs with regular wages and are recognized as income sources on which income taxes must be paid. Jobs in the formal economy are included in the gross national product (GNP) and gross domestic product (GDP) of a country.

Informal Sector:
The informal sector refers to those workers who are self-employed, work for family, or who work for those who are self-employed. It encompasses all jobs which are not recognized as normal income sources, and on which taxes are not paid. The informal sector could also be interpreted to include jobs that are performed in exchange for something other than money.

II. MEASUREMENT OF RESULTS

Applicants shall provide a logic model to demonstrate how the proposed project (including activities, the project design, and the surrounding context) will achieve the stated objectives. The logic model statements can be generated using the template in Appendix II. Please see Section VI below for more information.

Successful applicants will work with the NEA/AC program and monitoring and evaluation (M&E) teams to create a plan based on the proposed logic model/theory of change to measure qualitative and quantitative indicators as part of the award negotiations process. The successful applicants will be responsible for collecting data against these indicators, which will be monitored throughout the period of performance of the award to gauge necessary modifications to the project's design, and assess the results of the project's success in meeting expected outcomes.

All projects funded as a result of this NOFO will be required to complete a final evaluation of the project at the end of the period of performance with support from the NEA/AC M&E team. Successful applicants will dedicate between 3% and 5% of their total budget to monitoring, evaluation, and learning.

Per 2 CFR 200, recipients are required to have project information available for up to three years after the project closeout for the NEA/AC team to evaluate long-term outcomes.

III. AWARD INFORMATION

Funding Mechanism Type:	**Cooperative Agreement**
Estimated Number of Awards:	**One**
Estimated Total Project Funding:	**$6,000,000**
Estimated Initial Increment Award Ceiling:	**$3,000,000**
Estimated Initial Increment Award Floor:	**$2,000,000**
Cost-Sharing or Matching:	**Required, minimum of 5%**
Estimated Length of Project Period:	**5 years**

Contingent on the availability of funds, NEA/AC intends to provide up to approximately $6,000,000 in Economic Support Funds in total funding for approximately one (1) award over a five year period through this announcement. Funding for this Cooperative Agreement will be provided on an incremental basis subject to the availability of funds and successful performance. NEA/AC reserves the right to change the funding amounts, period of performance, and terms of the resulting Cooperative Agreement as a result of availability of funds, U.S. Government requirements, Recipient performance, and project results. The Recipient will be notified in writing should such changes occur.

The resulting award will utilize an incremental funding mechanism and will only fund the first increment in the initial award. Up to approximately $3,000,000 is available for the first increment of funding (ceiling amount). It is estimated that the first increment will provide funding for component one activities and deliverables for an initial 24 months of the award (anticipated: October 1, 2019 to September 30, 2021).The second increment will provide funding for an additional 36 months (anticipated: October 1, 2021 to September 30, 2024) for a total five-year period of performance. The second increment of funding – which will be for component two activities and deliverables – is contingent upon the availability of funds and will be awarded at NEA/AC's discretion.

The estimated start date for this project is October 1, 2019. NEA/AC reserves the right to award more or less than the estimated project funding, and reserves the right to award funding under this announcement for a period of up to two years after the announcement's close date.

This request for full applications **does not** constitute an award or commitment on the part of the U.S. government to make any awards, **nor does it commit the U.S. government to pay for costs incurred in the preparation and submission of an application.**

There will be no continuation (competing nor non-competing) for this award.

IV. SUBSTANTIAL INVOLVEMENT

NEA/AC shall be involved in the program and management performance of this cooperative agreement through consultation and technical collaboration on specified project activities.

NEA/AC Responsibilities

Examples of NEA/AC responsibilities for a cooperative agreement may include:

- Collaboration in establishing annual project objectives and approval of an annual work plan;
- Collaboration in development of information sharing plans;
- Collaboration in development of materials such as surveys and questionnaires;
- Participation in selection process of data inputs; and/or
- Collaboration/approval of project design.

V. ELIGIBILITY INFORMATION

All applicants will be screened by NEA/AC to determine whether they meet all of the program eligibility requirements detailed below.

NOTE: Applications that do not demonstrate that they meet all of the eligibility requirements in Section A and Section B will not advance past the Technical Eligibility Review stage and may be deemed ineligible for funding under this announcement. Nothing can be added to an application once the competition deadline has passed.

A. ELIGIBLE APPLICANTS

Eligible applicants include:

- U.S. or foreign
    - non-profit organizations;
    - For-profit organizations;
    - Private institutions of higher education;
    - Public or state institutions of higher education;
    - Public international organizations;

NEA/AC strongly encourages applications from organizations headquartered in the Middle East and North Africa region. International non-governmental organizations with principal bases of operations outside the Middle East and North Africa are also encouraged to apply, **but the percentage of total budget actually spent in the region through local partners will be among the elements of evaluation for this competition**.

NEA/AC is committed to an anti-discrimination policy in all of its programs and activities. NEA/AC welcomes applications irrespective of an applicants' race, ethnicity, color, creed, national origin, gender, sexual orientation, or disability. We encourage applications from organizations working with underserved communities, including women, people with disabilities, and youth.

A.1. Prime Applicant

To be considered for funding under this opportunity, applicants SHALL:

- Have demonstrable previous experience working in the MENA region. This should be addressed within the project narrative section of your application.
- Have demonstrable expertise in labor market analysis and in women's empowerment programming.
- Have a demonstrable network including civil society and business organizations in the MENA region. This should be addressed within the project narrative section of your application.
- Meet ALL of the registration requirements listed in *Section B* below.
- Meet any requirements listed as MANDATORY in *Section G, Additional Eligibility Considerations*, below.

A.2. Local Partners

Applicants are strongly encouraged to submit projects that include partnerships with local organizations that would work together on specific programmatic objectives or priorities and that utilize local expertise. **In particular, NEA/AC strongly encourages applicants not based in the MENA region to partner with local organizations**

B. REGISTRATION REQUIREMENTS

To apply for NEA/AC (Federal) funding, organizations, whether based in or outside the U.S., must have a Unique Entity Identifier (UEI) number, currently referred to as a DUNS

number, and an active account with the System for Award Management (SAM). This applies to BOTH prime applicants and any local partners receiving federally funded sub-awards. Applicants who do not meet all registration requirements are NOT eligible for funding under the opportunity.

UEI Number

The UEI number is a nine-digit number established and assigned by Dun and Bradstreet, Inc. (D&B) to uniquely identify business entities.

All applicants must have a UEI number. To obtain a UEI number, please follow the steps below:

Go to http://fedgov.dnb.com/webform/pages/CCRSearch.jsp.

Select the country or territory where your organization is physically located. Complete and submit the form. Organizations will need to provide basic information, including physical and mailing addresses, name and title of the chief executive, primary Standard Industrial Code (SIC), and annual revenue.

For technical difficulties in obtaining this number, please contact D&B at: govt@dnb.com.

System for Award Management (SAM)

SAM is a U.S. government wide registry of vendors doing business with the Federal government and requires annual renewal. The system centralizes information about grant applicants/recipients, and provides a central location for grant applicants/recipients to change organizational information.

Further, applicants must maintain an active account, with current information, while its application is under consideration for funding. To keep an active SAM.gov account, applicants must renew it at least once each year. **If an organizations account expires, the organization cannot submit a grant application until it is renewed.**

To create a new account, please follow the steps below:

Go to http://www.sam.gov.

Log In to complete authentication and create an account. On the My SAM page, select *Entity Registrations* from the sub-navigation menu and select *Register New Entity*.

Organizations must have a UEI number and a CAGE number (US Domestic Organizations) or a NCAGE number (Foreign Organizations), to create an account.

Complete and submit the online form. If the applying organization already has the necessary information on hand (see the SAM Quick Start Guide for Grant Registration), the online form takes approximately one hour to complete, depending upon the size and complexity of the applying entity. Because of the different steps in the process, it might take anywhere from **12 – 15 business days** to complete the process of creating an account with the system.

For help with SAM.gov, please visit their support page at https://www.fsd.gov or contact them at: 866-606-8220 (U.S.) or +1-334-206-7828 (international).

C. ADDITIONAL ELIGIBILITY CONSIDERATIONS

C.1. Cost-Sharing or Matching

Cost-sharing or matching IS an evaluation criteria of this NOFO. Applicants MUST propose cost-share that is – at a minimum – 5% of the total federal requested amount.

All cost share or matching must be included in detail in the line item budget and noted in the budget narrative. Proposals offering potential, yet to be determined cost-share sourcing will NOT be considered to have met this requirement, and will be deemed ineligible. When cost sharing is offered, it is understood and agreed that the applicant must provide the amount of cost sharing as stipulated in its proposal and 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 OMB 2 CFR 200.306 – Cost Sharing and Matching.

VI. APPLICATION AND SUBMISSION INFORMATION

A. APPLICATION DOCUMENTS

All applications must include the application components detailed below. **All application documents must be submitted in English.** **Applicants may submit only one (1) application.** Please refer to Section B below for additional submissions guidance and requirements.

NOTE: Applications that do not include all the required documentation described in Section 1 below will not advance past the Technical Eligibility Review state. Further, applications that exceed the allowable page limits will not be reviewed by the review panel. **Applicants may not add any materials to an application once it has been submitted and the competition deadline has passed.**

A.1. Required Documents

Federal Assistance Application Forms (SF-424, SF424a, and SF-424b):
Applicants must complete each of these forms online to be considered for funding. The SF-424B is only required for those applicants who a) have not registered in SAM.gov or b) have not recertified their registration in SAM.gov since February 2, 2019.

If an organization has an active registration in SAM.gov that was either created or updated **on or after** 2/2/2019, then the applicant does ***NOT*** need to submit the SF-424B because their registration or recertification will have included the necessary information.

Guidance on how to complete the SF-424 and SF424a is provided in Appendix 3. NOTE: In addition to following all guidance outlines below regarding application materials, applicants are strongly encourage to review the Application Evaluation Criteria section of this NOFO closely as they prepare their proposal. The Evaluation Criteria section is the rubric by which each application will be scored.

Project Narrative:

The Project Narrative describes the efforts the applicant will undertake to address the priorities and goals of this announcement. It may **be no longer than 15 pages**. More details on preparing the Project Narrative are provided in Appendix 3. **Applicants are strongly encouraged to review Appendix 3 before preparing their Narrative.**

As this is an incremental funding project, please provide a complete proposal that includes total project funding of $6,000,000. The proposal narrative and budget should clearly specify the activities, budget breakdown, and timeframes for each funding increment. The first funding increment for the project is component one, and the second funding increment is component two, as detailed under the "Project Design" section above. Additionally, the applicant should ensure that the project is severable after the completion of the first increment of funding for component one. In other words, the proposal should clearly demonstrate the value delivered at the end of the first increment and component one, which could stand on its own merits should funding for a second increment to support component two be unavailable.

Budget & Budget Narrative Submission:

Applicants must provide the following three elements as part of their budget submission:

- Summary Budget
- Detailed Line Item Budget
- Budget Narrative

There is no page limit for this section of an application. A sample fillable template can be found in Appendix 1. This template includes three tabs: The first tab includes written guidance on preparing the **Budget Narrative.** Applicants are strongly encouraged to create their Budget Narrative in Word and submit as either a Word Doc or PDF file. Please note that the Budget Narrative should include designations of who is considered Key Personnel for this project. As defined in the Department of State Standard Terms and Conditions for assistance awards, Key Personnel means, "…key professional and supervisory personnel; i.e., the members of the professional staff in a program supervisory position engaged for or assigned to duties under the award." The second tab has the template for the **Summary Budget**. This tab will auto-fill as you complete the Detailed Line Item Budget, which can be found on the third tab. The third tab is where you can fill in the template for the **Detailed Line Item Budget** as stated above. **NOTE: Applicants are strongly encouraged to use the same format as provided in the template, and to submit summary and detailed line item budgets in Excel form, and the Budget Narrative as either a PDF or Word file.** If the applicant does not use the template, the applicant must ensure that their submission includes all elements outlined in the sample. The template, which includes more detailed instructions, can be found in Appendix 1. **Applicants are strongly encouraged to review Appendix 1 before preparing their Budget and Budget Narrative.**

Logic Model:
Applicants shall provide a logic model to demonstrate how the proposed project (including activities, the project design, and the surrounding context) will achieve the stated objectives. The logic model statements can be generated using the template in **Appendix 2**. **NOTE: Applicants are strongly encouraged to use the same format as found in the sample.** If the applicant does not use the template, the applicant must ensure that their submission includes all elements outlined in the sample. This **may be no longer than 3 pages.**

Project Timeline:
Applicants must provide an overall breakdown of the order and timeframe in which all project activities will take place. This item should provide a macro snapshot of what will take place from beginning to end of the project. Applicants must ensure that the timeline of activities/events corresponds with details provided in the Project Narrative and Logic Model. This **may not exceed 2 pages.**

Data Analytics:
Applicants must provide a description of the data analytics methodology to be used in carrying out the project, including projections, estimates and imputations. This **may be no longer than 2 pages.**

Job Descriptions / Biographical Info for Key Personnel Positions:
For each position designated as key personnel for this project, applicants must provide the following:

1. If the position is already filled: Provide brief biographical information summarizing the person's qualifications, as well as a brief description of the roles or responsibilities pertaining to this project.

OR

2. If the person to fill a key position has not yet been hired: Provide a brief summary of the job description, which should include a description of the roles and responsibilities pertaining to this project, as well as a description of qualifications of eligible candidates.

NOTE: If an applicant is proposing sub grant partner(s) as part of their project design, **Key Personnel/Positions of the sub grantee must also be included.** This **may not exceed 5 pages.**

Negotiated Indirect Cost Rate Agreement: **NOTE: This item is required only IF applicable.**
Applicants proposing indirect costs in the Budget greater than the 10% de minimis must provide a copy of their Negotiated Indirect Cost Rate Agreement (NICRA). This item will not be counted toward any page limits.

A.2. Optional Documents

Applicants may submit additional documents for consideration with their application. These documents are not required and there is a 10 page limit for this section of the application. Some examples of additional documents an applicant may wish to submit include but are not limited to letters of agreement/intent, organizational chart, etc.

NOTE: Applicants must adhere to all maximum allowed page counts. Applications that exceed any of the allowable page limits will not advance past the Technical Eligibility Review stage.

B. APPLICATION FORMATTING REQUIREMENTS

The required font is 12-point, Times New Roman. All application documents must be single spaced, with all margins (left, right, top, and bottom) of at least one inch each. Also, applicants should ensure all pages in the application package are numbered consecutively and meet the page limit requirements outlined in Section VI above. **The Standard Forms 424 (SF-424, SF-424a, and SF-424b) are excluded from the page numbering.**

It is strongly recommended that applicants submit grant applications using Microsoft Office. If applicants do not have access to Microsoft Office products, Adobe PDF files may be submitted.

C. SUBMITTING AN APPLICATION

Applicants must submit their application electronically using either Grants.gov OR SAMS Domestic. Both systems require that the applying organization have an account with the system and both require a UEI number and SAM.gov account as detailed in B.3 above. **It is the responsibility of the applicant to ensure they have an active account and will be able to submit its application. Applicants must select one of these systems to submit their application; do not submit an application through both systems.** NEA/AC is not in a position to grant exceptions to these requirements.

The application process is not complete until the applicant receives notification that its application has been validated and forwarded to the granting agency (NEA/AC). Please allow sufficient time for entering the application into these systems. It is the responsibility of the applicant to monitor its application to ensure that it is successfully received and validated.

C.1. Grants.gov

Grants.gov is a single portal for applicants to find and apply to U.S. government funding opportunities. Creating an account with this system is a five-step process: 1) obtain a UEI number; 2) create an account with the System for Award Management; 3) create a profile, including username and password; 4) obtain Authorized Organization Representative (AOR) authorization; and 5) track AOR status. This process can take 10 business days or longer, even if all the steps are completed in a timely manner. **To create an account, go to www.grants.gov and click on the "Register" link, located at the top, right-hand side of the page.**

C.2. SAMS Domestic

SAMS Domestic is a comprehensive grants management system that allows applicants to apply for, manage, and report on the use of U.S. government funds for multiple programs, accessed online at mygrants.service-now.com.

To create an account, go to http://mygrants.service-now.com, and click the "create an account" hyperlink, located above the user name prompt. Users will be directed to a page entitled "User Registration Request;" complete the online form and click the "Submit" button. Users will receive an activation email entitled "Verify Your Grants Account Registration;" click the activation link within the email to receive a username and password.

SAMS Domestic has Quick Tours available to educate users about the system. These documents can be found on the Support tab upon logging into the system.

D. SUBMISSION DATES AND TIMES

Applications must be time stamped before 17:00:00 eastern time (ET) on June 20, 2019. There will be no grace period, and any application not received by the application deadline will be deemed ineligible and will not advance to be reviewed. **Applicants are encouraged to submit an application far enough in advance of the deadline so it can alert NEA/AC (nea-grants@state.gov) of any technical difficulties and allow sufficient time to resolve difficulties before the deadline.** Although NEA/AC will work with applicants to resolve technical issues, it is not in a position to grant exceptions to the submission requirements outlined in this announcement.

VII. FUNDING LIMITATIONS, RESTRICTIONS, AND OTHER CONSIDERATIONS

1. Awards to Commercial Firms or For-Profit Organizations

The Department of State prohibits profit under its assistance awards to commercial organizations. No funds will be paid as profit to any recipient that is a commercial organization. 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 Part 31. Program income earned by the recipient may be:

- added to the total of the amount of this award, including the required cost sharing or matching, and use it to further eligible project objectives;
- used to meet the Recipient's cost sharing or matching requirement;
- OR deducted from the total project or program allowable cost in determining the net allowable costs on which the federal share of costs is based.

2. Audit Requirements

Domestic and foreign organizations that expend $750,000 or more in a fiscal year in federal assistance must perform an independent, recipient-contracted Single Audit or Program Specific Audit. (***Program-specific Audit*** means an audit of one Federal award program. ***Single Audit*** means an audit which includes both the entity's financial statements and the Federal Awards to be conducted in accordance with Generally Accepted Government Auditing Standards (GAGAS). The audits must be independently and professionally executed in accordance with GAGAS either prescribed by a government's Supreme Audit Institution with auditing standards approved by the Comptroller General of the United States, or the host country's laws or adopted by the host country's public accountants or associations of public accountants, together with generally accepted international auditing standards. However, foreign entity audits consistent with International Standards for Auditing or other auditing standards are acceptable with the Grants Officer's approval. More information can be found at http://gao.gov/assets/590/587281.pdf

For sub-non-Federal entities expending $750,000 or more in Department of State award funding during their fiscal year, Department of State standard audit provisions require that Prime non-Federal entities certify that audits of sub-non-Federal entities are performed annually and according to the standards described above. The cost of audits required under this policy may be charged either as an allowable direct cost to the award, OR included in the organizations established indirect costs in the award's detailed budget.

3. Compliance with Applicable Federal Funding Regulations and DOS Terms and Conditions

Payment of funds awarded under this Notice of Funding Opportunity will not be disbursed until the DOS has been assured that the Recipient's financial management system will provide effective control over and accountability for all Federal funds in accordance with 2 CFR 200 and 2 CFR 600 as applicable. Awards issued under this NOFO are subject to the Department of State Standard Terms and Conditions and 2 CFR 200 and 2 CFR 600 as applicable.

VIII. APPLICATION REVIEW AND SELECTION PROCESS

A. APPLICATION EVALUATION CRITERIA

Achievable Objectives (10 points)

Each of the project objectives listed above (in Section I) are clearly addressed.

- Impact and Effectiveness: The applicant describes the project's potential contribution to solving the problem addressed in the problem statement and achieving results.
- Timeframe: The applicant describes realistic results to be accomplished within the timeframe of the proposed award.
- Beneficiaries: The applicant clearly identifies the anticipated beneficiaries and explains how the project's objectives will positively affect them.
- Milestones: The applicant provides realistic milestones to indicate progress toward goals and objectives as described in the program announcement.

Project Design (40 points)

The applicant clearly describes how each proposed project activity will address each of the objectives outlined in the requested priority area above (Section I).

- Responsiveness to NOFO: Explain how the proposed activities respond to the objectives listed in the NOFO.
- Rationale: To justify how the proposed activities will achieve the above objectives in this context.
- Project Management: Clear description of how the project will be managed in terms of initiation, planning, implementation, and closing.
- Partnerships and Buy-ins: The applicant addresses how the project will engage or obtain support from relevant stakeholders and identifies local partners.
- Feasibility: The applicant proposes activities that are feasible, and are also practical, and/or experiential in nature to encourage innovation.

- Duplication: 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.
- Division of Labor: The application describes the division of labor among the applicant and any partners.
- Gender Considerations: The applicant includes gender analysis in the project narrative that identifies relevant gender gaps and ways the proposed activities will address those gaps. Proposals should demonstrate how addressing relevant gender gaps will enhance the program's goals and objectives and how the project will benefit both men and women.
- Program Logic: Is it theoretically sound? Do all elements of the logic model fit together showing plausible pathways to achieving project outcomes? Have all the key assumptions been identified and their potential influences described? Are the risks to implementation (external factors) fully accounted for and described?

Data Analytics (10 points)

- The applicant clearly describes the data analytics methodology to be used in carrying out the project, including projections, estimates, and imputations.
- The applicant demonstrates expertise in the informal economies, and the methods to be used in conducting the informal sector assessment.

Organizational Capacity (20 points)

- The applicant demonstrates experience (e.g., has previously worked and/or has established contacts/partners) in the proposed country/territory/region.
- The applicant demonstrates an institutional record of successful programs in the content area proposed (e.g. women's economic empowerment).
- The applicant demonstrates capacity for responsible fiscal management of donor funding (e.g., successful management of a previous sub-award or grant).
- The applicant demonstrates the ability to meet monitoring and evaluation requirements.
- The applicant has adequate staffing and demonstrates the capacity to manage the proposed project.
- The applicant includes letters of intent/commitment/agreement from proposed partners.
- The applicant ensures standardization of implementation processes among all local partners.

Staff and Position Specifications (15 points)

- Pre-identified key staff members, including volunteers, demonstrate experience working in the country/territory/region proposed and with participants from that area (e.g., language skills, cultural understanding).
- A description of the roles of each person or position on the project, whether staff, partner, consultant, or volunteer demonstrates that the project will be adequately but efficiently staffed, avoiding redundancy or duplication of effort.
- A job description, including hiring criteria, is provided for each open key position.
- Applicant and/or partner staff have relevant language competencies.

Budget & Budget Narrative (Acceptable or Not Acceptable)

- The costs proposed are reasonable in relation to the proposed activities and anticipated results, which are clearly explained in the budget narrative.
- The budget provides details of calculations, including estimation methods, quantities, unit costs, and other similar quantitative detail sufficient for the calculation to be duplicated.
- The preponderance of the budget is spent on supporting the project participants/activities in country.
- The budget includes costs dedicated to management, monitoring, and evaluation, as well as an explanation of how those additional sources will be used.
- Adequate travel costs are proposed.
- Additional sources (cost-share or matching) for project funding are proposed, as well as an explanation of how those additional sources will be used.
- The budget accounts for monitoring and evaluation costs.

Evaluation (5 points)

- The applicant explains how monitoring and evaluation activities will be carried out throughout the award's period of performance and who will be responsible for them.
- The applicant includes a detailed scope for a final evaluation of the project at the completion of the award.
- The applicant dedicates between three and five percent (3-5%) of the total project budget to monitoring, evaluation, and learning.

B. REVIEW AND SELECTION PROCESS

NEA/AC 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 V and have submitted all required documents outlined in Section VI. 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.

NEA/AC reserves the right to have all applications deemed to be eligible undergo a Subject Matter Expert (SME) review prior to the Merit Review Panel. Applications that do not pass SME review will not proceed to the Merit Review Panel.

All applications that proceed to the Merit Review Panel will be evaluated by U.S. government and non-governmental subject matter and/or country-specific experts and will be rated on a 100-point scale. Point values for individual elements of the application are presented in Section VII, Part A. Panel Reviewers' ratings, and any resulting recommendations, are advisory.

Final award decisions will be influenced by whether the application meets NEA/AC's programmatic goals and objectives, how it supports the Department's overarching foreign policy priorities, and the geographic distribution of the top-ranking applications.

IX. ADMINSTRATION INFORMATION

A. AWARD NOTICES

Applicants who do not advance beyond the Technical Eligibility Review stage will be notified 30 business days after the closing of the announcement. The authorized representative and program point of contact listed on the SF-424 will receive the notification via email. If an applicant does not receive such a notification, their submission was put forward for review.

NEA/AC expects to notify applicants who proceeded past the Technical Eligibility Review stage about the status of their application by September 30, 2019. Final awards cannot be made until funds have been appropriated by Congress, allocated and committed through internal bureau procedures. Successful applicants will receive a Federal Assistance Award (FAA) from the bureau's Grants Office. The FAA and the original proposal with subsequent modifications (if applicable) shall be the only binding authorizing document between the recipient and the U.S. Government. The FAA will be signed by an authorized Grants Officer, and transmitted to the recipient's responsible officer identified in the application. NEA/AC reserves the right to award funding to applicants under this announcement for a period of up to two years after the announcement's close date.

B. REPORTING REQUIREMENTS

Reporting is critical to effective program management and oversight. Reports are required as a means of evaluating the recipient's progress and utilization of resources. They are divided between a performance progress report and a financial status report.

Recipients will, at a minimum, be required to submit Quarterly Performance Reports (QPR) and a Quarterly Financial Report (QFR). The QPRs will compare actual to planned performance and indicates the progress made in accomplishing each assistance award tasks/goals noted in the grant agreement and will contain analysis and summary of findings, both quantitative and qualitative, for key indicators. The QFRs provide a means of monitoring expenditures and comparing costs incurred with progress.

Recipients must report ***immediately*** when a project faces unplanned delays in implementation, fails to meet project targets or milestones, or costs increase. Any changes or revisions to the approved budget require prior approval from the NEA/AC Grants Officer. Recipients are required to report project and beneficiary achievements on a quarterly basis (or provide written confirmation that there is no related news for the given quarter) beginning with second quarter's project report.

C. TRAVEL NOTIFICATIONS

Selected applicants will be required to provide prior notification of all international travel as a requirement of their agreement. This includes travel which is already included in the approved budget and Scope of Work. The purpose of this notification is to enable NEA/AC to inform the relevant U.S. Embassy or post of the recipient's intent to travel. The recipient must notify the Grants Officer at least three (3) business days prior to any travel. The Grants Officer reserves the right to advise against specific travel arrangements for security-related reasons.

D. APPLICANT VETTING AS A CONDITION OF AWARD

Applicants proposing activities in Lebanon are advised that successful passing of vetting to evaluate the risk that funds may benefit terrorists or their supporters is a condition of award. Applicants may be asked to submit information required by DS Form 4184, Risk Analysis Information about their company and its principal personnel. Vetting information is also required for all sub-award performance on assistance awards identified by the Grants Officer, information may be submitted on the secure web portal at https://ramportal.state.gov, via Email to RAM@state.gov, or hardcopy to the Grants Officer. Questions on the form may be emailed to RAM@state.gov. Failure to submit information when requested, or failure to pass vetting, may be grounds for rejecting an application for award.

E. SPECIAL PROVISION FOR PERFORMANCE IN A DESIGNATED COMBAT AREA (SPOT) REQUIREMENTS

Applicants proposing activities in **Iraq** are required to adhere to the following:

All recipient personnel deploying to an area of combat operations, as designated by the Secretary of Defense under federal assistance over $150,000 or performance over 30 days must register in the Department of Defense maintained Synchronized Pre-deployment and Operational Tracker (SPOT) system. Recipients of federal assistance awards shall register in SPOT before deployment, or if already in the designated operational area, register upon becoming an employee under the assistance award and maintain current data in SPOT. Information on how to register in SPOT is available from your Grants Officer or Grants Officer Representative. Recipients utilizing personnel who are not performing private security functions must account for personnel within the SPOT system anonymously through the use of the aggregate count functionality. This includes U.S. Citizens, Third Country Nationals (TCN), and Locally-hired Iraqi personnel except as noted in the following paragraph.

Recipients utilizing personnel who are performing a private security function; are performing duties as a translator or interpreter; require access to U.S. facilities, services, or support; or desire consideration for refugee or special immigrant status under the Refugee Crisis in Iraq Act of 2007 (subtitle C of title XII of Public Law 110–181 must be entered into SPOT individually with all required personal information. If a locally-hired Iraqi falls into one of these categories, the recipient must enter all of the required identification data into SPOT.
When the Recipient is ready to enter U.S. Citizens, Third Country Nationals (TCN), and/or locally-hired individuals using the Aggregate Count method, the Recipient will notify the Grants Officer who will contact the Department SPOT Program Manager (A/LM/AQM) to obtain the "Aggregate Count" template. The Recipient will complete the "Aggregate Count" template and return to the SPOT Program Manager who will ensure that aggregate counts are loaded into SPOT.

The Recipient's SPOT Administrator is responsible for updating the aggregate locally hired national count on a quarterly basis by providing updated information via the "Aggregate Count" template to the GO/GOR for each award who will forward to the Department SPOT Program Manager for SPOT entry.

Recipient performance may require the use of armed private security personnel. To the extent that such private security contractors (PSCs) are required, recipients are required to ensure they adhere to Chief of Mission (COM) policies and procedures regarding the operation, oversight, and accountability of PSCs.

Recipient performance may require the use of armed private security personnel. To the extent that such private security contractors (PSCs) are required, recipients are required to ensure they adhere to Chief of Mission (COM) policies and procedures regarding the operation, oversight, and accountability of PSCs.

As specific COM policies and procedures may differ in scope and applicability, recipients of federal assistance awards are advised to review post policies and procedures carefully in this regard and direct any questions to the Embassy Regional Security Office (RSO) via the Grants Officer Representative (GOR). Any exclusion to these policies must be granted by the COM via the RSO. COM policies and procedures may be obtained from the RSO via the GOR. Recipients of federal assistance awards are also advised that these policies and procedures may be amended from time to time at the post in response to changing circumstances.

Recipients of federal assistance awards are advised that adherence to these policies and procedures are considered to be a material requirement of their award. Recipients of federal assistance awards are reminded that only the Grants Officer has the authority to modify the Notice of Award. Recipients shall proceed with any security guidance provided by the RSO, but shall advise the Grants Officer and the GOR of the guidance received and any potential cost or schedule impact.

F. BRANDING AND MARKING REQUIREMENTS FOR GRANTEES

Grantees awarded under this announcement will be required to make all materials produced under the award with the standard U.S. flag in a size and prominence equal to (or greater than) any other logo or identity. Materials are defined as but not limited to: training materials, materials for recipients, or materials to communicate or promote with foreign audiences a program, event, project, or some other activity under this award, including but not limited to invitations to events, press materials, event backdrops, podium signs, etc. In addition, sub-recipients or sub-awardees are subject to the marking requirements and the grantee shall include a provision in the sub-recipient or sub-awardee's agreement indicating that the standard, rectangular U.S. flag is a requirement. Exceptions to this requirement can be discussed with NEA/AC when negotiating an award.

G. UEI NUMBER REQUIREMENT FOR SUB AWARDEES

All sub-awardees are required to have a UEI number. For information on obtaining a UEI number, please see Part III, Section B.1. **Proposed sub-awardees are not required to have a UEI number prior to the submission of an application but must have one prior to a sub-award being issued.**

H. SUB AWARDEE REPORTING REQUIREMENT

Grantees awarded under this announcement will be required to report all sub-awardees receiving funds of $25,000 or more to http://www.fsrs.gov. More information about this requirement can be found at this site.

X. AGENCY CONTACTS

For questions regarding this funding opportunity including: completing an application, financial and grants management issues, or technical matters, contact:

Grants Officer
Shane Stryzinski
nea-grants@state.gov

All questions must be submitted in writing to nea-grants@state.gov by May 22, 2019 at 17:00:00 eastern time (ET). NEA/AC will create a document of the submitted questions along with the answers and post it on SAMS Domestic and Grants.gov. Questions submitted after the deadline will not be addressed.

For questions regarding creating an account with or using grants.gov to submit an application, contact the grants.gov Contact Center. The Contact Center is available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, excluding Federal holidays.

Grants.gov Contact Center
(800) 518-4726
support@Grants.gov

For questions regarding creating an account or using SAMS Domestic to submit an application, contact the ILMS Help Desk. The Help Desk is available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, excluding Federal holidays. The ILMS Help Desk utilizes a user-facing ticketing interface that allows users to submit and monitor their SAMS Domestic tickets. The ILMS Self Service Portal can be accessed by going to https://afsitsm.service-now.com/ilms/home.

ILMS Help Desk
(888) 313-ILMS (4567)
ILMS Self Service Portal

XI. DISCLAIMER

The terms and conditions published in this NOFO are binding and may not be modified by any Bureau representative. Explanatory information provided by the bureau that contradicts public language will not be binding. Issuance of the NOFO does not constitute an award commitment on the part of the U.S. government. The Bureau reserves the right to reduce, revise, or increase proposal budgets in accordance with the needs of the program and the availability of funds. Awards made will be subject to periodic reporting and evaluation requirements listed in this NOFO.