

**U.S. Department of State
Bureau of Near Eastern Affairs**

Office of the U.S.-Middle East Partnership Initiative
Catalog of Federal Domestic Assistance (CFDA) Number: **19.500**

**Supporting Civic Engagement and National Dialogue
through Independent Palestinian Media**

Opportunity Number: *MEPI-MEPICA-14-019*
Competition ID: *MEPI-MEPICA-14-019-049427*
Announcement Type: **New**

Key Information:

Application Deadline:	17:00 ET on June 2, 2014
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Date Opened	May 9, 2014
Electronic Link for Full Announcement (MEPI Website):	mepi.state.gov

Funding Opportunity Synopsis:

Project Synopsis:

The Office of the U.S.-Middle East Partnership Initiative (MEPI) seeks proposals to: encourage greater civic engagement; create a culture of tolerance and respect for diversity; and, promote a vibrant and inclusive national dialogue around issues important to Palestinian society, particularly youth, through the strengthening of free and independent media. A strong, independent media and effective and inclusive political processes go hand in hand and are critical for any society. This call is consistent with the United States' goal of supporting participatory societies where citizens play active roles in making decisions that affect their lives and in holding their governments accountable.

Eligible Countries and Territories:

Through this announcement, we seek to support projects focused on media in Palestinian society.

Please note: Applications that focus on activities outside of the Palestinian territories will not be considered.

All applications must be submitted in English. Applicants may submit only one application each.

Background Information about MEPI:

The U.S.-Middle East Partnership Initiative (MEPI) program offers assistance, training, and support to groups and individuals striving to create positive change in the Middle East and North Africa (MENA). MEPI works in 18 countries and territories, partnering with civil society organizations (CSOs), community leaders, youth and women activists, and private sector groups to advance reform efforts. MEPI's approach is bottom-up and grassroots, responding directly to local interests and needs.

MEPI has been active in the MENA region since 2002, contributing over \$975 million to more than 1,100 grant projects administered by our offices in Washington, D.C. and the region. More information about MEPI can be found at: mepi.state.gov.

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APPENDICES (ENCLOSED WITH RFA)

**GrantSolutions.gov includes downloadable forms and templates listed by title with announcement.*

**Grants.gov will view downloadable forms and templates listed by Appendix number.*

APPENDIX 1—MEPI Application Cover Sheet

APPENDIX 2—Applicant Organization Information

APPENDIX 3—Budget Narrative Sample Template

APPENDIX 4—Results Monitoring Plan Template

APPENDIX 5—Additional Submission Information

APPENDIX 6—Pre-submission Checklist

I. FUNDING OPPORTUNITY DESCRIPTION

The Office of the U.S.-Middle East Partnership Initiative (MEPI) seeks proposals to encourage greater civic engagement, create a culture of tolerance and respect for diversity, and promote a vibrant and inclusive national dialogue around issues important to Palestinian society, particularly youth, through the strengthening of free and independent media. A strong, independent media and effective and inclusive political processes go hand in hand and are critical for any society. This call is consistent with the United States' goal of supporting participatory societies where citizens play active roles in making decisions that affect their lives and in holding their governments accountable.

Proposed programming should focus on increasing opportunities for building bridges between Palestinians with different points of view and from different geographic, religious and socio-economic backgrounds. Applicant organizations are strongly encouraged to work through local partners, and equipment costs should not comprise a majority of the project's budget. MEPI invites creative and detailed proposals which address these goals in cost-effective and high-impact ways. Proposals should also consider the multifaceted aspects of Palestinian society that make inclusive and meaningful political and social participation challenging.

Illustrative activities that could be proposed include, but are not limited to:

- Using innovative technology and digital media to: encourage and facilitate civic participation; empower grassroots activists; expand intra-Palestinian dialogue around issues of social importance; expand political pluralism; or build the capacity of existing media contributors to use such technology.
- Utilizing social entrepreneurship initiatives, business incubators, and/or start-up competitions to create an indigenous Palestinian online social platform, or enhance an existing one. The online platform could support local digital news gathering, international news curating, civic or citizen journalism, social media, or discussion forums that facilitate dialogue and connect Palestinians with diverse views. In addition, the online platform should have a strong emphasis on responsible social media use, journalistic integrity, and rigorous fact-checking.
- Creating and utilizing unique content and interactive programming that covers civic and socio-economic issues, including tolerance and respect for diversity. Programming should encourage citizens toward greater involvement in their society and government (may include televised town hall meetings, roundtable discussions, etc.).
- Refining, distributing, and calibrating local news coverage via online and traditional media so that it accurately reports facts, serves the public good and creates fora for discussion on political processes, including election and candidate coverage, parliamentary proceedings, etc.. This process should include a mechanism that enables fact-checking of news stories and other information disseminated over social media, utilizing professional journalistic tradecraft, crowd-sourcing, and moderated discussion.
- Developing a mechanism for data journalism (i.e., the use of software applications to crowd-source data on an issue) to enable media to create platforms that use crowd-sourced data to heighten public awareness of social issues.

The following activities and costs are **not covered** under this announcement:

- Social welfare projects;

- Completion of activities begun with other funds;
- Activities that appear partisan or that support individual or party electoral campaigns;
- Academic or analytical research (if not necessary as part of a larger project);
- Exchange programs with other countries or territories;
- 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).

II. AWARD INFORMATION

Funding Mechanism Type:	Cooperative Agreement
Estimated Number of Awards:	1-3 awards
Estimated Total Program Funding:	\$2,500,000
Estimated Award Ceiling:	\$2,500,000
Estimated Award Floor:	\$750,000
Cost-Sharing or Matching:	Encouraged but not required (<i>See Section III C.2</i>)
Length of Project Period:	18-36 months

Based on the availability of funds, approximately \$2,500,000 in Economic Support Funds will be awarded for up to three grants through this announcement. If selected to receive a grant, an applicant will be awarded funds for 18-36 months, depending on the activities proposed. MEPI reserves the right to award more or less than the estimated program 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.

Non-Competing Continuation

Continuation grants funded under these awards, beyond the initial budget period, will be contingent upon the availability of funds; grantee's progress in meeting grant requirements, including timely submission of required reports and compliance with all terms and conditions of the award; timely submission of a request for additional funding; and a determination that continued funding would be in the best interest of the Department of State.

III. ELIGIBILITY INFORMATION

All applications will be screened by the U.S.-Middle East Partnership Initiative to determine whether it meets 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 be reviewed. Nothing can be added to an application once it has been submitted and the competition deadline has passed.

A. ELIGIBLE APPLICANTS

Eligible applicants include registered 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; and small businesses with function and regional experience in the area of media in the Palestinian territories. **MEPI strongly encourages applications from civil society 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. **All applicants must be legally registered organizations prior to applying to this announcement.**

The U.S.-Middle East Partnership Initiative is committed to an anti-discrimination policy in all of its programs and activities. MEPI 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.

B. ELIGIBILITY REQUIREMENTS

To receive MEPI (Federal) funding organizations, whether based in or outside the U.S., must have a Dun and Bradstreet Data Universal Number (DUNS) and an active registration with the System for Award Management.

B.1 Dun and Bradstreet Data Universal Number System Registration

The DUNS number is a nine-digit number established and assigned by Dun and Bradstreet, Inc. to uniquely identify business entities.

All applicants must have a Data Universal Number System (DUNS) number. To register, please follow the steps below:

1. Go to <http://fedgov.dnb.com/webform/pages/CCRSearch.jsp>.
2. 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.
3. Typically, an organization can complete this registration in **one day** and have a DUNS number emailed to them. For technical difficulties in obtaining this number, please contact Dun & Bradstreet at: govt@dnb.com.

B.2 System for Award Management Registration

The System for Award Management, formerly managed by the Central Contractor Registration (CCR), is a U.S.-government wide registry for 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. **More information about SAM.gov and useful guides for setting-up a new registration, updating an existing registration, or renewing an expired registration can be found at:** <http://fa.statebuy.state.gov>. Foreign-based applicants are strongly encouraged to review these guides when registering with SAM.gov.

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

To register, please follow the steps below:

1. Go to <http://www.sam.gov>.
2. Select *Create User Account*, and then select *Create an Account* on the left-hand side of the screen under *Individual Account Details*. Organizations must have a Data Universal Numbering System (DUNS) number to begin the registration process.
3. Complete and submit the online registration form. If the applying organization already has the necessary information on hand (see the [SAM User Guide](#)), the online registration 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 can take anywhere from **three to fourteen days** to register with the system.

For help with SAM.gov, please visit their support page at: <https://www.fsd.gov> or contact them at: 001-334-206-7828.

B.3 Sustainability Plan

Applicants must outline a plan to sustain the proposed project beyond the initial award period. The plan should address each of the areas list below:

- Discuss how sustainability will be integrated into project planning and implementation from the beginning.
- Describe how project activities and results will create sustainable impact through local ownership.
- Identify the results and outcomes that can be realistically sustained after MEPI funding ends.
- Present a plan to secure the resources needed to sustain the aforementioned results after MEPI funding ends.
- Identify potential partners that will play a role in sustaining the project past the scheduled end date and explain the role they will play.

The quality and feasibility of the proposed sustainability plan will be among the elements on which applications are evaluated (See [Part V, Section A](#) for more information).

The plan should be attached as a separate document and may not exceed two pages.

B.4 Results Monitoring Plan

Applicants must submit a Results Monitoring Plan (RMP) that will describe the measures proposed by the applicant to capture and demonstrate progress towards achieving the objectives of the proposed project.

All RMPs should include one or more of the following objective(s), based on the proposed project:

- ***A civic culture exists that supports democratic values and the active participation of all individuals in social and political life***

- *Sub-objective:* Civic involvement increases
- *Sub-objective:* Citizen understanding of civic rights and responsibilities increases

- ***Media defends the public interest***
 - *Sub-objective:* Media holds public officials accountable
 - *Sub-objective:* Sustainable, independent media offer a diversity of views
 - *Sub-objective:* Journalists have professional skills

The RMP should include the following elements:

- *Realistic project objectives:* What results are achievable during the period of the grant?
- *Qualitative indicators:* How and what will you measure to show the project's results based on outcomes (impact) as well as outputs (raw numbers)?
- *Data collection and analysis:* How will you collect and present indicator data and analysis to show progress toward the project objectives?
- *Monitoring and reporting:* How will you monitor and assess results during the implementation of the project to adapt to changes on the ground and maintain progress?

The quality and feasibility of the proposed RMP will be among the elements on which applications are evaluated (See [Part V, Section A](#) for more information).

The plan should be attached as a separate document and may not exceed three pages. A sample template can be found in Appendix 4 and a fill-able template is available for download online. **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.

C. ADDITIONAL ELIGIBILITY CONSIDERATIONS

C.1 Partners or Coalitions

Applicants are strongly encouraged to submit projects that include partnerships or coalitions with local organizations, regional organizations, and/or local individuals that would work together on specific programmatic objectives or priorities and would share information and expertise with one another. **In particular, MEPI strongly encourages applicants not based in the Middle East and North Africa to partner with local organizations.** The inclusion of a partnership or coalition will be among the elements on which applications are evaluated (See [Part V, Section A](#) for more information).

A partnership or coalition is defined as a negotiated arrangement among organizations or individuals that defines substantive, collaborative roles for each of the partners in planning and implementing a project. Coalitions could include non-governmental organizations, private sector entities, governmental entities, academic institutions, and non-profit organizations.

If proposing partners or coalitions, applicants should provide the following in their submission:

- Description of how the partnership arrangement advances the objectives of the project;
- Description of how the partner(s) has been involved in the planning of the project;
- Explanation of the roles and responsibilities of the partner(s) in the implementation of the project, project evaluation, and project sustainability;
- Explanation of the partner(s) experience and expertise in the proposed content area(s);

- Explanation of how the applying organization will provide oversight and support to the partner(s); and
- Provide a letter of intent or letter of agreement from the prospective partner(s) to collaborate with the applying organization on the proposed project.

In addition, applicants who propose working with sub-grant(s) must describe in both the program and budget narratives how the sub-grant(s) will be managed, monitored, and evaluated to ensure compliance with project objectives and Federal regulations. **Capacity building and technical support to foreign-based sub-grantees is strongly encouraged. Staff or consultant costs should be proposed in the budget narrative for the management, monitoring, and evaluation of sub-grantee(s).**

C.2 Cost-Sharing or Matching

Applicants are encouraged to provide cost-sharing (or matching) from additional sources in support of their proposed project. Applicants should clearly explain all additional sources of project funding and how the funds will be used. **If additional funding resources are not proposed, applicants should explain why not.** The inclusion of cost-sharing will be among the elements on which applications are evaluated (See [Part V, Section A](#) for more information).

IV. 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 application each.** Please refer to [Section B](#) below for additional submissions guidance and requirements (e.g., font size, page margins).

NOTE: Applications that do not include all the required documentation described in [Section A.1](#) below will not be reviewed. Further, if an application exceeds the allowable page limits, the additional pages, over the page limit, 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

MEPI Application Coversheet:

The Cover Sheet summarizes details about the applying organization and its application, and includes space for a mandatory project synopsis of **no more than one-page**. A sample and fill-able template can be found online with the announcement (if using Grants.gov in Appendix 1).

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 the submission includes all elements outlined in the sample.

Applicant Organizational Information:

The Applicant Organizational Information document provides details about the type of organization that is applying, its organizational structure and policies, and the applicant's ability to manage Federal funds. A sample and fill-able template is available online with the announcement (if using Grants.gov 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.

Federal Assistance Application Forms (SF-424, SF-424a, and SF424b):

Applicants must complete all three forms online to be considered for funding. **Guidance on how to complete the SF-424 and SF-424a is provided online with the announcement** (if using Grants.gov in Appendix 5).

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 10 pages**. **If the narrative exceeds the page limit, the extra pages will be removed from the application package.** More details on preparing the Project Narrative are provided online with the announcement (if using Grants.gov in Appendix 5). **Applicants are strongly encouraged to review Appendix 5 before preparing their Narrative.**

Budget Narrative:

The Budget Narrative provides detail about both the Federal request and the non-Federal match. There is **no page limit** for this section of an application. A sample and fill-able template can be found online with the announcement (if using Grants.gov in Appendix 3). **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. More details on preparing the Budget Narrative are provided on line with the announcement (if using Grants.gov in Appendix 5). **Applicants are strongly encouraged to review Budget Narrative instructions in GrantSolutions.gov before preparing their Narrative** (if using Grants.gov in Appendix 5).

Negotiated Indirect Cost Rate Agreement (if applicable):

Applicants proposing indirect costs in the Budget Narrative must provide a copy of their Negotiated Indirect Cost Rate Agreement (NICRA).

Sustainability Plan:

The sustainability plan outlines how the proposed project will be sustained beyond the initial award period. More information about preparing this Plan can be found in [Part III, Section B.3](#). Sustainability Plans should be attached as separate document and may not exceed **two pages**.

Results Monitoring Plan:

A Results Monitoring Plan (RMP) describes the measures proposed by an applicant to capture and demonstrate progress towards achieving the objectives of the proposed project. A sample and fill-able template can be found online with the announcement (if using Grants.gov in Appendix 4). **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. **More information about preparing this Plan can be found in [Part III, Section B.4](#).** RMPs should be attached as a separate document and may not exceed **three pages**.

A.2 *Optional Documents*

Applicants may submit additional documents for consideration with their application. These documents are not required and **may not exceed 10 pages**. **If these documents exceed the page**

limit, the extra pages will be removed from the application package. Below are examples of some additional documents an applicant may wish to submit.

- **Biographical Sketch or Job Descriptions for key personnel and partners:** This information may be included within the project narrative or as a separate document included in the optional documents of the application. If these items are not included, applicants will be scored lower under *Staff and Position Specifications* review criteria outlined in [Part V, Section A](#).
- **Letters of Agreement or Letters of Intent** from proposed partners
- **Organizational Chart** outlining clear lines of responsibility and authority in the applicant organization.
- **Work Plans, Project Timeline, and/or Calendar of Activities:** A work plan is a detailed list of proposed activities, milestones, and approximate dates. Applicants may choose to include a work plan, project timeline, and/or calendar of proposed activities.
- **Pre-Submission Checklist** can be found online with the announcement. This Checklist ensures that an applicant has accurately documented the eligibility requirements and included all major components of the application.

A.3 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 A.1](#) and [A.2](#) above. **The Standard Forms 424 (SF-424, SF-424a, and SF-424b), MEPI Application Coversheet, and Applicant Organization Information 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. In addition, applicants are strongly encouraged to include a Table of Contents with their submission.

Adhering to the standards outlined above will help to ensure the accurate submission of the document. Failure to comply with these requirements may affect the successful transmission and consideration of an application. **Note: If an application exceeds the allowable page limits, the additional pages, over the page limit, will not be reviewed.**

B. SUBMITTING AN APPLICATION

Applicants must submit an application electronically using either [GrantSolutions.gov](#) OR [Grants.gov](#) (**do not submit an application thru both systems**). **GrantSolutions.gov is highly recommended for submission of all applications and our preferred choice for receiving applications.** Both systems require registration by the applying organization and require a DUNS number and SAM.gov registration detailed in [Part III](#) above. **NOTE: The Grants.gov registration process can take 10 business days or longer, even if all the registration steps are completed in a timely manner.** **It is the responsibility of the applicant to ensure it has an active registration and will be able to submit its application.** MEPI 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 (MEPI). 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.

B.1 GrantSolutions.gov

GrantSolutions.gov 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 www.grantsolutions.gov. **GrantSolutions.gov is highly recommended for submission of all applications and our preferred choice for receiving applications.**

To register, go to www.grantsolutions.gov, and select the orange “Login to GrantSolutions” button, located on the right-hand side of the site. Select the “Register” button under the “First Time Users” header. Organizations will be directed to a page entitled “Welcome to the GrantSolutions New Organization Registration Page;” select the link entitled “**Register with GrantSolutions with your DUNS number,**” and complete the registration form. **The registration process can be completed in 1-24 hours.**

GrantSolutions has training videos available to educate users about the system. These videos can be found at: <https://home.grantsolutions.gov/home/grantee-training-videos/>.

Please Note: When completing and uploading the application documents (excluding the SF-424 form) applicants must use the *Upload Files* attachment link. Applicants will also see an attachment link entitled *Mail-in Items* which may not be used. **MEPI does not accept Mail-in items to our announcements.**

B.2 Grants.gov

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

C. SUBMISSION DATES AND TIMES

Applications must be time stamped before 17:00 eastern time (ET) on **June 2, 2014**. **There will be no grace period, and any application not received by the application deadline will not advance to the Technical Review stage.**

Applicants are encouraged to submit an application far enough in advance of the deadline so it can alert MEPI (nea-grants@state.gov) of any technical difficulties and allow sufficient time to resolve difficulties before the deadline. Although, MEPI work with applicants to resolve technical issues, it is not in a position to grant exceptions to the submission requirements outlined in this announcement.

D. FUNDING LIMITATIONS, RESTRICTIONS, AND OTHER CONSIDERATIONS

D.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 must be deducted from

the total project or program allowable cost in determining the net allowable costs on which the federal share of costs is based.

V. APPLICATION REVIEW AND SELECTION PROCESS

A. APPLICATION EVALUATION CRITERIA

Each application submitted under this announcement will be evaluated and rated on the basis of the evaluation criteria outlined below. The criteria are designed to assess the quality of the application and to determine the likelihood of its success and impact. 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.

Approach (35 points)

- The applicant clearly describes how each proposed project activity will address the objectives outlined in the requested priority area. (8 points)
- The applicant addresses how the project will engage or obtain support from relevant stakeholders and identifies local partners. (6 points)
- The applicant articulates potential challenges to project implementation and proposes contingency plans. (6 points)
- The application describes the division of labor among the applicant and any partners. (3 points)
- The applicant includes letters of intent/commitment/agreement from proposed partners. (2 points)
- 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. (4 points)
- The proposed project design is innovative and original, as well as feasible. (2 points)
- The applicant identifies and addresses support for marginalized populations in all proposed activities and objectives and provides specific means for their inclusion. (4 points)

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. (8 points)
- The applicant demonstrates an institutional record of successful programs in the content area proposed (e.g., media). (6 points)
- The applicant demonstrates capacity for responsible fiscal management of donor funding (e.g. successful management of a previous sub-award or grant). (4 points)
- The applicant has adequate staffing and demonstrates the capacity to manage the proposed project. (2 points)

Results and Benefits (20 points)

- The project objectives are specific and clearly explained. (4 points)
- The applicant describes realistic results to be accomplished within the timeframe of the proposed award. (5 points)
- The applicant clearly identifies the anticipated beneficiaries and explains how the project's objectives will positively affect them. (1 points)

- The applicant provides realistic milestones to indicate progress toward MEPI goals and objectives as described in the program announcement. (3 points)
- The applicant explains how the project's impact will be sustainable beyond the life of the grant. (3 points)
- The applicant explains how monitoring and evaluation activities will be carried out and who will be responsible for them. (1 points)
- The project includes a midterm or final evaluation. (1 points)
- The RMP indicators measure realistic/feasible project impact (outcomes) rather than just outputs. (2 points)

Staff and Position Specifications (10 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). (4 points)
- The roles and qualifications of each key person, whether staff, partner, consultant, or volunteer, are described in a biographical sketch. (2 points)
- A job description, including hiring criteria, is provided for each open key position. (2 points)
- Pre-identified key staff members, including volunteers, demonstrate experience and knowledge in the proposed content area. (2 points)

Budget Narrative (15 points)

- The preponderance of the budget is spent on supporting the project participants/activities and includes costs dedicated to management, monitoring, and evaluation, with only a minimum amount spent on administrative costs. (8 points)
- The costs proposed are reasonable in relation to the proposed activities and anticipated results, which is clearly explained in the budget narrative. (3 points)
- The budget provides details of calculations, including estimation methods, quantities, unit costs, and other similar quantitative detail sufficient for the calculation to be duplicated. (2 points)
- Adequate travel costs are proposed. (1 points)
- Additional sources (cost-share or matching) for project funding are proposed, as well as an explanation of how those additional sources will be used. (1 points)

B. REVIEW AND SELECTION PROCESS

The Office of the U.S.-Middle East Partnership Initiative is committed to ensuring a competitive and standardized process for awarding Economic Support Funds grants. Applications will be screened initially by MEPI to determine whether applicants meet the requirements and priorities outlined in [Part I](#); meet the eligibility requirements outlined in [Part III](#); and submitted the required documents outlined in [Part IV](#). Applications that do not meet these requirements will not be reviewed.

All applications 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 [Part V, Section A](#). Technical Reviewers' ratings, and any resulting recommendations, are advisory.

Final award decision will be influenced by whether the application meets MEPI's programmatic goals and objectives, how it supports the Department's overarching foreign policy priorities, and the

geographic distribution of the top-ranking applications. All award recommendations will be made by the Deputy Assistant Secretary and acceptance determined by the Grants Officer.

VI. ADMINISTRATION INFORMATION

A. AWARD NOTICES

Five days after the closing of the announcement, applicants will be notified via email that their application was received. This notification will include an application log number that applicants must use to track their applications.

MEPI expects to notify applicants about the status of their application by *September 16, 2014*. The authorized representative and program point of contact listed on the SF-424 will receive such a notification via email. **MEPI 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. APPLICANT VETTING AS A CONDITION OF AWARD

Applicants 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 about their company and its principal personnel. Vetting information may also be required for all sub-award performance on assistance awards identified by DOS as presenting a risk of terrorist financing. When vetting information is requested by the Grants Officer, information may be submitted via email. Failure to submit information when requested, or failure to pass vetting, may be grounds for rejecting an application for award.

C. BRANDING AND MARKING REQUIREMENTS FOR GRANTEES

Grantees awarded under this announcement will be required to mark 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 MEPI when negotiating an award.

D. DUNS NUMBER AND SAM REQUIREMENT FOR SUB-AWARDEES

All sub-awardees who will receive funds of \$25,000 or more are required to have a DUNS number and maintain an active SAM registration with current information. For information on obtaining a DUNS number and registering with SAM please see Part III, Sections [B.1](#) and [B.2](#). **Proposed sub-awardees are not required to have a DUNS number and SAM registration prior to the submission of an application.**

E. 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.fsr.gov>. More information about this requirement can be found at this site.

VII. AGENCY CONTACTS

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

Ms. Olwyn Ice

Pre-Award Team Lead

202-776-8874

nea-grants@state.gov

For questions regarding registering 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.

GrantSolutions.gov Contact Center

(866) 577-0771

(202) 401-5282

help@grantsolutions.gov

Grants.gov Contact Center

(800) 518-4726

support@Grants.gov

For questions regarding registering or using GrantSolutions.gov to submit an application, contact the GrantSolutions.gov Contact Center. The Contact Center is available Monday-Friday, 8:00 am – 6:00 pm Eastern Standard Time.