

Department of State – U.S. Embassy, Kabul
Notice of Funding Opportunity

Program Office:	Public Affairs Section, U.S. Embassy, Kabul, Afghanistan
Funding Opportunity Title:	Rural Youth Development
Announcement Type:	Cooperative Agreement
Funding Opportunity Number:	SCAKAB-15-CA-014-SCA-06152015
Deadline for Applications	August 3, 2015 (11:59 p.m., Kabul time)
CFDA Number:	19.501- Public Diplomacy Programs for Afghanistan and Pakistan

CONTACT INFORMATION

- A) For questions relating to Grants.gov, please call the Grants.gov Contact Center at 1-800-518-4726.
- B) For assistance with the requirements of this solicitation, contact **Javier Pareja**, Grants Manager, Public Affairs Section, U.S. Embassy, Kabul, Afghanistan, at:
Email: KabulPASProposals@state.gov (*Preferred method of communication*)

Important Notes:

All application materials must be submitted electronically through Grants.gov. Applications materials submitted via other means such as email will **not** be accepted.

Registration at several different sites is necessary to be able to use www.grants.gov. **Please begin the registration process immediately to ensure that the process is completed well in advance of the deadline for applications.** The entire registration process can require **up to four weeks** for the registration to be validated and confirmed.

Thorough instructions on the application process are available at <https://eportal.nspa.nato.int/AC135Public/Docs/US%20Instructions%20for%20NSPA%20NCA%20GE.pdf> (for the DUNS number application, NCAGE number application, and registration with SAM) and at <http://www.grants.gov/web/grants/applicants/organization-registration.html> for registration with www.grants.gov as an Authorized Organization Representative (AOR). For questions relating to Grants.gov, please call the Grants.gov Contact Center at 1-800-518-4726. Please note: kabulpasproposals@state.gov is unable to assist with technical questions or problems applicants experience with Grants.gov, DUNS or SAMS. Please refer to the contact information for these organizations/processes listed in this NOFO.

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A. PROGRAM DESCRIPTION

The Public Affairs Section (PAS) of the U.S. Embassy in Kabul, Afghanistan is pleased to announce an open competition for assistance awards through this Notice of Funding Opportunity (NOFO). PAS Kabul invites all eligible organizations to submit a proposal for the Rural Youth Development program.

Executive Summary

This project will establish a rural youth development program, preferably within pre-existing youth associations or schools, to provide boys and girls ages 10-19 with opportunities for leadership, personal growth and career success through agricultural education. The program will draw on the expertise of technical experts in Afghan ministries, universities, and other relevant organizations. It will be tailored to individual communities and include agricultural science education, incorporate leadership training, and include experiences such as field trips, competitions (e.g. fairs), linkages to markets, volunteer opportunities, mentorship, and interaction with peers through established group meetings. A cadre of mentors and volunteers should be developed and may include successful local farmers, cooperative extension agents, provincial officials, and others. This program will begin with a pilot project and only after PAS approval will the rest of the project continue.

PAS intends to issue an award for a period of 24 months (base period) with an option for one additional 12 month period (option year one).

Background

Up to 80 percent of the Afghan population relies directly or indirectly on agriculture, but land is difficult to cultivate due to land mines, persistent fighting, drought, and damage to the traditional irrigation system. Many rural families lack the knowledge to engage in economically viable licit agriculture practices, and disaster related food insecurity remains an issue. In some rural areas, criminal elements coerce farmers to engage in illicit poppy cultivation directly linked to violent extremism.

An estimated 64% of the total Afghan population is under the age of 24, and the median age in Afghanistan is estimated to be 18. Many Afghan children are required to work in agriculture, either part or full-time. At the same time, young people often do not have the opportunity to discuss or constructively act on their need for identity, and to develop the resilience needed to resist extremist rhetoric which can promise recognition, fellowship, and/or economic benefits. Providing youth with opportunities to build a positive identity through community engagement, civic participation, and technical education that leads to sustainable livelihoods can provide alternatives to violent extremism.

Youth are often more likely than adults to adopt technological and scientific innovations, including in the agricultural field. Skill demonstrations are also an important element of positive youth development, allowing youth to demonstrate what they have learned.

Goal

This program aims to provide an outlet for youth to learn new agricultural techniques that are suitable to their environments which will enable them to increase ties to their communities, gain leadership skills that will help them succeed socially, academically, and economically, thereby providing alternatives to violent extremism. The Ministry of Agriculture, Irrigation, and Livestock also noted that such a project can provide alternatives to drug trafficking and illegal migration outside of the country.

A secondary goal of this project is community outreach highlighting youth entrepreneurship, innovation, and achievements, thereby contributing to a sense of pride and self-esteem in the children involved.

Applications for creative programs designed to achieve the goal and objectives of the program are encouraged.

Objectives

The successful applicant will:

1. Select Provinces and Participants:
 - Identify one to two provinces in which to pilot this program:
 - Target border provinces or districts in the south, east, south east, and far west where there is potential for cross-border trade relationships or other areas with potential access to markets for small scale agriculture;
 - Focus the project on agriculturally rich areas where youth are most at risk of extremist recruitment.
 - Target districts on the National Unity Government's 41 Top Counternarcotics (CN)-Priority Districts, recognizing that youth from destitute families, IDPs, and orphans are easy prey for recruitment by narco-entrepreneurs.
 - Identify at least eight more provinces in which to expand the program if the pilot is successful.
 - Identify existing and receptive youth associations or schools where this project could be implemented:
 - Target youth ages 10-19, both male and female (may be separate); understanding that in some areas or activities females may not be able to participate. Separate programs for males and females that take local sensitivities into consideration are encouraged.
 - Include youth who have dropped out of school after ninth grade, unemployed high school graduates, and youth who fail to gain entry into public universities.
 - Involve enthusiastic young people ages 20-30 from University Agricultural programs to serve as trainers and mentors;
 - Establish least two local volunteer mentors for each group of youth, by reaching out to university agricultural programs, successful local farmers, and cooperative extension officials, as well as local civil society organizations.
 - Form relationships with local technical experts;

2. Design activities for Youth Associations involved in the program:
 - Train youth associations to run democratic (parliamentary style) meetings so that youth can propose and vote on community service projects;
 - Stimulate discussion among youth on how licit agriculture relates to science and education, livelihood opportunities, community needs/welfare, and Afghanistan's future;
 - Tailor interactive trainings and field trips for each youth association or community
 - Provide field trips to research or demonstration farms/plots to teach appropriate modern and traditional agricultural and environmental techniques;
 - Provide or enhance agricultural science education with hands-on learning experiences;
 - Provide leadership training to youth associations;
 - Provide training on healthy lifestyles and community health;
 - Provide practical business training as requested by youth associations;
 - Arrange internships with factories, workshops, and processing plants;
 - Schedule competitions for different youth associations to meet and showcase their skills. These could take the form of exhibitions/fairs, speaking competitions, creative arts, small business endeavors, etc.
 - In moving from the pilot stage, competitions create opportunities for youth from different provinces or regions to meet;
 - Require four *or more* community service/volunteer activities (decided by vote within youth associations) by each youth association per year;
 - These could include tree planting, disaster and fire response, clearing roads of snow in winter, helping war victims with food and blood drives, teaching others skills learned, etc.;
 - In areas or activities where females may not be allowed to participate in all activities, alternatives for female participants should be designed, while continuing a focus on male participants at risk of extremist recruitment.
3. Form Partnerships:
 - Work closely with the Ministry of Agriculture, Irrigation, and Livestock (MAIL), seeking feedback in project design and activities, and an MOU.
 - Work closely with other appropriate ministries or groups as needed, including the Ministry of Education Deputy Ministry of Technical and Vocational Education and Training (MOE-DMTVET), the Independent Directorate of Local Government (IDLG), the Ministry of Counter-Narcotics, the Ministry of Rural Rehabilitation and Development, and Farmers' Associations.
 - (Optional) Seek an MOU with DMTVET.
 - Create opportunities for youth and government officials to work together.

- Seek to structure the program so that it can be sustained through partnerships with MAIL, MOE, Agricultural Cooperatives, Farmer’s Associations, Universities, or others.
4. Promote project with a logo competition and through community awareness raising:
 - Run a design competition for youth to create a logo and slogan for this program.
 - Include a promotion plan for the logo competition;
 - Include a roll-out plan for the logo once chosen;
 - Allow youth themselves to vote on proposed logos;
 - Include the largest number of participants possible in competition
 - Turn the logo into patches, pins, or other easily worn items.
 - Raise community awareness of the purpose of youth associations and the goals of this project;
 - Conduct community outreach around volunteerism and other youth achievements resulting from the project.
 5. Follow these guiding principles on youth development:
 - Youth and adults working together on partnerships;
 - Every element should have an experiential component emphasizing the science of agriculture.
 6. Provide sufficient oversight to ensure this program does not instruct youth on the development of illicit crops.

Proposals should include:

- A detailed implementation plan that shows a thorough understanding of the project’s objectives, an ability to work with the Ministry of Agriculture, Irrigation, and Livestock, other Afghan Government Ministries such as the Ministry of Education’s Deputy Ministry of Technical and Vocational Education and Training (DMTVET), and with provincial and district level officials.
 - The implementation plan should include specifics for both a pilot (at least one province) and a full-scale project (at least 8 provinces), including the provinces chosen, details of the logo design competition, the process by which associations will be selected, the number and location of participants, consideration for the security of the participants, the type, number, source, and use of any equipment or supplies to be purchased or rented, the process by which mentors and volunteers will be or have been identified, and how the project will provide recognition of achievements by youth associations at every step of the project.
 - The proposal should include an assessment of current agriculture, science, and youth development resources in the areas chosen.

- Information on the applicant’s past experiences managing U.S. Government grants, youth development, and agricultural programs.
- A detailed training and sustainability plan that includes the following components:
 - If sub-awards are proposed, the proposed relationship and division of labor between the grantee and any other partners, including sub-award budgets.
 - An outline of proposed educational activities in agriculture, science, business, leadership, and healthy lifestyles. Please include information on proposed field trips;
 - A training curriculum on child protection and youth development for any adults working with children;
 - An outline of the process to select mentors and technical experts;
 - An outline of the process for conducting fairs or other competitions;
 - A description of how this program will continue to operate after the end of the grant.
- A detailed engagement plan that includes:
 - community and family engagement
 - A plan to facilitate the engagement of youth associations with one another, whether in person or virtually.
- A detailed monitoring and evaluation plan including methodology, indicators, and how activities, events, or achievements will be recorded.
- A commitment to implement the program for the base period of two years, plus one additional option year, pending successful performance and availability of funds. The proposal narrative should focus on details specific to the implementation of the base period program, with the understanding that the program design, duration and participant numbers would be similar when/if the subsequent option year is exercised. PAS will perform an annual performance evaluation/review to determine if an option year will be exercised. Satisfactory performance and the availability of funds is a condition of continued administration of the program and execution of the option year.

The safety and security of all participants and activities under this project are the sole responsibility of the award recipient. Due to the changing nature of security in Afghanistan, we require all proposals to include a security package to accompany appropriate programmatic elements within their proposal. Security packages may include, but are not limited to, secure transportation, lodging, and emergency evacuation for personnel living or working in Afghanistan. Reasonable costs for necessary security are allowable expenses and may be included in the proposed budget. If a security company is engaged and funded under the award,

it must be registered by the Government of Afghanistan to operate in Afghanistan. Additionally, applicants will submit their organizational policy for working within high-risk environments, which should include security operational procedures.

U.S. Government Role and Responsibilities

As a cooperative agreement, the Public Affairs Section of U.S. Embassy Kabul will have significant involvement in this effort. USG responsibilities will include, but are not limited to:

1. Providing feedback and approval for the provinces chosen for the project.
2. Providing feedback and approval for activities of the project.
3. Providing feedback and approval for the Monitoring Plan Indicators.
4. Providing feedback and approval on a sustainability plan, implementation plan, sub-agreements, and any outreach activities.

B. FEDERAL AWARD INFORMATION

Anticipated Award Type: Cooperative Agreement

Number of Awards Anticipated: One

Anticipated Award Amount: The award Floor is set at \$1,750,000. The award ceiling is set at \$ 2,000,000. The Option period award Floor is set at \$ 800,000. The Option period award ceiling is set at \$1,000,000.

Anticipated Award Period: 24 months Base Period: 24 months; Option Period: 12 Months

Anticipated Start Date: August, 2015

Potential for Option Years: Yes. PAS intends to award a cooperative agreement for a period of 24 months (base period) with options for one additional 12 month period (option year one). PAS will notify the recipient of its intention to exercise or not to exercise an option year approximately 90 days in advance of expiration of the current year after an internal evaluation of the recipient's performance. The decision to exercise option years will depend on the satisfactory performance of the recipient, PAS priorities, and the availability of funds.

As a cooperative agreement the United States Government will have substantial involvement in this effort. For more information on the USG's role please see Section A. Program Description.

This NOFO is soliciting applications for the specific project outlined in Section A. Applications for renewal or supplementation of existing projects will not be considered under this NOFO.

C. ELIGIBILITY INFORMATION

Eligible Applicants

This project will be funded by Economic Support Funds and authorized by the Foreign Assistance Act and is subject to the statutory limitations of such funding.

Eligibility is open to all types of applicants except for 1) individuals and 2) government entities. Please refer to Section D for funding restrictions. Organizations may sub-contract with other entities, but only one entity can be the prime recipient of the award. When sub-contracting with other entities, the responsibilities of each entity must be clearly defined in the proposal.

Cost Sharing

Cost Sharing or Matching is not required for this funding opportunity.

Other Eligibility Requirements

1. There is no limit on the number of applications an entity may submit for this NOFO.
2. Previous federal award recipients who are not/were not in compliance with the terms of the award, including the financial and program reporting requirements, are not eligible for an award under the NOFO. It is the applicant's responsibility to ensure it is in compliance with all applicable terms, conditions, and Office of Management and Budget guidance and requirements.
3. 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 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 DOS as presenting a risk of terrorist financing. When vetting information is requested 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 about 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 your proposal.
4. **Dun and Bradstreet Universal Numbering System (DUNS) and System for Award Management (SAM)** Organizations must have a Data Universal Numbering System (DUNS) number from Dun & Bradstreet, if your organization does not have one already, you may obtain one by calling 1-866-705-5711 or visiting <http://fedgov.dnb.com/webform/displayHomePage.do;jsessionid=81407B1F03F2BDB123DD47D19158B75F>. Organizations must also maintain an active SAM registration (www.SAM.gov) with current information at all times during which they have an active Federal award or an application under consideration by a Federal awarding agency. The U.S. Department of State may not make an award to an applicant until the applicant has complied with all applicable DUNS and SAM requirements by the time the Department is ready to make an award. The Department may determine that the applicant is not

qualified to receive an award and use this determination as a basis for making an award to another applicant.

D. APPLICATION AND SUBMISSION INFORMATION

Address to Request Application Package

This NOFO document and any amendments can be found at and www.grants.gov and <http://kabul.usembassy.gov/pdprp.html>. If you require special accommodation to access any information contained in this announcement, please contact Javier Pareja at KabulPASProposals@state.gov (preferred method of communication) or Phone +93 (0) 700 10 8540 or 1-301-490-1042 x7127 or x8540.

Content and Form of Application Submission

Please follow all instructions below carefully. Failure to furnish all information or comply with stated requirements will not be considered. Applicants must set forth accurate and complete information as required by this NOFO. The penalty for making false statements in proposals to the USG is prescribed on 18 U.S.C.1001.

Applicants must ensure:

1. The proposal clearly addresses the goals and objectives of this funding opportunity.
2. All documents are in English
3. All budgets are in U.S. dollars
4. All pages are numbered
5. All Microsoft Word documents are single-spaced, 12 point Times New Roman font, with a minimum of 1-inch margins.
6. All materials are submitted in one of the following formats: .xls, .xlsx, .doc, .docx, .pdf, .jpeg. No other file types will be reviewed.

When submitting a proposal, applicants are required to include the following documents and information:

Section 1 – Cover Sheet:

The coversheet is limited to one page in length. It must provide a summary of the project to be undertaken, the organization's capacity to carry it out, expected timeline, and cost.

Section 2 – Technical Proposal:

- A. Implementation Plan:** The applicant must specify the goals and objectives of the project. Goals are general statements of intent; Objectives define a task to be accomplished. The applicant should describe in detail the steps which will be taken to achieve these goals. This description should include all components of the proposed project including, as needed, design, procurement, installation, and training. The proposal should clearly demonstrate how each of these project components directly

relates to the project's stated goals. The proposal should include information on organizational partners and preferred vendors. In alignment with the M&E plan described below, this section should also describe how success will be measured, and should propose specific performance indicators which can be used to track progress and determine the project's success. This section must include a time-task plan that clearly identifies the timeline for carrying out the project's major activities.

Applicants are recommended to present the following for each project component:

- An overview of the proposed project component and its respective activities.
- A description of how the project component supports the overall goal of the project.
- A detailed outline of the methodology that will be used to implement the proposed component.
- An analysis of anticipated implementation risks and challenges.
- A summary of expected outputs with their expected impact, using performance indicators that will be used to track progress towards the anticipated results.

The proposal should also describe the applicant's sustainability plan and what measures will be taken to ensure that the benefits of the proposed project continue to be realized after the completion of award performance.

B. Organizational Description and Capability:

This section should detail the applicant's capability to successfully carry out the project. It should include a clear description of the applicant's management structure, experience working with the Ministry of Agriculture, Irrigation, and Livestock, experience with youth, experience with U.S. Government grants, and the organizational experience and background in Afghanistan related to the proposed activities. The applicant should explain how its previous experience has equipped it to carry out this project. Besides information about the organization as a whole, this section must also identify the proposed management structure and staffing plan for the proposed project. Resumes for Key Personnel should be included in Section 4 (Key Personnel Resumes).

C. Monitoring and Evaluation Plan:

Applications must include a monitoring and evaluation plan (M&E plan), sometimes also referred to as a performance monitoring or performance management plan. The M&E plan is a systematic and objective approach or process for monitoring project performance toward its objectives over time. The plan must consist of indicators with baselines and targets; means for tracking critical assumptions; plans for managing the data collection process; and regular collection of data. The indicators in the plan should be SMART (Specific, Measurable, Attainable, Realistic, and Time-framed). Applicants must include a detailed M&E plan for the base period and should also describe how the plan would change/be updated should the option periods be exercised.

The M&E plan for this project must include the following indicators:

- Indicator 1: Number of clubs, trainings, meetings, field trips, exhibition/fairs, youth involved
- Indicator 2: MOU with Ministry of Agriculture, Irrigation, and Livestock (MAIL)
- Indicator 3: Increase in confidence among program participants
- Indicator 4: Increase in improved agriculture and business practices
- Indicator 5: Percentage of community leaders that express interest in or are involved in the program.
- Indicator 6: Percentage of participants' parents expressing interest in or involved in the program.
- Indicator 7: Percentage of youth who report positive feelings regarding their relationships with the community/the government/themselves/their peers
- Indicator 8: Percentage of youth involved demonstrating social responsibility
- Indicator 9: Percentage of youth involved demonstrating healthy lifestyles
- Indicator 10: Percentage of youth involved demonstrating leadership
- Indicator 11: Percentage of youth involved demonstrating academic achievement
- Indicator 12: Percentage of youth involved expressing hope regarding their role in the community.
- Indicator 13: (Optional) MOU with the Ministry of Education Deputy Ministry of Technical and Vocational Education and Training.

Applicants are encouraged to include additional indicators they maintain believe will assess project impact.

More information on M&E plans is located <http://www.state.gov/j/drl/p/c35797.htm>.

Section 3 Budget:

A. Budget Detail:

Applications will not be considered complete unless they include budgets that respond to the solicitation guidelines. Complete budgets will include detailed line-items outlining specific cost requirements for proposed activities. Applicants must adhere to the regulations found in [2 CFR 200 Uniform Administrative Requirements, Costs Principles, and Audit Requirements for Federal Awards](#).

Applicants must include in their submission a detailed line item budget for the base period and a budget category summary budget for each option period. Upon request, the recipient will be expected to present a detailed line-item budget for the option period.

Detailed Line-Item Budget (in Microsoft Excel or similar spreadsheet format) that delineates funds requested from the Embassy and cost-share (see below for more information on budget format). Costs must be in U.S. Dollars. The budget must identify the total amount of funding requested, with a breakdown of amounts to be spent in the

following budget categories: personnel; fringe benefits; travel; equipment; supplies; consultants/contracts; other direct costs; and indirect costs. The following provides a description of the types of costs to be included in each budget category.

a. Personnel – Identify staffing requirements by each position title and brief description of duties. For clarity, please list the annual salary of each position, percentage of time and number of months devoted to the project. (e.g., Administrative Director: \$30,000/year x 25% x 8.5 months; calculation: $\$30,000/12 = \$2,500 \times 25\% \times 8.5 \text{ months} = \$5,312.$).

b. Fringe Benefits - State benefit costs separately from salary costs and explain how benefits are computed for each category of employee - specify type and rate.

c. Travel - Staff and any participant travel

1) International Airfare

2) In-country Travel

3) Domestic Travel in the U.S., if any

4) Per diem/maintenance: Includes lodging, meals and incidentals for both participant and staff travel. Rates of maximum allowances for U.S. and foreign travel are available from the following website:

http://aoprals.state.gov/web920/per_diem.asp. Per diem rates may not exceed the published U.S. government allowance rates; however, institutions may use per diem rates lower than official government rates. Please explain differences in fares among travelers on the same routes. Please note that all travel, where applicable, must be in compliance with the Fly America Act.

d. Equipment – Please provide justification for any equipment purchase/rental, defined as tangible personal property having a useful life of more than one year and an acquisition cost of \$5,000 or more per unit.

e. Supplies – The specifications and cost of each type of supply proposed (e.g., desktop computer with pre-installed software) must be included in this section. List items separately using unit costs (and the percentage of each unit cost being charged to the award) for photocopying, postage, telephone/fax, printing, and office supplies (e.g., Telephone: $\$50/\text{month} \times 50\% = \$25/\text{month} \times 12 \text{ months}$).

f. Contractual -

a) Sub-grants and sub-contracts. For each sub-grant/contract please provide a detailed line item breakdown explaining specific services. In the sub-grant budgets, provide the same level of detail for personnel, travel, supplies, equipment, direct costs, fringe benefits, and indirect costs as required of the direct applicant.

b) Consultant Fees. For example lecture fees, honoraria, travel, and per diem for outside speakers or independent evaluators: list number of people and rates per day (e.g., 2 x \$150/day x 2 days).

g. Construction – For this solicitation, construction costs are not applicable.

h. Other Direct Costs - these will vary depending on the nature of the project. The inclusion of each should be justified in the budget narrative.

i. Indirect Costs - Organizations claiming indirect costs should have an established NICRA. A copy of the NICRA should be provided with the proposal package. If sub-grantees are claiming indirect costs, they should have an established NICRA should also submitted with the proposal package. **If an organization does not have a NICRA, and the proposal budget has a line item for indirect cost charges, those indirect charges may not exceed 10%.** Information how to obtain a NICRA rate is listed Section G.

B. Budget Narrative

The purpose of the budget narrative is to supplement the information provided in the budget spreadsheet by justifying how the budget cost elements are necessary to implement project objectives and accomplish the project goals. The budget narrative is a tool to help the Embassy staff fully understand the budgetary needs of the applicant and is an opportunity to provide descriptive information about the costs beyond the constraints of the budget template. Together, the budget narrative and budget spreadsheets should provide a complete financial and qualitative description that supports the proposed project plan and should be directly relatable to the specific project components described in the applicant's Implementation Plan. The description provided on the budget spreadsheets should be very brief.

Section 4 – Key Personnel Resumes – a resume, not to exceed 1 page in length, must be included for the proposed key staff persons, such as the Project Director. If an individual for this type of position has not been identified, the applicant may submit a 1-page position description, identifying the qualifications and skills required for that position, in lieu of a resume.

Section 5 - Application for Federal Assistance (SF-424): The SF424 is the standard cover sheet for applications. This form can be found on-line at:
<https://statebuy.state.gov/fa/Pages/Forms.aspx>.

Section 6 - Application for Federal Assistance SF424A: The SF424A is a budget summary sheet for proposals. Please refer to page 12-13 for a description of budget categories. This form can be found on-line at: <https://statebuy.state.gov/fa/Pages/Forms.aspx>.

Section 7 – Letters of Intent: for this project, local partnerships, between the recipient, the Ministry of Agriculture, Irrigation, and Livestock, and Youth Associations are critical. Applicants must include a letter of intent from proposed key partners as part of their application. The letters must identify the type of relationship to be entered into (formal or informal), the roles and responsibilities of each partner in relation to the proposed project activities, and the expected result of the partnership. The individual letters cannot exceed 1 page in length.

Please note:

1. Other items NOT required/requested for submission, but which may be requested if your application is selected for funding include:
 - Copies of an organization or program audit within the last two (2) years
 - Copies of relevant human resources, financial, or procurement policies
 - Copies of other relevant organizational policies or documentation that would help the Department determine your organization’s capacity to manage a federal grant award overseas.
 - Completion of a pre-award organizational information sheet, to determine what financial controls and standard operating procedures an organization uses to procure goods and services, hire staff and track time and attendance, pay for grant-related travel, and other financial transactions which may be necessary to undertake the activities in your application.

2. The U.S. Embassy reserves the right to request any additional programmatic and/or financial information regarding the proposal.

Submission Dates and Times

Application Deadline: All applications must be received by **August 3, 2015 at 11:59 p.m.** U.S. Eastern Time. For the purposes of determining if an award is submitted on time, officials will utilize the time-stamp provided by Grants.gov. This deadline is firm and is not a rolling deadline. If organizations fail to meet the deadline noted above their application will be considered ineligible and will not be considered for funding.

Applications are accepted in English only, and final grant agreements will be concluded in English. Budgets shall be submitted in U.S. dollars and final grant agreements will be conducted in U.S. dollars.

Question Deadline: For questions on this solicitation please contact Javier Pareja, Grants Manager, Public Affairs Section, U.S. Embassy, Kabul, Afghanistan, at: KabulPASProposals@state.gov. Questions must be received on or before **July 2, 2015, 11:59 p.m.**, Kabul time. Answers to questions will be posted at <http://www.grants.gov> and <http://kabul.usembassy.gov/pdprp.html>.

Submission Process

All application materials must be submitted electronically through Grants.gov. Applications materials submitted via other means such as email will **not** be accepted.

Authorization to submit proposals through www.grants.gov is a multi-step process that requires prior successful registration with DUNS, NCAGE, SAM, and www.grants.gov. Please begin the registration process immediately to ensure that the process is completed well in advance of the deadline for applications. The entire registration process can require **up to four weeks** for the registration to be validated and confirmed.

- Thorough instructions on the application process are available at <https://eportal.nspa.nato.int/AC135Public/Docs/US%20Instructions%20for%20NSPA%20NCAGE.pdf> (for the DUNS number application, NCAGE number application, and registration with SAM) and at
- <http://www.grants.gov/web/grants/applicants/organization-registration.html> for registration with www.grants.gov as an Authorized Organization Representative (AOR). For questions relating to Grants.gov, please call the Grants.gov Contact Center at 1-800-518-4726.

Please note: Only www.grants.gov, DUNS, NCAGE, and SAM can assist with technical questions or problems applicants may experience during the registration process. Please refer to the contact information for these organizations listed in this NOFO and on the organization registration page of www.grants.gov.

Organizations must obtain a

- DUNS number
- an NCAGE code
- a SAM registration, and
- an AOR (Authorized Organization Representative) registration on www.grants.gov

Step 1:

Apply for a DUNS number and an NCAGE number (these can be completed simultaneously)

- Step 1a: DUNS application:
Organizations must have a Data Universal Numbering System (DUNS) number from Dun & Bradstreet, if your organization does not have one already, you may obtain one by calling 1-866-705-5711 or visiting <http://fedgov.dnb.com/webform/displayHomePage.do;jsessionid=81407B1F03F2BDB123DD47D19158B75F> or <http://fedgov.dnb.com/webform>
- Step 1b:

NCAGE application: Application page here (but need to click magnifying glass and then scroll down to click new registration)

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

Instructions for the NCAGE application process:

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

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

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

Email NCAGE@dliis.dla.mil for any problems in getting an NCAGE code. After receiving the NCAGE Code, proceed to register in SAM by logging onto:

<https://www.sam.gov/>

Step 2:

Once DUNS and NCAGE are obtained, continue to SAM registration

www.SAM.gov

Step 3:

Once SAM registration is confirmed, continue to Grants.gov organization registration

<http://www.grants.gov/web/grants/applicants/organization-registration.html>

Organizations must maintain an active SAM registration (www.SAM.gov) with current information at all times during which they have an active Federal award or an application under consideration by a Federal awarding agency.

Intergovernmental Review

This funding opportunity is not subject to Executive Order 12372 “Intergovernmental Review of Federal Programs”.

Funding Restrictions

- 1. Construction:** This award does not allow for construction activities or costs.
- 2. Indirect Charges:** An organization with a Negotiated Indirect Cost Rate Agreement (NICRA) from a cognizant (primary) federal government agency should include a copy of the cost-rate agreement. Applicants should indicate in the proposal budget how the rate is applied and if any of the rate will be cost-shared. Organizations claiming indirect costs should have an established NICRA. If sub-grantees are claiming indirect costs, they should have an established NICRA that is also submitted with the proposal package. **If your organization does not have a NICRA, and the proposal budget has a line item for indirect cost charges, those indirect charges may not exceed 10%.** Information how to obtain a NICRA rate is listed Section G.
- 3. Pre-award Costs:** Any costs incurred prior to the award start date in the Federal Notice of Award are incurred at the recipient’s own risk. Approval of these costs require authorization of the Grants Officer to be considered allowable, will only be considered on a case-by-case basis, and will only be authorized in extraordinary circumstances.

Applicants should assume that any costs incurred before the start date on the Federal Notice of Award will not be authorized.

If you require special accommodation to access any information contained in this announcement, please contact Javier Pareja at KabulPASProposals@state.gov or phone +93 (0) 700 10 8540 or 1-301-490-1042 x7127 or x8540 and any necessary arrangements will be made.

E. APPLICATION REVIEW INFORMATION

Selection Criteria

Eligible applications submitted under this opportunity will be evaluated and rated on the basis of the criteria detailed below. The criteria are designed to assess the quality of the proposed project plan/approach, and to determine the likelihood of its success. The criteria are closely related and are considered as a whole in judging the overall quality of an application. Applications will be reviewed on the basis of their fullness, coherence, clarity, and attention to detail. Proposals will be selected for funding based on an evaluation of how the proposal meets the solicitation review criteria, U.S. foreign policy objectives, and the priority needs of PAS. Past performance on grants awarded by the U.S. Department of State, other United States government entities, or international donor agencies may also be considered.

PAS reviews all proposals for eligibility. Eligible proposals will be subject to compliance of federal and Public Diplomacy regulations and guidelines and may also be reviewed by the Office of the Legal Adviser or by other Department elements. Final technical authority for assistance awards resides with the Department's Grants Division.

Selection criteria for this NOFO will include:

1. Quality of the program idea and program planning (25 points): The proposed project plan should be well developed, respond to the design outlined in the solicitation and demonstrate originality. The project should have clear goals and objectives and metrics for determining whether the project goals were met. It should be clearly and accurately written, substantive and with sufficient detail. The program plan should adhere to the program overview and guidelines described above, and should reference the applicant's capacity to meet all needs specified in the NOFO.

2. Ability to achieve program objectives (30 points): Objectives should be reasonable and feasible. Applications should clearly demonstrate how the institution will meet the program's objectives and plan. Proposed personnel, institutional resources and partner organizations should be adequate and appropriate to achieve the program goals.

3. Institution's record and capacity (15 points): The application should demonstrate an institutional record, including successful programming, responsible fiscal management involving complex budgets, and compliance with reporting requirements, especially for U.S. Government

grants. The application should demonstrate experience in human resources and overseeing staffing.

4. Sustainability (10 points): Proposed project should address the applicant's strategy for ensuring that the project benefits will continue to be realized on a long-term basis after the conclusion of the period of performance of the award. Applicant should clearly address a feasible approach to the Sustainability Plan.

5. Monitoring and Evaluation (10 points): Applications should demonstrate the capacity for engaging in impact assessments and providing objectives with measurable outputs and outcomes. The applicant should describe its plan for monitoring and reporting project outcomes.

6. Cost-effectiveness (10 points): The overhead and administrative components of the proposal, including salaries and supplies, should be consistent with prevailing market rates in Afghanistan. All other items should be necessary, appropriate, and directly relatable to the project's goals and objectives. Cost sharing is not required.

Review and Selection Process

It may take up to 90 days from the application deadline before an award or decline notice is sent from the embassy. Due to the volume of proposals received, individual responses to requests for updates prior to the 90 day timeframe may not be returned until final review and approval of proposals is completed. The U.S. Embassy Public Affairs Section utilizes the following review and selection process:

1. After the NOFO closes applications are reviewed for eligibility. Those applications found to be ineligible will be removed from the selection process. Those applications found to be eligible will be forwarded to an embassy review committee.
2. An embassy review committee, made up of PAS and other embassy personnel, will score and comment on eligible proposals. The highest scoring proposal will be recommended for funding by the committee. If the funding opportunity allows for the selection of multiple awards, awards will be chosen based on rank score and the availability of funding.
3. The committee's recommendation is then forwarded to the Public Affairs Officer (PAO) for review and approval. At this stage potential requests for programmatic adjustments or conditions of an award may be suggested.
4. Upon approval of the Public Affairs Officer, the proposal is then assigned to a Grants Officer Representative (GOR). The GOR will make contact with the applicant to discuss and negotiate any potential changes to the proposal.
5. The GOR then submits the draft Notice of Award and grant proposal to a Washington, D.C. Grants Officer for approval. Additional clarification or negotiations may take place as part of the Grant Officer's review. The Grants Officer is the only Government Official who may write, award, and administer grants and cooperative agreements. No other individual throughout the selection process is allowed to commit funds or guarantee an award.

6. After approval from the Grants Officer, the GOR will provide a copy of the signed award and required documents to the applicant for counter-signature.
7. After a grant award(s) is made from this solicitation, those applicants whose proposals were not selected for funding will be notified.

Anticipated Time to Award: Applicants should expect to be notified if their proposal has been selected for award within 90 days after the submission deadline. PAS Kabul will provide information at the point of notification about any modification to the proposal or plan of work that will be required to finalize the award.

F. FEDERAL AWARD ADMINISTRATION INFORMATION

Federal Award Notices As described in Section E above, the successful applicant will be notified via email that its proposal has been selected to move forward in the review process; this email IS NOT an authorization to begin performance. The Grants Officer is the Government Official delegated the authority by the U.S. Department of State Procurement Executive to write, award, and administer grants and cooperative agreements. The assistance award agreement is the authorizing document and it will be provided to the Recipient through email transmission. The recipient may only incur obligations against the award beginning on the start date outlined in the DS-1909 award document that has been signed by the Grants Officer. See Section E for more information on pre-award costs. Organizations whose applications will not be funded will also be notified via email. Please refer to the anticipated time to award information in Section E.

Terms and Conditions: Recipients will be held to the applicable terms and conditions found at <https://www.statebuy.state.gov/fa/Pages/TermsandConditions.aspx>.

It is the Recipient's responsibility to ensure they are in compliance with all applicable terms, conditions, and OMB guidance and requirements. Those organizations found to be in non-compliance may be found ineligible for funding or designated high risk.

2 CFR 200 Uniform Administrative Requirements, Costs Principles, and Audit

Requirements for Federal Awards: All applicants must adhere to the regulations found in [2 CFR 200 Uniform Administrative Requirements, Costs Principles, and Audit Requirements for Federal Awards](#).

Branding Requirements: As a condition of receipt of a grant award, all materials produced pursuant to the award, including training materials, materials for recipients or materials to communicate or promote with foreign audiences a program, event, project, or some other activity under an agreement, including but not limited to invitations to events, press materials, and backdrops, podium signs, etc. must be marked appropriately with the standard, rectangular U.S. flag in a size and prominence equal to (or greater than) any other logo or identity. **Note:** Exceptions to the branding requirement are allowable under certain conditions. If an applicant is notified that their award has been chosen for funding, the Grants Officer will determine, in consultation with the applicant, if an exception is applicable.

Evaluation: In line with the Department of State's Evaluation Policy, the U.S. Embassy Kabul Public Affairs Section may include this award in its program evaluation efforts. When applicable and feasible, the Recipient shall cooperate with the Grants Officer (GO) and Grants Officer Representative (GOR) requests to contribute data on specific performance measures and indicators; consider GO and GOR input on design and methodology of Recipient-led evaluation efforts; provide any evaluation reports produced under the award to the GO and GOR for review; incorporate the project into any third-party evaluations that PAS may initiate.

Reporting Requirements:

1. Recipients are required to submit quarterly (calendar year) program progress and financial reports throughout the project period. Progress (SF-PPR, narrative) and financial reports (SF 424 and a detailed financial expenditure report) are due 30 days after the reporting period. Final certified programmatic and financial reports are due 90 days after the close of the project period.
 - First Quarter (January 1 – March 31): Report due by April 30
 - Second Quarter (April 1 – June 30): Report due by July 30
 - Third Quarter (July 1 – September 30): Report due by October 30
 - Fourth Quarter (October 1 – December 31): Report due by January 30All reports are to be submitted electronically.
2. Awardees that are deemed to be high risk may be required to submit more extensive and frequent reports until their high risk designation has been removed.
3. The Awardee must provide the Embassy on an annual basis an inventory of all the U.S. government provided equipment using the SF428 form.
4. Awardees are required to comply with the following Special Provision for Performance in a Designated Combat Area and Future Contingency Operations (Currently Iraq and Afghanistan) (Revised August 2014)

Each federal assistance award within areas of combat operations or future contingency operation, as designated by the Secretary of Defense (currently Iraq and Afghanistan), over \$150,000 or providing for performance over 30 days must be registered in the Department of Defense maintained Synchronized Pre-deployment and Operational Tracker (SPOT) system. Each federal assistance award shall be registered in SPOT before personnel deployment. The DoS SPOT Program Office can assist with entering awards in SPOT. Please send an email to AQMOps@state.gov for information. Information on how to register in SPOT and how to report the total number of recipient personnel deploying under each award will be contained in a Special Provision within each assistance award.

Recipients that do not utilize personnel who are performing a private security function; or require access to U.S. facilities, services, or support can be entered through the SPOT aggregate functionality. Upon the award of a grant/and or cooperative agreement in a designated area of combat operations or future contingency operation (currently Iraq and

Afghanistan), the Grants Officer or his/her designee will enter the following award information into SPOT to include (i) a brief description of the contract (to the extent consistent with security considerations); (ii) the total value of the contract; and (iii) whether the contract was awarded competitively. The Recipient should send updated deployment numbers for each award sent to the Grants Officer and his/her designee and the Department of State's SPOT program office on a quarterly basis as follows:

The Recipient is required to submit with the quarterly financial report submission information regarding the number of individuals receiving payment from the funds being granted under this award. This report is due 30 days after the calendar year quarter and 90 days after the award period end date and also should be sent to AQMOps@state.gov with the subject line "SPOT Quarterly Report -- Award Number". The following information shall be provided:

1. Total number of individuals receiving payment from the funds being granted:
 - a. Total Number U.S. Personnel Deployed:
 - b. Total Number Host Country Personnel:
 - c. Total Third Country Personnel Deployed:

These reports should be sent to AQMOps@state.gov. The SPOT program office will enter the numbers into SPOT.

Recipients utilizing personnel who are performing a private security function; or require access to U.S. facilities, services, or support must be entered into SPOT individually with all required personal information. The Recipient organization will designate a SPOT administrator who will obtain a SPOT company administrator account. Recipients of federal assistance awards shall register personnel in SPOT before deployment, or if already operational in the designated operational area, register personnel upon becoming an employee under the award and maintain current data in SPOT. Procedures on how to register in SPOT will be provided by the Grants Officer and his/her designee.

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.

In a designated area of combat operations or future contingency operation, the term PSC includes any personnel providing protection of the personnel, facilities, property of a Recipient or sub-recipient at any level, or performing any other activity for which personnel are required to carry weapons in the performance of their duties. In a designated area of combat operations or future contingency operation, the term PSC includes any personnel providing protection of the personnel, facilities, property of a Recipient or sub-recipient at any level, or performing any other activity for which personnel are required to carry weapons in the performance of their duties.

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 the 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.

G. FEDERAL AWARDING AGENCY CONTACTS

- For questions on the requirements of this solicitation, contact **Javier Pareja**, Grants Manager, Public Affairs Section, U.S. Embassy, Kabul, Afghanistan, at:
Email: KabulPASProposals@state.gov (*Preferred method of communication*)
Phone: Within Afghanistan: 0700107127, From the U.S.: 1-301-490-1042 x7127 or x8540
- For questions relating to Grants.gov, please call the Grants.gov Contact Center at 1-800-518-4726.
- To inquire about the process for obtaining a Negotiated Indirect Cost Rate Agreement (NICRA), contact Donald Hunter at HunterDS@state.gov.

H. OTHER INFORMATION

Disclaimers

The Federal government is not obligated to make any Federal award as a result of the announcement. Issuance of this NOFO does not constitute an award commitment on the part of the U.S. government, nor does it commit the U.S. government to pay for costs incurred in the preparation and submission of proposals. Further, the U.S. government reserves the right to reject any or all proposals received. The U.S. government also reserves the right to make an award in excess of the award ceiling.

If a proposal is funded, the Department of State has no obligation to provide any additional future funding in connection with the award. Renewal of an award to increase funding or extend the period of performance is at the total discretion of the Department of State.

This NOFO is subject to funds availability. Awards may be granted only if appropriated funds are allocated to the United States Embassy in Kabul by Department of State central budget authorities.

Applicants should be familiar with the U.S. Department of State's guidance on travel to Afghanistan available at <http://travel.state.gov>.