

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

Federal Awarding Agency name: Public Affairs Section, U.S. Embassy Cotonou,
Department of State
Funding Opportunity Title: U.S. Embassy Cotonou - Public Affairs Section -
Small Grants Program
Announcement Type: Fixed Amount Award or Individual grant
Funding Opportunity Number: PAS-SGP-02-0001-FY16
Deadline for Applications January 21, 2016 at 22:00 (Cotonou time)
CFDA Number: 19.040 - Public Diplomacy Programs

CONTACT INFORMATION

For questions relating to Grants.gov, please call the Grants.gov Contact Center at 1-800-518-4726 or support@grants.gov

For assistance with the requirements of this solicitation, contact Mr. Romaric Mouftaou, Program Support Specialist, Public Affairs Section:

- By email: CotonouPASGrants@state.gov
- By post or in-person delivery: U.S. Embassy Cotonou, Boulevard de la Marina, 01B.P.2012 Cotonou, Benin.

Sending an email is the preferred method of communication.

Important Notes:

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

Any entity or individual wishing to apply for a grant with the U.S. Government needs to satisfy certain requirements before applying. 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.

- 1.) Step #1: Apply for a DUNS number on the following link
<http://fedgov.dnb.com/webform/pages/CCRSearch.jsp>
- 2.) Step #2: Apply for an NCAGE number on the following link
<https://eportal.nspa.nato.int/AC135Public/scage/RequestNewCAGE.aspx>
- 3.) Step #3: Register with SAM on the following link <https://www.sam.gov>
- 4.) Step #4: Register as an Authorized Organization Representative (AOR) on the following link <http://www.grants.gov/web/grants/applicants/organization-registration/step-3-username-password.html>

5.) For questions relating to Grants.gov, please call the Grants.gov Contact Center at 1-800-518-4726.

Please note that the U.S. Embassy in Cotonou is unable to assist with technical questions or problems applicants experience with Grants.gov, DUNS or SAM registrations. Please refer to the contact information for these organizations/processes listed in this NOFO.

Contents

A. PROGRAM DESCRIPTION.....
B. FEDERAL AWARD INFORMATION
C. ELIGIBILITY INFORMATION
D. APPLICATION AND SUBMISSION INFORMATION
E. APPLICATION REVIEW INFORMATION
F. FEDERAL AWARD ADMINISTRATION INFORMATION
G. FEDERAL AWARING AGENCY CONTACTS
H. OTHER INFORMATION

A. PROGRAM DESCRIPTION

The U.S. Embassy in Cotonou, Benin is pleased to announce an open competition for assistance awards through this Notice of Funding Opportunity (NOFO). Embassy Cotonou invites all eligible non-for-profit organizations or individuals from Benin to submit a proposal.

Executive Summary

The Public Affairs Section of the U.S. Embassy in Cotonou seeks to promote and shares U.S. values and culture with a variety of Beninese audiences, especially the youth, women and people from rural areas. Domains of interests include but are not limited to English, Press Freedom, Entrepreneurship, Leadership, Women's Empowerment, Good Governance, Civil Society, Environment, Biodiversity, Food Security, Human Rights and Arts and Culture. The US Embassy intends to issue an award for a period of twelve (12) months from \$5,000.00 to \$20,000.00 to fund any project that advances the goals outlined below.

Goal

Project proposals submitted through this NOFO should address one of the following goals:

- *Strengthen Democracy and Good Governance*
- *Expand Development, Economic Prosperity and Trade Opportunities*
- *Advance Education, especially the use of the English language*
- *Promote Sustainable Environment and Biodiversity*
- *Security and Regional Stability*

Objectives

Project proposals submitted through this NOFO should address one of the following objectives:

Objectives related to the goal of "Strengthening Democracy and Good Governance"

- *Advance the rule of law*
- *Improve the judiciary system*
- *Advance accountability in public governance*
- *Increase women and youth participation in politics*
- *Enhance capacity and professionalism of the medias*
- *Empower civil society*
- *Promote civic engagement with citizens*

Objectives related to the goal of "Expanding Development, Economic Prosperity and Trade Opportunities"

- *Support efforts to improve the business environment*
- *Encourage and support entrepreneurship with women and youth.*
- *Promote the African Growth Opportunity Act (AGOA) with local entrepreneurs*
- *Promote access to capital for startups*
- *Identify, promote, and support U.S. investment in Benin.*

Objectives related to the goal of “Advancing Education, especially the use of the English language”

- *Support English-language acquisition and use, especially by youth and women*
- *Increase Beninese access to American scholarships and exchanges programs*
- *Promote the use of resources available at the American spaces*
- *Empower youth and women with strong leadership skills*
- *Provide access to technology and social medias, especially with youth and women*
- *Increase official and cultural exchanges to promote appreciation for shared values*
- *Promote American sports in Benin: Sports Diplomacy*

Objectives related to the goal of “Promoting Sustainable Environment and Biodiversity

- *Contribute to clean and green public spaces*
- *Protect the biodiversity*
- *Educate the populations on environmentally-friendly behaviors*

Objectives related to the goal of “Ensuring Security and Regional Stability”

- *Promote religious tolerance and mutual understanding*
- *Prevent risks of violent extremism*
- *Countering radical messages*
- *Expand opportunities to vulnerable populations, including at risk youth*

Proposals Description

Proposal narratives should include a brief commitment to implement the program for the base period pending successful performance and the availability of funds.

The safety and security of all participants and activities under this project are the sole responsibility of the award recipient

B. FEDERAL AWARD INFORMATION

Anticipated Award Type: Fixed Amount Award or Individual grant

Number of Awards Anticipated: 4 to 15

Anticipated Award Amount: The award floor is set at \$500.00. The award ceiling is set at \$10,000.00.

Anticipated Award Period: 12 months **Anticipated Start Date:** March, 2016

Potential for Option Years: No

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 (appropriation XXX) and authorized by Smith Mundt, and is subject to the statutory limitations of such funding.

Eligibility is open to all non-profit, non-governmental organizations, and individuals. Organizations may sub-contract with other entities, but only one, **non-profit, non-governmental entity or individual** can be the prime recipient of the award. **For profit entities are not eligible to be the prime recipient of an award under this NOFO.** When sub-contracting with other entities, the responsibilities of each entity must be clearly defined in the proposal. Per Section D, **applicants must submit proof of their non-profit status with their proposal submission** (e.g. proof of 501(c)(3) status, Benin NGO license). Applications that do not include proof of non-profit status will not be considered. Please refer to Section D for funding restrictions.

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/pages/CCRSearch.jsp>. 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. Embassy Cotonou may not make an award to an applicant until the applicant has complied with all applicable DUNS and SAM requirements by the time the Embassy is ready to make an award. Embassy Cotonou 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://cotonou.usembassy.gov>

If you require special accommodation to access any information contained in this announcement, please contact Mr. Romaric Mouftaou, Program Support Specialist, Public Affairs Section:

- By email: CotonouPASGrants@state.gov
- By post or in-person delivery: U.S. Embassy Cotonou, Boulevard de la Marina, 01B.P.2012 Cotonou, Benin.
- **Sending an email is the preferred method of communication.**

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 Monitoring and evaluation (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 in the related thematic/program objective, 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 or CV 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 should clearly detail the indicators to measure the success:

- Indicator 1: **XXXX**
- Indicator 2: **XXXX**
- Indicator 3: **XXXX**
- Indicator 4: **XXXX**
- Indicator 5: **XXXX**

Applicants are encouraged to include additional indicators they may 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(s). *[Only include if the NOFO offers option years. Delete if no option years]*

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/month x 50% = \$25/month x 12 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 XX 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: Applicants must include a letter of intent in their application if they plan to enter into partnership with another person and/or organization for the execution of the project. 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.

Section 8 - Proof of Non-profit Status

Documentation to demonstrate the applicant's non-profit status (e.g. U.S.-based organizations should submit a copy of their IRS determination letter, Beninese organizations should provide a copy of their NGO license).

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 **January 21, 2016 at 22:00 (Cotonou 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 (change language for rolling proposals submissions). If applicants 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 Mr. Romaric Mouftaou, Program Support Specialist, Public Affairs Section:

- By email: CotonouPASGrants@state.gov
- By post or in-person delivery: U.S. Embassy Cotonou, Boulevard de la Marina, 01B.P.2012 Cotonou, Benin.
- **Sending an email is the preferred method of communication.**

Questions must be received on or before **January 11, 2016 at 22:00 (Cotonou time)**. Answers to questions will be posted at <http://www.grants.gov> and <http://Cotonou.usembassy.gov>

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%20NSPA%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.

Step 4:

- As part of the registration on Grants.gov, applicants should designate and register an Authorized Organization Representative (AOR) on www.grants.gov

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 Romaric Mouftaou at CotonouPASProposals@state.gov or phone +0022921367868 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 the Embassy. 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.

The Embassy reviews all proposals for eligibility. Eligible proposals will be subject to compliance of federal 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 (20 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 (20 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 (10 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 (20 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 (20 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 Cotonou 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 various 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 Program Officer for review and approval. At this stage potential requests for programmatic adjustments or conditions of an award may be suggested.
4. Upon approval, the proposal is then assigned to a Grants Officer and 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 may be required to submit 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. The Embassy 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 Cotonou 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:

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. All reports are to be submitted electronically.

G. FEDERAL AWARDING AGENCY CONTACTS

For questions on the requirements of this solicitation, please contact Mr. Romaric Mouftaou, Program Support Specialist, Public Affairs Section:

- By email: CotonouPASGrants@state.gov
- By post or in-person delivery: U.S. Embassy Cotonou, Boulevard de la Marina, 01B.P.2012 Cotonou, Benin.

Sending an email is the preferred method of communication.

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 please contact Mr. Romaric Mouftaou, Program Support Specialist, Public Affairs Section:

- By email: CotonouPASGrants@state.gov
- By post or in-person delivery: U.S. Embassy Cotonou, Boulevard de la Marina, 01B.P.2012 Cotonou, Benin.

Sending an email is the preferred method of communication.

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 Cotonou by Department of State central budget authorities.

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