

Department of State – U.S. Embassy, Kabul

Program Office: Public Affairs Section, U.S. Embassy, Kabul, Afghanistan
Funding Opportunity Title: U.S. Embassy Kabul Women’s Economic Participation Research Project
Announcement Type: Grant or Cooperative Agreement
Funding Opportunity Number: SCAKAB-12-AW-006-SCA-04202012
Deadline for Applications: 30 May 2012
CFDA 19.501- Public Diplomacy Programs for Afghanistan and Pakistan

ELIGIBILITY

U.S., Afghan, and international organizations or companies are eligible to submit proposals but preference is given to local NGOs or to partnerships that develop capacity with Afghan NGOs or employees and include plans to transfer programs to sustainable local management.

Cost Sharing or Matching

This program does not require cost sharing.

Other Special Eligibility Criteria

Not Applicable.

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

I. Funding Opportunity Description

The U.S. Embassy Kabul Public Affairs Section (PAS) of the U.S. Department of State is pleased to announce funding is available for a research proposal on women’s economic participation in Afghanistan. Please follow all instructions below carefully.

Purpose of Grant: This grant will fund one comprehensive study of Afghan women's economic activity throughout the country. The purpose of the study is to create as complete as possible a picture of the totality of Afghan women's work, in the form of:

1. a map identifying key areas of women's participation throughout the country,
2. a detailed report, and
3. a directory of businesses either owned by Afghan women or employing large numbers of them.

Proposals should clearly demonstrate that the grantee has the organizational capacity to conduct research throughout the country and include a description of the proposed methodology. A combination of original research and analysis of existing studies and statistics is desired. Samples of the organization's previous work, particularly in economics or market research, are highly encouraged, in addition to resumes/CVs of key research and administrative personnel.

A competitive proposal will contain detailed information about how the grantee will:

1. Identify Afghan women entrepreneurs throughout the country and gain as much information as possible about their enterprises, for example:

- Industry;
- Quality of work relative to similar local businesses;
- Potential to scale up production;
- Partnerships with other businesses, NGOs, or international donors;
- Primary suppliers of raw materials;
- Business' primary market;
- Marketing/promotion techniques of their products;
- Whether the business is owned by the women themselves or by a male family member;
- Number of total employees; disaggregated by sex;
- Level of family support for business;
- Level of education and international experience of the women proprietors;
- Women's self-assessment of their business and its challenges;
- Ability to access credit through banks, NGOs, family, and other financial institutions;
- Women's self-assessment of the kind of support they need from the international community in order to sustain their businesses, other than grants or subsidies;
- Formal and informal women's business associations or groups;
- Grantee assessment of business' sustainability; and
- Any other information as deemed relevant by grantee.

2. Examine women's formal employment in each major economic center, answering to the extent possible the following questions:

- Which industries and/or specific firms are the largest employers of women?
- What are the primary obstacles to women's employment in these- culture, access to education, women's own willingness to work, overall employment situation?
- What are the typical hiring practices? Is there fair and open competition for jobs, for new hires and/or existing employees? How did these women find their jobs?
- Do workplaces have facilities for women? Does the organization/firm provide transportation or other incentives to facilitate women's employment?
- Are there training/upward mobility opportunities for women?
- Any other information as deemed relevant by grantee.

3. Identify key challenges for working Afghan women and provide detailed, frank recommendations as to how donor community money can best support increased women's economic empowerment.

The scope of this study should be limited to private organizations and should not attempt to categorize employment in the government or in agriculture.

II. Award Information

Funding Instrument Type: Grant

Floor of Individual Award Amounts: \$150,000

Ceiling of Individual Award Amounts: \$350,000

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

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

III. Eligibility Information: Unrestricted

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

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

IV. Application Submission and Deadline

Application Submission Process: Applicants must submit proposals electronically using Grants.gov or submit proposals to PAS Kabul directly at: KabulPDProposals@state.gov. If proposals are submitted to KabulPDProposals@state.gov, please include the Funding Opportunity Title and Funding Opportunity Number in the subject line of the email. Thorough

instructions on the Grants.gov application process are available at <http://www.grants.gov>. For questions relating to Grants.gov, please call the Grants.gov Contact Center at 1-800-518-4726. For questions about this solicitation, contact Cynthia Rafferty, Grants Manager, Public Affairs Section, U.S. Embassy, Kabul, Afghanistan, at:

Email: KabulPDProposals@state.gov (*Preferred method of communication*)

Application Deadline: All applications must be submitted on or before 30 May 2012, 11:59 p.m. eastern time. Applications submitted after 11:59 p.m. will be ineligible for consideration. **Begin the application process early**, as this will allow time to address any technical difficulties that may arise in advance of the deadline. There will be no exceptions to this application deadline.

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

Proposals submitted via email to the U.S. Embassy in Kabul should be sent to the following email address: kabulpdproposals@state.gov by May 30, 2012. Applications are accepted in English only, and final grant agreements will be concluded in English.

When submitting a proposal, applicants are required to include the Federal Assistance Application (Standard Form 424), which is available, along with guidance for completing this form, at: www.grants.gov or http://fa.statebuy.state.gov/content.asp?content_id=20&menu_id=68. Applicants are recommended to complete and submit the suggested local grants application format attached to this announcement. Applicants must complete and submit a detailed budget.

V. Review and Selection Process

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

Applicants must submit a full project description in accordance with the following instructions and the specified evaluation criteria. The instructions give a broad overview of what the project description should include while the evaluation criteria provide details of more program-specific information that is needed.

Cover Sheet: Provide a summary of the project description (no more than two pages) with reference to the amount and duration of the funding request.

Narrative: Outline a plan of action that describes the scope and detail of how the proposed work will be accomplished. Account for all functions or activities identified in the application. Cite factors that might accelerate or decelerate the work and state reasons for taking the proposed approach rather than alternatives. Describe any unusual features of the project, such as design or technological innovations, reductions in cost or time, or extraordinary social and community involvement.

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

Application Evaluation Criteria:

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

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

Organizational Capacity – The organization has expertise and demonstrates the ability to perform the proposed activities. Where partners are described, the applicant details each partner's respective role and provides curriculum vitas (CVs) for persons responsible for the project and

financial administration. Each key person responsible for the proposed project and its financial administration is listed and a CV for these persons is provided. (30 points)

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

VI. Award Administration

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

Anticipated Time to Award: Applicants should expect to be notified of the recommended concepts within 60 days after the submission deadline.

Closing Date: Applications will be accepted until no later than May 30, 2012.

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