

Notice of Funding Opportunity

U.S. Embassy Dili

Title: Women Weaving a Better Future through Better Business

Announcement Type: New Grant
Funding Opportunity Title: Women Weaving a Better Future through Better Business
Funding Opportunity Number: DI-15-NOFO-001
Catalog of Federal Domestic Assistance Number: 19.801
Funding Amount: One grant – totaling up to \$496,900 USD
Expected Period of Performance: 24 months
Key Dates:
1. Applications must be submitted by Monday September 14, 2015
2. Application review and selection is expected by September 21, 2015.

Executive Summary:

The U.S. Embassy in Dili, Timor-Leste announces the Notice of Funding Opportunity (NOFO) for a new program whose goal is to help female artisans develop a sustainable business collective, access international markets, and increase revenue. The program will support the following activities, with the goal of advancing economic empowerment for women and girls in Timor-Leste:

- Modernize local skills and develop business practices for artisan weavers in Timor-Leste;
- Develop a united, organized collective for women weavers;
- Identify new markets and develop strategies for international market access;
- As part of the collective development, support a scholarship and internship program for girls;
- Sub-grants to local organizations working to empower women through economic opportunity in the artisan industry.

Eligibility for this NOFO is limited to: educational and research institutions; foreign public entities; U.S. not-for-profit/non-governmental organizations (NGOs) subject to section 501 (c) (3) of the U.S. tax code, and foreign not-for-profits/NGOs/social enterprises.

One grant in FY 2014 Economic Support Funds (ESF) will be awarded under this NOFO.

The initial period of performance will be for two years. Funding authority rests in the Foreign Assistance Act of 1961, as amended.

All applicants should be familiar with OMB Circular 2 CFR Part 200.

Contact Person:
Grants Team, U.S. Embassy Dili
+670-332-4684 x2063
DiliGrants@state.gov

Please read the [entire NOFO package](#) before submitting an application, and follow the steps immediately in order to submit before the deadline. Applications that do not meet the eligibility criteria and do not contain all of the required information will not be considered.

Program Description

A. Funding Opportunity Description

i. Background

Independent for just over ten years, Timor-Leste is confronting many challenges as a new nation. Among these, some of the most difficult are endemic rates of gender-based violence, limited economic opportunity, and pressures for girls to terminate education early. As a largely male-dominated culture, in a post-conflict context, women and girls bear the brunt of development challenges. Incidents of rape and incest have disproportionately affected school-age girls, forcing them to leave school early. According to a local justice-sector NGO, 97% of their clients who experience incest are less than 25 years of age and 100% are female. Teen pregnancies are met with pressure from communities to quit school and marry— often resulting in girls marrying their abusers. Adult women also experience exceptionally high rates of violence, with more than 50% of women reporting partner abuse at least once in their lifetime. Part of the driving factor in this cycle is the limited economic opportunities, which create economic pressures on families. Further, women are generally restricted from participating in much formal economic work. Instead, they are expected to stay at home and tend to the family. As a result, women often lack resources to leave abusive relationships.

Bright spots, literally and figuratively, in this framework are the intricate woven fabrics, tais, that Timorese women produce. The artistic tapestries have been a form of currency in trade for much of Timor-Leste's history. They are still utilized in formal ceremonies and, where it still exists, bride prices. The success of occasional appearances by individual producers at international crafts fairs made possible by funding from NGOs, including sell-out trips to the renowned International Folk Art Market in Santa Fe, New Mexico, indicates that the products have commercial potential. However, producers currently lack access to broader markets needed to sustain a business operation. In addition to providing a much-needed export product to propel economic growth, a more developed tais industry would directly empower women and girls. Timor-Leste is also entering a new era of its economic future as it begins to build service-oriented skills. Its bid to become a part of ASEAN will also open many jobs which demand business and service skills, which are currently in short supply across most of Timor-Leste.

ii. Program Goals

This program aims to empower women and girls to avoid abusive relationships, stay in school, become economically self-sufficient, contribute to the evolving economy of Timor-Leste, and promote cultural traditions of Timor-Leste through the modernization of marketing strategies and development of collectives for traditional tapestries.

iii. Main Activities

1. **Activity One: Market research and market access identification.** The recipient, possibly through a sub-contract with a business development consultant, will conduct research and work with Timorese organizations to identify market opportunities. This activity will include facilitating market access for Timorese businesses and may

include bringing businesses to Timor-Leste or arranging Timorese participations in international marketplaces.

2. **Activity Two: Collective Development, Including the Framework for Supporting Adolescent Girls.** Working with existing artisan groups in Timor-Leste, this activity will strengthen weaving collectives, assisting them with setting up business models and enhancing their ability to market. As a required part of the collective development, the implementer will create and manage a mechanism whereby a portion of the collective’s enhanced revenues will be used to support scholarships for adolescent girls to continue their education. Grant funds will not be used for these scholarships, and the implementer does not need to account for the potential earnings (program income) or the scholarships in the budget request. Additionally, implementers are encouraged to develop mentorship or internship opportunities for adolescent girls to foster an ongoing membership in the collective and to enhance business skills in a new generation.

3. **Activity Three: Business Management and Financial Skills Training for Collective Members.** Through partnerships with the collectives, this activity will offer training to individual members of the collective, allowing them to better manage their businesses, contribute to management of the collective, and manage household and business finances.

iv. Expected Results and Performance Indicators

- Additional access to international markets for Timorese weaving collectives
- Collectives develop market and sustainability business plans
- Scholarships are sustainably funded by collective, independent of U.S.government funding
- Adolescent girls receive mentoring and/or internship opportunities
- Increased annual income for collective members

B. Federal Award Information

i. Available Funding and Legislative Authority

The source of this funding is Economic Support Funds.

ii. Summary of Award Information

Type of Award:	Grant(s)
Appropriated Fiscal Year of Funds:	FY 2014 Economic Support Funds
Approximate Total Funding:	Up to 496,900 USD
Approximate Number of Awards:	1
Anticipated Award Date:	September 2015
Anticipated Project Completion Date:	24 months

iii. Deadline

Deadline for Applications:	September 14, 2015
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C. Eligibility Information

Applications by applicants which do not meet the eligibility by the time of an application deadline will result the application not being reviewed.

1. Eligible Applicants:
Eligibility for this NOFO is limited to: educational and research institutions, foreign public entities, U.S. not-for-profit/non-governmental organizations (NGOs) subject to section 501 (c) (3) of the U.S. tax code, and foreign not-for-profit organizations/NGOs/social enterprises.
2. Cost-Sharing or Matching – encouraged, but will not be a factor for consideration in the panel review process. Applicants should show any cost share in the budget proposal.
3. Other: Applicants must supply evidence that they have significant experience working on artisan business development and the ability to partner with organizations already working in Timor-Leste.

D. Application and Submission Information

1. Address to Request Application Package

This NOFO contains all of the information and links necessary for potential applicants to apply. This NOFO and all required forms can be downloaded at www.grants.gov, or may be requested via email from DiliGrants@state.gov.

2. Content and Form of Application Submission

Please read the entire NOFO and follow the guidelines for proposal preparation below. Applicants must include the following in the proposal submission. **All submissions must be in English.**

1. Table of Contents that lists application contents and attachments (if any);
2. Completed and signed SF-424, SF-424A and SF424B, as directed on www.grants.gov. The Certifications and Assurances that your organization is agreeing to in signing the 424 are available at <https://statebuy.state.gov/fa/>;
3. If your organization engages in lobbying activities, a Disclosure of Lobbying Activities (SF-LLL) form is required;
4. Proposal Narrative (not to exceed 10 pages, single-spaced, 12 point Times New Roman font in Microsoft Word, at least one-inch margins), following the structure described below. The proposal narrative should identify inputs, outputs, and outcomes of the proposal activities, timelines, and any qualitative or quantitative targets, and impact.
5. Summary and detailed Budget in USD, in Excel, using the format shown in the

- budget template;
6. Detailed Budget Narrative (not to exceed 6 pages) that includes an explanation for each line item in the spreadsheet, as well as the source and description of any cost share offered;
 7. Monitoring and Evaluation Plan detailing how the project's impact and effectiveness will be monitored and evaluated throughout the project, using the attached template.
 8. Attachments may be included, (letters of commitment from the applicant institution and sub-award partners, CVs of key personnel, project experience, etc.) but should not be unreasonably lengthy; see NOFO for details on required attachments, if any;
 9. If your organization has a negotiated indirect cost rate agreement (NICRA) and includes NICRA charges in the budget, include your latest NICRA as a pdf file;
 10. A PDF file copy of your organization's most recent financial audit;
 11. Number all pages, including budget and addenda;

Applicants under consideration for an award will likely be subject to a pre-award survey to determine fiscal responsibility and ensure adequacy of financial controls. This survey contains a list of criteria for determining whether the applicant's accounting system meets the minimum standards to be eligible for USG funding. These standards include appropriate accounting software and written financial management policies and accounting procedures. The pre-award survey will involve assessing the extent to which these are in place within an organization and being actively implemented.

E. Application Review Information

Criteria: Each application will be evaluated and scored on the five-part Proposal Components and the two-part Budget Components using a 100 point scale by a peer review committee of Department of State and other experts, as appropriate.

Proposal Narrative: The committee will score each of the five sections of the Proposal Narrative based on how completely they address the points described in the Proposal Narrative Guidance in Section E, i and ii. The importance of each section is indicated by the maximum score as follows:

Executive Summary – 5 points
Organization Capacity and Past Performance – 20 points
Program Strategy – 30 points
Performance Monitoring and Evaluation – 15 points
Management Plan – 20 points

Budget: The committee will also review the budget components in order to assign up to 10 points for the overall program budget and cost-effectiveness.

Budget Appropriateness – 5 points
Cost-effectiveness – 5 points

i. Criteria Components

1. Executive Summary (5 points):

This section should be a succinct, one-page summary containing information that the applicant believes best represents its proposed competition and includes the name and contact information for the project's main point of contact; the description of the problem this project seeks to address; the description of the intended direct beneficiaries; the project's purpose and expected results both to impact women from Timor-Leste and the broader market access for Timorese artisan products; and a one paragraph program description.

2. Organizational Capacity and Past Performance (20 points):

This section of the application provides information about the applicant organization and any proposed key partners. It provides evidence that the applicant has the ability to successfully carry out the program activities of the cooperative agreement.

Provide a description of the applicant organization – including its general purpose, goals, annual budget (including funding sources), and major past and current activities and projects undertaken. Demonstrated success in the proposed will be viewed favorably. Include a description of all key partners for this project and of the proposed working relationship with them. Applicants should clearly distinguish between partners with whom they intend to enter into a sub-grant or sub-contract relationship and those with whom they intend to collaborate, but not transfer, program funds.

Discuss the applicant's organization and key partners' past experience in providing partnership support services, and/or evaluating programs similar to that requested. Describe areas of key competency, past domestic/international experience on addressing these barriers, if any, and structure of the organization. Describe how many people previously reached with prior projects, what changes have resulted from it, etc. Please include statistics (if appropriate) and specific examples as evidence of the organization's previous impact along the proposed project aims. As an attachment, please provide at least one past performance reference, which describes any contracts, grants, and/or cooperative agreements that the applicant organization has implemented involving similar or related programs over the past three years. Please provide this reference in an attachment and include the following information: name and address of the organization for which the work was performed; current telephone number and email address of responsible representative from the organization for which the work was performed; contract/grant name and number (if any); annual amount received for each of the last three years and beginning and end dates; brief description of the project/assistance activity; and key project accomplishments/results achieved to date. Applicants must demonstrate that they have the ability to work in Timor-Leste and communicate with target communities.

3. Program Strategy (30 points):

Propose a clear and realistic implementation plan to comprehensively address objectives of this Notice of Funding Opportunity (section A). The strategy should further outline the Program Goals and Expected Results for the project. It should also outline the

relevant and appropriate Main Activities to accomplish the Goals and Expected Results. Explain the assumptions on which the success of the project depends and the involvement of other stakeholders. Strategy should give attention to thoughtful partnerships with local community, women's groups, men and boys; to building local capacity; and to sustainability of program activities and results.

In table format, please present a brief, one to two page work plan matrix with a timeline including target dates for activities, which reflects the overall program approach and its objectives. (see sample attached)

Include information on how the program and budget could be expanded should matching funds be made available from other donors.

4. Performance Monitoring and Evaluation (15 points):

Give a clear description of assumptions, short-term and long-term project goal(s), objective(s), activities, outputs and intended results linked to your project; provide matching indicators and a plan to demonstrate a baseline at project inception that measures the current status of conditions that the project seeks to affect. Include a detailed table listing by program objectives the output and outcome-based performance indicators. Discuss how progress towards the expected results will be measured.

5. Management Plan (20 points):

Describe the proposed management structure for this project and provide a project organizational chart in the attachments. Include in the narrative a description of the responsibilities of team members and include key partners, reporting relationships, authority, and lines of communication within and among each of the team members or organizations.

Include job descriptions and CVs of team members (e.g. Project Coordinator) as attachments outside the 10-page limit, which demonstrates that the proposed team is consistent with the project's requirements and needs.

ii. Budget Components

1. Budget Appropriateness (5 points):

Budgeted items are obviously necessary to the achievement of the goals and activities as presented in the application.

2. Cost-effectiveness (5 points):

Applicants should propose expenditures that are reasonable, allowable, and allocable to the proposed activities and that reflect the applicant's understanding of 2 CFR 200.

3. Unique Entity Identifier and SAMS

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

about SAM.gov and useful guides for setting-up a new account, updating an existing account, or renewing an expired account can be found at: <http://statebuy.state.gov/fa/Pages/SAMInfo.aspx>. Foreign-based applicants are strongly encouraged to review these guides when creating an account with SAM.gov. Each applicant is required to: (i) Be registered in SAM.gov before submitting its application; (ii) provide a valid unique entity identifier in its application; and (iii) continue to maintain an active SAM registration with current information at all times during which it has an active Federal award or an application or plan under consideration by a Federal awarding agency. The Department of State may not make a Federal award to an applicant until the applicant has complied with all applicable unique entity identifier and SAM requirements and, if an applicant has not fully complied with the requirements by the time the Department of State is ready to make a Federal award, DOS may determine that the applicant is not qualified to receive a Federal award and use that determination as a basis for making a Federal award to another applicant. Further, applicants must maintain an active account, with current information, while its application is under consideration for funding. To keep an active SAM.gov account, applicants must renew it at least once each year. If an organization's account expires, the organization cannot submit a grant application until it is renewed.

4. Submission Method and Dates

Completed applications should be submitted electronically through www.grants.gov or via email to the grants team at U.S. Embassy Dili at DiliGrants@state.gov. **Please follow all NOFO instructions carefully and start early to ensure you have time to collect all of the required information.** All applications must be submitted by September 14, 2015 EDT. Applications received after the deadline will not be considered, unless a late filing has been approved in advance by the Department of State.

Direct all questions regarding grants.gov registration and submissions to a grants.gov Customer Service Representative. The Customer Service Center can be reached at 1-800-518-4726 or at support@grants.gov. The center is open Monday through Friday, 7 A.M. to 9 P.M. EDT.

5. Funding Restrictions: The following activities and costs are not covered under this announcement:

- Construction is not an allowable activity under this award.
- Activities that appear partisan or that support individual or party electoral campaigns;
- Direct support or the appearance of direct support for any religious organization, to include repair or building of structures used for religious purposes.
- Military assistance of any kind, including weapons buy back or rewards programs.
- Purchase of firearms, ammunition, or removal of unexploded ordnances.

- Para-police (i.e., militias, neighborhood watch, security guards) and prison-related projects. This restriction includes no funding of any secondary need in a law-enforcement organization.
- Payments for any partner government, military or civilian government employee salary or pension.
- Vehicle purchases to include motorcycles. (However, farm equipment, such as small tractors, and transportation costs will be considered.)
- Duplication of services immediately available through municipal, provincial, or national government.
- Funds for market research, advertising (unless public service related to grant program) or other promotional expenses.
- Expenses made prior to the approval of a proposal or unreasonable expenditures will not be reimbursed.

F: Federal Award Administration Information

1. Award Notices

The grant shall be written, signed, and awarded by the Grants Officer and administered by both the Grants Officer and the Grants Officer Representative. 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 either mail or facsimile transmission. Organizations whose applications will not be funded will also be notified in writing.

Issuance of this NOFO does not constitute an award commitment on the part of the Government nor does it commit the Government to pay for costs incurred in the preparation and submission of proposals. Furthermore, the Government reserves the right to reject any or all proposals received.

2. Administrative and National Policy

Prior to submitting an application, applicants should review all the terms and conditions and required certifications that will apply to this award to ensure they will be able to comply. The terms and conditions are available on the State Department's procurement website at: <http://fa.statebuy.state.gov/>

Applicants should also be familiar with the OMB circular that will apply to this cooperative agreement: OMB Uniform Guidance: Cost Principles, Audit, and Administrative Requirements for Federal Awards (2 CFR Chapter I, Chapter II, Part 200, et al.)

3. Reporting Requirements

The Recipient, at a minimum, shall provide financial, progress, and final reports. Please note that all substantiating documentation supporting reporting and data collected, including survey responses and contact information, must be maintained for a minimum

of three years and provided to the Department of State upon request. All reports must be written in English.

i. Financial Reports

The Recipient is required to submit quarterly financial reports throughout the project period, using Form FFR SF-425, the Federal Financial Report form, as well as forms suggested by the Grants Officer Representative. Form FFR (SF-425) can be found on OMB's website here: http://www.whitehouse.gov/omb/grants_forms/. Financial reports are due 30 days after the end of each fiscal year quarter.

ii. Progress Reporting

While the grantee will be in frequent contact with the Embassy concerning the project details, the grantee is required to submit quarterly program progress reports using page 1 of Form SF-PPR Performance Progress Report, which can be found at OMB's website http://www.whitehouse.gov/omb/grants_forms as well as forms suggested by the Grants Officer Representative (GOR). The Embassy may provide a more detailed reporting template. Progress reports are due 30 days after the end of the quarterly reporting period and must use the template provided by the GOR.

iii. Final Report

The final report will be due no later than ninety days after completion or termination of all project activities. The Final Report shall include the following elements: executive summary, successes, outcomes, how the project has increased science capacity in the regions selected and addressed the other goals of the project, and a final financial report.

G: Agency Contact

Any prospective applicant who has questions concerning the contents of this NOFO should email them to Dili Grants Team at DiliGrants@state.gov. Note that once the Request for Proposals deadline has passed Department of State staff in Washington, D.C. and overseas at U.S. Embassies/Missions may not discuss this competition with applicants until the review process has been completed.