

## Request for Proposals (RFP)

**Program Office:** Public Affairs Office at the United States Mission to NATO  
**Funding Opportunity Title:** The Future of NATO: Opportunities and Challenges  
**Announcement Type:** Grant  
**Funding Opportunity Number:** S-BE500-14RFP-001  
**Deadline for Applications:** August 31, 2014, 11:59 p.m. Brussels time

### I. BACKGROUND

The North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) is the most successful military alliance in history. In his March 26 speech to European youth, President Obama called NATO the “bedrock” of American and European security. NATO remains the quintessential expression of the transatlantic bond between the United States and Europe. NATO will continue to play a key role in keeping the world secure and its Allies safe.

The September 4-5 2014 Summit in Wales will focus on the future of the Alliance in the light of ongoing crisis with Russia in Ukraine and the transition to a NATO Train, Advise, and Assist mission in Afghanistan. In addition, NATO heads of state and government will broadly discuss NATO’s capabilities and defense spending; interoperability and cooperation with the global partners; and Afghanistan after 2014.

So, what comes next? We need to be prepared to discuss the strategic implications of the outcomes of the Summit and what comes after, while continuing to deliver the message of a strong, ready, and capable NATO to the leaders and a general public from both the allied and partnership countries.

### II. PROJECT DESCRIPTION

The U.S. Mission to NATO Public Affairs Section (PAS) is soliciting proposals from not-for-profit, non-governmental organizations, think tanks, and academic institutions that focus on international affairs, defense and security issues, and U.S. and European relations. The purpose of this solicitation is to encourage public discussion and creative public engagement on the major theme of “NATO: Beyond the 2014 Summit in Wales.”

We are looking forward to working with partner institutions to discuss the implications of the outcomes of the 2014 Summit, and to emphasize the importance of the Alliance and shed light on important topics such as the NATO-Russia relationship, cybersecurity, maritime cooperation, the roll of and collaboration with partners, women in peace and security, and the way forward on defense spending, to name a few.

Additional goals include combating misinformation and delivering clear messages about the importance of the NATO Alliance and its mission to a broad audience including the general public, youth and future leaders, the security and defense community, policy makers and opinion shapers. We are hoping to stimulate new ideas and to encourage public dialogue on the priorities for the NATO in the upcoming years.

The activities funded with a Federal Assistance Award (Grant) up to \$45,000 might embrace (but should not be limited to) conferences, symposiums, discussions, public debates, competitions, etc.

We encourage new and creative approaches that utilize digital technology, social media and other innovative means.

### III. ELIGIBILITY

Eligibility is limited to not-for-profit organizations, non-governmental organizations, think tanks, and academic institutions that have demonstrated expertise in international affairs, defense and security issues, and U.S. and European relations. The Department encourages organizations that have not previously received international program funding from the U.S. Government to apply under this announcement.

Applicants must:

A. Be registered in the System for Award Management SAM located at [www.sam.gov](http://www.sam.gov) prior to submitting an application; AND

B. 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 an agency.

#### Cost Sharing or Matching

This program does not require cost sharing however cost sharing is encouraged.

### IV. CONTACT INFORMATION

For questions and assistance with the requirements of this solicitation, contact Malgorzata Wolfe, Grant Officer Representative, Public Affairs Section, U.S. Mission to NATO, Brussels at: [USNATOPASProposals@state.gov](mailto:USNATOPASProposals@state.gov) (preferred method of communication)

### APPLICATION AND SUBMISSION INFORMATION

**Award Period:** up to 12 months

**Number of awards anticipated:** 1-2

**Award Amount:** The award ceiling is set at \$45,000.

**Application Submission Process:** Applicants must submit concept papers electronically using the following address: [USNATOPASProposals@state.gov](mailto:USNATOPASProposals@state.gov).

**Application Deadline:** Applications may be submitted at any time for consideration before August 31, 2014, 11:59 p.m. Brussels time. Applications received after 11:59 p.m. will be ineligible for consideration. **Applicants are encouraged to 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.

Please note that review may take up to 60 days. 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.

**Anticipated Time to Award:** Applicants should expect to be notified of the committee decision by October 3, 2014.

Issuance of the RFP 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.

**Application Content:** Applicants must follow the RFP instructions and conditions contained herein and supply all information required. **Failure to furnish all information or comply with stated requirements will result in disqualification from the competition.** Applicants must set forth full, accurate, and complete information as required by this RFP. The penalty for making false statements in proposals to the USG is prescribed on [18 U.S.C.1001](#).

Proposals (without section 1) may not exceed 5 double-spaced pages in 12-point, Times New Roman font with 1-inch margins. Shorter applications are encouraged. Longer applications will be considered non-responsive and will not be reviewed. This requirement excludes the allowable appendices, which are identified in Section 6 below. Organizations are permitted to submit multiple concept papers, but should be aware that USNATO seeks to provide opportunities to as many organizations as possible. The proposal must consist of the following:

**Section 1 - Application for Federal Assistance (SF-424):**

The SF424 is the standard cover sheet for grant applications. This form and instructions can be found on-line at: <https://statebuy.state.gov/fa/Pages/Forms.aspx>

**Section 2 - Abstract:**

The abstract is limited to 300 words in length. It must be in English and it must provide a summary of the identified need, proposed activities, and expected results and timeline.

**Section 3 - Problem Statement:**

The problem statement must describe the need for the project. Corroboration of the perceived problem should be presented, with any available qualitative and quantitative information.

**Section 4 – Project Goals/Implementation Plan:**

The applicant must specify the goals and objectives of the project, relative to the problem statement. Goals are general statements of intent; Objectives define a specific problem or task to be accomplished. The proposed activities should be described in sufficient detail to show how objectives and goals will be met. Supporting information should include:

- project description
- timeframe of project
- program/schedule if applicable (conferences, symposiums or similar)
- press and social media involvement
- target audience
- program impact
- description of how success will be measured with specific performance indicators and expected outputs

**Section 5 - Organizational Capability:**

Applications must include a clear description of the applicant's management structure, previous experience with U.S. Government grants, and expertise in defense and security issues. Besides information about the organization as a whole, this section must also identify the proposed management structure and staffing plan for the proposed project.

**Section 6 - Appendices:**

The concept paper submission must include three appendices. Only the appendices listed below may be included as part of the application:

- (a) **Budget (Required)** – 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 **budget may not exceed 1 page in length and needs to be calculated in U.S. dollars.**
- (b) **Budget Narrative (Required)** - 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.
- (c) **Resume (Required)** – a resume, not to exceed 1 page in length, must be included for the proposed key staff person, 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.

## V. AWARD SELECTION CRITERIA

U.S. NATO Public Affairs will review all proposals for eligibility. The U.S. Embassy reserves the right to request any additional programmatic and/or financial information regarding the proposal. Proposals will be funded based on an evaluation of how the proposal meets the solicitation review criteria, U.S. foreign policy objectives, and the priority needs of the U.S. Embassy. All proposals submitted under this request will undergo a technical review by embassy personnel; all proposals deemed technically eligible will be evaluated by an embassy review committee. Committee members may make conditions and recommendations on any given proposal in order to enhance the proposed program.

**Evaluation Criteria:** Applicants should note that the following criteria (1) serve as a standard against which all proposals will be evaluated, and (2) serve to identify the significant matters that should be addressed in all proposals. The USG will award grants to the applicants whose offers represent the best value to the USNATO on the basis of technical merit and cost.

Each application will be evaluated by a review committee of USNATO staff. The evaluation criteria have been tailored to the requirements of this RFP.

- **Problem Statement:** This section should identify the importance and relevance of the applicant’s proposal to the USNATO goals and priorities.
- **Project Goals/Implementation Plan:** Applicants should describe what they propose to do and how they will do it. 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 review panel will be viewing the implementation plan in terms of how well it addresses the problem statement, relevance of the goals and

objectives, feasibility and creativity of the proposed activities and their timeline for completion.

- **Organizational Capability:** Proposals should demonstrate the ability to develop and implement suggested program(s). Applicants must demonstrate how their resources, capabilities, and experience will enable them to achieve the stated goals and objectives. In addition, applicants should describe how and with whom they will collaborate to meet project goals.
- **Appendices:**
  - **Budget:** Costs shall be evaluated for realism, control practices, and efficiency. The Department of State must determine that the costs paid for this award are reasonable, allowable, and allocable to the proposed project activities. This will consist of a review of the Budget to determine if the overall costs are realistic for the work to be performed, and if the costs are consistent with the program narrative.
  - **Resume:** The review panel will consider the appropriateness of the selected project director in view of the role and responsibility that person will play in guiding the project through implementation to completion. Position descriptions submitted in lieu of the resume will be reviewed for the appropriateness of the qualifications and skills identified.

## **VI. AWARD ADMINISTRATION INFORMATION**

**Award Notices:** The grant award or co-operative agreement shall be written, signed, awarded, and administered by the Grants Officer. 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.

- **Reporting Requirements:** Grantees are required to submit quarterly program progress and financial reports throughout the project period. Progress and financial reports are due 30 days after the reporting period. Final programmatic and financial reports are due 90 days after the close of the project period. Progress reports at a minimum should be submitted via electronic mail to an address to be provided in the award.

## **VII. DISCLAIMER**

If a proposal is selected for funding, 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.

## **IX. AVAILABILITY OF FUNDS**

This RFP is subject to funds availability. Awards will be granted only if appropriated funds are allocated to the United States Mission to NATO by Department of State central budget authorities.