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**Questions to and Answers from the Office to Monitor and Combat Trafficking in Persons (TIP Office) about its Fiscal Year (FY) 2017 Solicitation: Request for Statements of Interest (SOI)**

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**ELIGIBILITY**

**Q. Who is eligible to apply for funding?**

**A.** U.S.-based and foreign non-profits, nongovernmental organizations (NGOs), for-profit organizations, institutions of higher education, and public international organizations (PIOs) are eligible to apply for funding under this solicitation.

For-profit organizations are not permitted to generate profits from grant-funded activities.

The Department of State's Office of the Procurement Executive must provide additional approval for grants awarded to for-profit entities.

Foreign governments are not eligible to apply, although governments may be beneficiaries of funded programs, provided that funding does not pay salaries of government agency personnel and that such assistance is not restricted by U.S. law or policy.

**Q. Are small businesses, as defined by the U.S. government, eligible to apply?**

**A.** Yes, but as with other for-profit organizations, small businesses may not make a profit from grant-funded activities.

**Q. Are local municipal entities in the United States eligible to apply for this particular funding opportunity?**

**A.** A municipal entity would not be eligible for consideration *unless* properly classified as an NGO, institution of higher education, or a for-profit organization.

**Q. As a for-profit company applying for funding, we do not plan to make a profit in carrying out our project, but base our time in-country on the standard per diem allowance for that country. Is this allowable?**

**A.** For-profit entities interested in submitting a SOI to the TIP Office may not generate a profit from grant-funded activities. If a SOI from a for-profit applicant is selected for the second stage of competition, applicants must submit a signed letter stating that no profits will be gained from grant activities.

Grantees are permitted to use project funds for work in-country in accordance with per diem allowances as regulated by the federal government.

**Q. Can organizations that currently receive funds from the TIP Office apply for additional funding under this solicitation?**

**A.** Yes, but only to propose projects which address the country-specific requirements listed in the Request for Statements of Interest.

**Q. Can an organization receiving funding from the State Department or from another government agency, related or un-related to TIP, apply?**

**A.** Yes. The eligibility requirements for applying to this solicitation do not restrict applicants based on other sources of funding from the United States government, including funding from other bureaus within the Department of State.

**LOGISTICS**

**Q. How much funding does the TIP Office have for FY 2017?**

**A.** FY 2017 funds have not yet been appropriated by Congress. All awards under this announcement are pending the appropriation of funds.

**Q. How much money will be allocated to each region or country?**

**A.** The final amount allocated for each country and region will depend on the quality of applications received and on the nature of the proposed activities.

**Q. What are the expected funding dates?**

**A.** The TIP Office expects to award grant funding to most successful applicants no later than September 30, 2017. However, awards made under this solicitation may be issued until the funding expires on September 30, 2018.

**Q. How much funding was awarded in FY2016?**

**A.** Last year, the TIP Office received applications from NGOs requesting more than \$114 million in funding – an amount that far exceeds the foreign assistance appropriation. We have so far awarded a total of 30 grants worth approximately \$22 million with FY 2016 funding. Detailed information about our FY 2016 awards is available at:

<http://www.state.gov/j/tip/intprog/index.htm>.

**Q. Where can I find specifics regarding previously funded projects?**

**A.** Applicants are encouraged to look to our website, <http://www.state.gov/j/tip/rls/other/index.htm>, for information on TIP Office-funded projects for prior years.

**Q. Please explain why some countries were not selected for funding consideration.**

**A.** Our foreign assistance priorities and funding decisions are guided by the global trends and country-specific recommendations in the annual Trafficking in Persons Report. The 2016 TIP Report is posted on our website at:

<http://www.state.gov/j/tip/rls/tiprpt/2015/index.htm>

The process of selecting countries for programming is done in consultation with other offices within the Department of State and with colleagues from USAID and the U.S. Department of

Labor. The number of programming priorities in the solicitation is limited by the amount of funding centrally-managed by our office. Please note that we will accept SOIs only for countries and sub-regions identified in the solicitation.

**Q. Can an organization propose to work domestically with refugees from one of the selected countries?**

**A.** Foreign assistance funds can only be used to fund projects outside of the United States. Therefore, SOIs focused on internal U.S. programs cannot be considered.

**Q. Can an organization apply to work in more than one country?**

**A.** The TIP Office will only consider SOIs addressing the specific countries and sub-regions identified in the programming objectives section of the solicitation. SOIs that add countries or sub-regions not addressed in the solicitation will not be considered.

Each organization may apply to work on more than one project identified in the programming objectives, but each is a stand-alone project. If an organization would like to apply for three separate projects, it must submit three separate SOIs.

**Q. Can a U.S.-based organization administer a program and related funds in a foreign country without a current presence in that country? And, if so, must the organization have a permanent presence in the country during the award?**

**A.** Any NGO is eligible to submit a SOI for work in any of the countries listed in the solicitation. The TIP Office cannot advise applicants on the content of their proposals or provide suggestions regarding proposals. SOIs will be evaluated based on the criteria listed in the solicitation.

**Q. Is there a limit to the number of SOIs that can be submitted by a single applicant?**

**A.** No, there is no limit. Organizations are permitted to submit multiple applications, but each application should be tailored to the organization's particular strengths and experience.

**CONTENT**

**Q. For regional projects, can I propose a project that is only active in one country or do I need to include more than one country?**

**A.** For regional projects (Malaysia-Indonesia, Balkans, SADC, Northern Triangle, etc.) SOIs must include more than one country listed within that region to qualify as a regional project. Please see other "Q&A's" to identify acceptable countries to include for each region.

**Q. Which countries would the TIP Office include in its classification of the Balkans?**

**A.** Albania, Bosnia, Croatia, Kosovo, Macedonia, Montenegro, and Serbia

**Q. Which countries would the TIP Office include in its classification of Southern African Development Community (SADC)?**

**A.** Angola, Botswana, Democratic Republic of Congo, Lesotho, Madagascar, Malawi, Mauritius, Mozambique, Namibia, Seychelles, South Africa, Swaziland, Tanzania, Zambia, Zimbabwe

**Q. Is it required that SOIs address all of the objectives listed below each programming objective heading?**

**A.** No. SOIs are required to address a minimum of one objective under each heading, but are encouraged to address each programming objective if possible.

**Q. Will the TIP Office fund research projects under this call for proposals?**

**A.** No, the TIP Office will not fund research projects under this call for proposals. The Office may publish a separate RFP later in the year Global Research and Innovation proposals.

**Q. Do I need to submit a complete budget at the time of submitting the SOI?**

**A.** No, only a total amount of funding in U.S. dollars is requested. No budget categories are required or requested for the SOI. If cost share is offered, then a total for cost share should also be provided. All cost figures must be in U.S. dollars.

**Q. Are organizations eligible to receive indirect funds?**

**A.** Regarding indirect costs, organizations without a Negotiated Indirect Cost Recovery Agreement (NICRA) agreement may account for a maximum of ten percent of these expenses as indirect costs when submitting a budget; please note this 10% deminimus rate is in accordance with 2 CFR 200.414(f). Organizations with NICRA agreements may account for indirect costs as a lump sum for the relevant percentage of funding as permitted by the NICRA. For organizations that do not have a NICRA and elect not to use the deminimus rate, identified "overhead costs" must be charged as direct costs.

**Q. Is there any indication concerning financial sharing of the costs? We would like to know if projects would be funded up to 100%. If not, what is the percentage of co-financing?**

**A.** We do not put a ceiling on cost share nor do we stipulate a percentage of cost share. The basis for determining the value of cash and in-kind contributions must be in accordance with 2 CFR 200.306 (Cost Sharing or Matching). The organization should be aware that if they are selected for an award, and they cannot provide the minimum amount of cost sharing as stipulated in the organizations approved budget, the DOS's contribution will be reduced in proportion to the organization's contribution

**Q. If an applicant proposes a partnership with government, civil society, another NGO or a PIO, does the partnership agreement have to be finalized or in writing at the time of the SOI application?**

**A.** Proposed partnerships should be referenced in the SIOs to ensure that they are considered in the review, but partnerships need not be formalized at the time the SOI is submitted. The TIP Office seeks SOIs that demonstrate strong local partnerships, and in the second stage of competition, applicants selected to submit full proposals are encouraged to submit letters of intent to cooperate.

**Q. Can an organization submit a letter of intent?**

**A.** Please review the solicitation carefully to ensure that your application meets the requirements for a SOI, which may not be the same as a letter of intent. The solicitation provides a detailed description of what needs to be included in the SOI.

**Q. Can an organization's project be focused on providing services in a government-run shelter [as an example], as opposed to running its own shelter?**

**A.** Yes, as long as the project attends to the country-specific requirements listed in the solicitation. Proposed partnerships should be referenced in the SOI to ensure they are considered in the review process. During the review process, the TIP Office will evaluate SOIs based on how effectively they address the requests explicitly outlined in the solicitation. The TIP Office encourages innovative and effective proposals to address these issues.

**APPLICATION SUBMISSION**

**Q. What does an application include?**

**A.** To ensure fairness, all applicants will have an equal chance to describe their proposed project. Detailed information on formatting requirements and more can be found in the solicitation. The Application Package must include:

1. Standard Forms (SF) 424 and 424B (Completed; Instructions provided)
2. Three-page Statement of Interest
  - In English, all in 12 Point font (Times New Roman or Arial)
  - Amount of funding requested in U.S. dollars. Cost share amount in U.S. Dollars, if it is proposed.
  - No budget categories are requested or required.

Please do not submit additional documents. No additional documents will be reviewed.

Please be sure to specifically designate the country you propose to work in on number 14 of the SF 424.

**Q. We are experiencing difficulty requesting a DUNS number.**

**A.** For information and assistance with DUNS numbers, please contact the Help Desk via phone at 866-705-5711 or via email at [govt@dnb.com](mailto:govt@dnb.com). In your message, provide your contact information and a brief description of the problems you are experiencing.

**Q. May an organization apply to work in a country where the organization is not physically present?**

**A.** Yes, an organization may propose to work in a country where they do not currently have a physical presence.

**Q. If an organization proposes a partnership with another organization, do all parties need to obtain a DUNS number, or only the applicant?**

**A.** For the purpose of filling out the SF 424s and submitting an application, the only DUNS number required is that of the applicant – the principle organization which is requesting funding.

Organizations proposing partnership or sub-grant agreements in their SOIs are advised that their partners may obtain a valid DUNS number in anticipation of selection for funding, as this information may be required for sub-grant agreements.

**Q. May two organizations or more organizations jointly submit an application/Statement of Interest?**

**A.** No, there must be a single or primary applicant. While applicants may designate one or more partner organizations as sub-grantees, there can only be one prime award recipient.

**Q. When are applications due?**

**A.** Applications are due on November 7, 2016 by 11:59 p.m. Eastern Daylight Time (EDT).

**Q. Is there any difference between submitting applications to [www.grantsolutions.gov](http://www.grantsolutions.gov) versus [www.grants.gov](http://www.grants.gov)? Should applicants submit applications to both?**

**A.** Applicants should not submit a SOI to both websites. While we will accept SOIs via either website, the TIP Office encourages applicants to use [www.grantsolutions.gov](http://www.grantsolutions.gov). Applicants should be aware that [www.grantsolutions.gov](http://www.grantsolutions.gov) requires a DUNS number to submit an application while Grants.gov requires both a DUNS number and a current CCR registration, which takes approximately 3-5 business days (for U.S.-based NGOs) to obtain and must be renewed annually. Regardless of the website used, all applicants are encouraged to initiate applications early in the application development process and to submit completed applications early to allow time to address any technical difficulties that may arise.

**Q. What should I do if I encounter difficulty in using the [www.grantsolutions.gov](http://www.grantsolutions.gov) or [www.grants.gov](http://www.grants.gov) websites?**

**A.** For assistance with GrantSolutions.gov please contact Customer Support at [help@grantsolutions.gov](mailto:help@grantsolutions.gov) or 1-866-577-0771 (toll charges for international callers) or 1-202-401-5282. Customer Support is available 8 AM – 6 PM EST, Monday – Friday, except for federal holidays. Please note that October 10, 2016 is a federal holiday and the help line will be closed.

For assistance with Grants.gov, please contact the Contact Center at [support@grants.gov](mailto:support@grants.gov) or call the Contact Center at 1-800-518-4726 (toll charges for international callers). The Contact Center is available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, except federal holidays. Please note that October 10, 2016 is a federal holiday and the help line will be closed.

**Q. The application requires a Mandatory Project Narrative on [www.grants.gov](http://www.grants.gov) in addition to the SF-424s. Is this the SOI or an additional document?**

**A.** Applicants should upload their SOI in this section of the application. Please do not submit additional documents.

**COMPETITIVE REVIEW**

**Q. How does the TIP Office decide which SOIs to fund?**

**A.** All SOIs received will first undergo a technical review. SOIs that pass the technical review are forwarded to the relevant U.S. embassy and regional bureau for review and comment. Recommendations are compiled and reviewed by the TIP Office staff, which then recommends the strongest SOIs for full proposals to the Ambassador-at-Large to Monitor and Combat Trafficking in Persons.

**Q. Please clarify the role of U.S. embassies in the 2017 competitive review process.**

**A.** All U.S. embassies have been informed of the FY 2017 solicitation and the embassies in the selected countries have been encouraged to post information about the solicitation on their websites. Embassies will review and comment on proposed projects that meet the technical requirements.

To preserve the fairness and integrity of the competitive process, please do not contact embassy personnel regarding your application. All questions regarding the status of applications may be directed to Melissa Verlaque or Connor Gary ([JTIPGrants@state.gov](mailto:JTIPGrants@state.gov)).

**Q. Are applicants required to submit a hard copy original signature with their proposal via mail?**

**A.** No, only an electronic signature is required. No applications or supplemental documents are required via mail - only the items listed in the instructions on the FY17 solicitation.

**Q. When do you expect to notify applicants if they are requested to submit a full proposal?**

**A.** We expect to notify applicants in late November or early December of 2016 that their SOI was selected for the second stage of competition. Selected applicants will receive additional information about the second stage requirements at that time.

**Q. Where can I get additional advice about preparing the SOI or full application?**

**A.** The TIP Office must ensure a fair, transparent, competitive grants process.

No one from the Office or other Department of State office or bureau, including Embassy personnel, is permitted to advise you on the content of your application. However, applicants are encouraged to watch our instructional video on submitting SOIs to the TIP Office. It includes recommendations for successful proposals, common pitfalls, and detailed information on the application process. Find the video at: <http://www.state.gov/j/tip/>.

Persons with additional questions about the requirements of the solicitation may contact Melissa Verlaque or Connor Gary ([JTIPGrants@state.gov](mailto:JTIPGrants@state.gov)).