Notice of Funding Opportunity (NOFO)

Advancing Innovation and Collaboration Through C-SIPA

Bureau of Near Eastern Affairs, U.S. Embassy, Manama,

Department of State

Opportunity number: DOS-Manama-PD-2026-001

Application deadline: July 6th, 2026

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U.S Department of State
Bureau of Near Eastern Affairs, U.S. Embassy, Manama, Public Diplomacy Section
Notice of Funding Opportunity

A. BASIC INFORMATION

1. Overview

Funding Opportunity Title	Advancing Innovation and Collaboration Through C-SIPA
Funding Opportunity Number	DOS-Manama-PD-2026-001
Announcement Type	Modification of a previously announced opportunity
Deadline for Applications	Monday, July 6, 2026 – 5:00pm Close of Business – Arab Standard Time (AST) UTC/GMT +3.
Assistance Listing Number	19.040 (Public Diplomacy Programs)
Length of performance period	6 to 18 months
Number of awards anticipated	2 awards
Award amounts	awards may range from a minimum of $10,000.00 to a maximum of $90,000.00
Total available funding	$180,000.00 pending availability of funds
Type of Funding	FY26 Smith-Mundt Public Diplomacy Funds
Anticipated project start date	October 1, 2026

Funding Instrument Type: Grant, fixed amount award (FAA), or cooperative agreement. Cooperative agreements include substantial involvement of the bureau or embassy in program implementation of the project. An FAA can also include substantial involvement. Examples of substantial involvement are included in section C below.

Project Performance Period: Proposed projects should be completed in 18 months or less.

This notice is subject to availability of funding. The Public Diplomacy Section reserves the right to award less or more than the funds described under circumstances deemed to be in the best interest of the U.S. government, pending the availability of funds and approval of the designated grants officer.

2. Executive Summary

The U.S. Department of State's Public Affairs Section (PAS) at U.S. Embassy Manama announces an open competition to support programs that advance high-tech research and innovation under the Comprehensive Strategic Integration and Prosperity Agreement (C-SIPA) between the United States, Bahrain, and the United Kingdom. C-SIPA strengthens trilateral cooperation under three pillars: 1) defense and security; 2) economic, commercial, and trade; and 3) science, technology, and network security. This initiative contributes to broader U.S.

efforts to reinforce national security, expand economic opportunity, and promote trusted technology partnerships.

The Embassy seeks proposals that foster collaboration among academic institutions and private sector partners with a focus on supporting economic and/or advanced technology cooperation under C-SIPA. This initiative aims to make America and its C-SIPA partners safer and more prosperous by promoting resilient, secure, and market-driven technology partnerships that uphold shared values and deliver measurable outcomes. Priority will be given to proposals that include direct collaboration with U.S. private sector partners and that engage all three C-SIPA countries.

If you have any questions about the grant application process in its entirety, please contact: ManamaPAO@state.gov.

Please follow all instructions below.

B. ELIGIBILITY

1. Eligible Applicants

The following organizations are eligible to apply:

- Not-for-profit organizations, including think tanks and civil society/non-governmental organizations registered in the United States, United Kingdom or Bahrain.
- Public and private educational institutions registered in the United States or Bahrain.

For-profit entities, even those that may fall into the categories listed above, are **not** eligible to apply for this NOFO. Organizations may sub-contract with other entities, but only one, non-profit, non-governmental entity can be the prime recipient of the award. When sub-contracting with other entities, the responsibilities of each entity must be clearly defined in the proposal. For more information on the difference between sub-contract and sub-recipient, please refer to 2 CFR 200.331.

2. Cost Sharing or Matching

Cost sharing is not required but is highly encouraged and will be evaluated positively during the merit review.

3. Other Eligibility Requirements

All organizations must have a Unique Entity Identifier (UEI) issued via SAM.gov as well as a valid registration in SAM.gov. Please see Section E.3 for more information. Individuals are not required to have a UEI or be registered in SAM.gov.

Applicants are only allowed to submit one proposal per organization. If more than one proposal is submitted from an organization, all proposals from that institution will be considered ineligible for funding under this funding opportunity.

4. This opportunity will not support:

- Projects relating to partisan political activity;
- Charitable or development activities; including direct social services such as medical, psychological, and/or humanitarian support
- Construction projects;
- Projects that support specific religious activities;
- Fund-raising campaigns;
- Lobbying for specific legislation or programs
- Scientific research or surveys;
- Commercial projects;
- Projects intended primarily for the growth or institutional development of the organization;
- Projects that duplicate existing projects;
- Illegal activities

C. PROGRAM DESCRIPTION

1. Project Background, Goals, and Objectives

The objective of this program is to create enduring research collaboration among the United States, Bahrain, and the United Kingdom in support of the groundbreaking Comprehensive Security Integration and Prosperity Agreement (C-SIPA). Successful projects will harness Bahraini research and technological talent with American and British academia and industry to power innovation, research, and development in emerging technologies. Proposals should seek to create sustainable joint research ventures that result in tangible outcomes, including new technologies, products or academic curricula, through collaboration between research institutions and the private sector across C-SIPA countries. This program should support topics directly related to Articles III and IV of C-SIPA, including:

- supply chain resilience and infrastructure,
- regional economic integration,
- emerging technologies,
- artificial intelligence (AI),
- critical mineral,
- commercial space technology,
- Civil nuclear energy and small modular nuclear reactors
- means of promoting secure networks, communications systems, software, and hardware, and,
- development and promotion of a more secure, resilient, diverse, competitive, transparent, and sustainable digital and Information and Communication Technology (ICT) infrastructure supply chain, particularly in global communications.

Any topic should focus on these issues as it affects the three countries (or, in the case of economic integration, as it affects the three countries and the region). The full text of the agreement may be found here:

https://bh.usembassy.gov/u-s-bahrain-comprehensive-security-integration-and-prosperity-agreement/

The budget should support staff time, virtual calls, and potential travel for U.S. university personnel to visit their counterparts and to showcase the research in Bahrain, and/or for Bahraini university personnel to visit their counterparts in the United States. The program should result in concrete outcomes (including, but not limited to, joint publication, memorandum of understanding for sustained joint research, etc.). The U.S. embassy encourages proposals that will also set the stage for future collaborations, including but not limited to additional research and publications, joint teaching endeavors, staff exchanges, additional memoranda, and/or student linkages. The budget should not support the purchase of equipment.

Project Audience(s):

Academic and Research Institutions: Universities, research centers, and faculty in the United States, Bahrain, and the United Kingdom engaged in science, technology, and innovation.

Private Sector and Industry Partners: Individuals and organizations with expertise or interest in areas such as supply chain resilience, economic integration, artificial intelligence, and cybersecurity.

Graduate Students and Early-Career Professionals: Students and young professionals participating in joint research, curriculum development, exchanges, and training programs.

Project Goal: Promotes U.S. technological dominance by establishing enduring research collaboration among the United States, Bahrain, and the United Kingdom that generates tangible innovation outcomes and product development for U.S. technology firms in support of the Comprehensive Security Integration and Prosperity Agreement (C-SIPA).

Project Objectives:

Objective 1: Establish a sustainable joint research venture involving academic institutions from the United States, United Kingdom, and Bahrain that directly ties into product development for the U.S. private sector, resulting in a formalized collaboration (e.g., memorandum of understanding, joint publication, or prototype development) aligned with C-SIPA priorities.

Objective 2: Facilitate collaboration among at least 30 researchers and technology professionals from the United States, Bahrain, and the United Kingdom to jointly develop and advance research and product development for a U.S. private entity in emerging technology sectors (e.g., AI, ICT, energy, or space), resulting in measurable outputs such as joint publications, prototypes, or pilot projects aligned with C-SIPA priorities.

Objective 3: Facilitate at least 12 structured virtual engagements and 2 in-person exchange visits between U.S. and Bahraini university personnel to support joint research activities and showcase project outcomes, resulting in at least two formal research outputs (e.g., presentations, demonstrations, or publications) that directly benefits a U.S. technology firm.

2. Substantial Involvement

This will be in the form of collaboration when it comes to media engagements and social media posts that are related to the program. Applicants should plan for engagements with the Public Affairs Section in advance and seek clearance for press releases and social media posts, as appropriate.

- U.S. Embassy Roles and Responsibilities: To clear on any interaction or publication with any media outlets, whether it's in or outside of Bahrain.

- Recipient Roles and Responsibilities: To produce press releases and social media posts for the pre-agreed milestones of the program and share them with perspective media outlets after clearance is obtained from the Public Affairs Section.

D. APPLICATION CONTENTS AND FORMAT

Please follow all instructions below carefully. Proposals that do not meet the requirements of this announcement or fail to comply with the stated requirements will be ineligible.

Content of Application

Please ensure:

- The proposal clearly addresses the goals and objectives of this funding opportunity
- All documents are in English
- All budgets are in U.S. dollars
- All applicant authorized signatures are provided where indicated on the various, required forms.

The following documents are **required**:

1. Mandatory application forms

- SF-424 (Application for Federal Assistance – organizations) at https://apply07.grants.gov/apply/forms/sample/SF424_4_0-V4.0.pdf
- SF-424A (Budget Information for Non-Construction programs) at https://apply07.grants.gov/apply/forms/sample/SF424A-V1.0.pdf
- SF-424B (Assurances for Non-Construction programs) at https://apply07.grants.gov/apply/forms/sample/SF424B-V1.1.pdf
  (note: the SF-424B is only required for individuals, organizations exempt from registration, and for organizations not required to fully register in SAM.gov)

2. Proposal (8 pages maximum)

The proposal should contain sufficient information that anyone not familiar with it would understand exactly what the applicant wants to do. You may use your own proposal format, but it must include all the items below.

- **Proposal Summary:** Short narrative that outlines the proposed project, including project objectives and anticipated impact.
- **Introduction to the Organization applying**: A description of past and present operations, showing ability to carry out the program, including information on all previous grants from the State Department and/or U.S. government agencies as well as experience with and expertise in areas related to those described in the NOFO. Applicants are encouraged, but not required, to use the attached Applicant Organization Information Survey form to provide this information (Applicant Organization Information Survey form). If the applicant chooses not to use the attached form, all of the requested information from the form will still need to be addressed in the application package.
- **Problem Statement:** Clear, concise and well-supported statement of the problem to be addressed and why the proposed program is needed
- **Program Methods, Design, Activities, and Deliverables:** The "goals" describe what the program is intended to achieve. The "objectives" refer to the intermediate accomplishments on the way to the goals. These should be achievable and measurable. Describe the program activities and how they will help achieve the objectives.
- **Proposed Project Schedule and Timeline:** The proposed timeline for the program activities. Include the dates, times, and locations of planned activities and events.
- **Key Personnel:** Names, titles, roles and experience/qualifications of key personnel involved in the program. What proportion of their time will be used in support of this program?
- **Project Partners:** List the names and type of involvement of key partner organizations and sub-awardees (if applicable).
- **Future Funding or Sustainability** Applicant's plan for continuing the program beyond the grant period, or the availability of other resources, if applicable.
- **Monitoring & Evaluation Plan:** Proposals must include a draft Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) Performance Monitoring Plan (PMP). The M&E PMP should show how applicants intend to measure and demonstrate progress towards the project's objectives and goals. M&E PMP form of this funding opportunity contains a template that may be used to fulfill this requirement. While the grantee is free to create their own template, completing M&E PMP form will ensure a thorough PMP.

The key components to the PMP are as follows:

- **Monitoring and Evaluation Narrative**: In narrative form, applicants should describe how they intend to monitor and evaluate the activities of their award. In addition, the applicant should describe any M&E processes, including key personnel, management structure (where M&E fits into the overall program's staff structure), technology, and as well provide a brief budget narrative explaining any line-item expenditures for M&E listed in the program's budget. If the proposal is from a prior grantee, the proposal

discusses how the grantee has adapted, improved or otherwise modified their approach based on learning from previous experience. This narrative is limited to two pages.

- **Theory of Change Diagram:** Applicants are expected to submit either a Theory of Change diagram or an If-Then Statement that illustrates how project activities will lead to intended outcomes. M&E PMP form includes a suggested format for these requirements.

- **Monitoring and Evaluation Datasheet:** The applicant must include their proposed activities and their expected outputs and outcomes as well as the goals and objectives as written in the NOFO. The datasheet's purpose is to explicitly illustrate how a project's activities lead to tangible results (such as increased beneficiary skills, knowledge, or attitudes) that ultimately address a PDS objective. For more information, please see M&E PMP form: Instructions.

- The selected applicant's M&E PMP is subject to review and approval before any award will be issued under this NOFO. The selected applicant will be required to work with the Public Diplomacy Section's Monitoring and Evaluation Specialist to ensure the applicant's M&E PMP achieves an expected level of expertise and meets PDS objectives.

- Expenses directly associated with monitoring and evaluation are considered allowable. The suggested template includes a space to list the portion of the total budget amount directly associated with monitoring and evaluation activities.

3. ***Budget Justification Narrative***

- **Detailed Budget** - Applicants must submit a detailed line-item budget. Applicants are encouraged to utilize the template provided with the funding opportunity but are not required to do so (PDS Budget Narrative Sample Template). Line-item expenditures should be listed in the greatest possible detail. 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. See Annex Section I for a description of the types of costs that should be included in each category. Personnel salaries should include the level of effort and the rate of pay, which should cover the percentage of time each staff member will dedicate to grant-based activities. If an organization is charging an indirect cost rate without a NICRA, it must apply it to the modified total budget costs (MTDC), refer to 2CFR§200.1. **Budgets shall be submitted in U.S. dollars** and final grant agreements will be conducted in U.S. dollars.

- **Budget Justification Narrative** – Applicants must submit a budget justification narrative to accompany the detailed line-item budget. The purpose of the budget justification narrative is to supplement the information provided in the detailed budget spreadsheet by justifying how the budget cost elements are necessary to implement project objectives and accomplish the project goals. The budget justification narrative is a tool to help Embassy staff fully understand the budgetary needs of the applicant and is an opportunity

to provide descriptive information about the requested costs beyond the constraints of the budget template. Together, the detailed budget spreadsheet, the budget justification narrative, and the SF-424A 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 proposal.

Additional Budget Notes:

- Audit Requirements: Please note the audit requirements for Department of State awards in the Standard Terms and Conditions https://www.state.gov/m/a/ope/index.htm and 2CFR200, Subpart F – Audit Requirements. The cost of the required audits may be charged either as an allowable direct cost to the award OR included in the organization's established indirect costs in the award's detailed budget.

- Visa Fees: Include all visa application and related fees in your budget as applicable. Please note DS-2019s for post-funded programs must be submitted directly by the award recipient. If you anticipate your program will include the DS-2019 visa processing, your organization must be a registered Designated Sponsoring Organization. For more information go to: https://j1visa.state.gov/sponsors/become-a-sponsor/

4. ***Attachments***

- **Key Personnel Resumes**: A résumé, not to exceed one page in length, must be included for the proposed key staff persons, such as the Project Director and Finance Officer, as well as any speakers or trainers (if applicable). 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 résumé.

- **Letters of support from program partners:** Letters of support should be included for sub-recipients or other partners. 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.

- **Indirect Costs**: If your organization has a Negotiated Indirect Cost Rate Agreement (NICRA) and includes NICRA charges in the budget, your latest NICRA should be included in the application submission.

- **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 501(c)(3) Internal Revenue Service determination letter, and non-U.S. organizations should provide evidence of non-profit status issued by a government entity).

- **Proof of Registration:** A copy of the organization's registration should be provided with the proposal application. U.S.-based organizations should submit a copy of their IRS

determination letter. U.S., U.K. and Bahrain-based organizations should submit a copy of their certificate of registration from the appropriate government organization.

Other items NOT required/requested with the application submission, but which *may* be requested if your application is approved to move forward in the review process include:

a. Copies of an organization or program audit within the last two (2) years
b. Copies of relevant human resources, financial, or procurement policies
c. 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
d. Documentation that demonstrates the recipients' plan and/or policy to safeguard PII of participants and beneficiaries. It is the responsibility of the recipient to ensure protection of personally identifiable information (PII) and safeguard PII when collecting, maintaining, using and disseminating such information
e. Information 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 identify other financial transactions that may be necessary to undertake the project activities
f. The Embassy reserves the right to request any additional programmatic and/or financial information regarding the proposal.

E. SUBMISSION REQUIREMENTS AND DEADLINES

1. Address to Request Application Package

Application forms required above are available at https://grants.gov/forms/forms-repository/ or at Grants.gov package page.

2. Department of State Contacts

If you have any questions about the grant application process, please contact: ManamaPAO@state.gov

3. Unique entity identifier and System for Award Management (SAM.gov)

Required Registration: All organizations, whether based in the United States or in another country, must have a Unique Entity Identifier (UEI) and an active registration in SAM.gov. A UEI is one of the data elements mandated by Public Law 109-282, the Federal Funding Accountability and Transparency Act (FFATA), for all Federal awards.

An applicant must maintain an active registration while it has a proposal under review by the Department and must continue to keep the registration active for the entire duration of the period of performance of any Federal award that results from this NOFO.

The 2 CFR 200 also requires subrecipients to obtain a UEI. Please note the UEI for subrecipients is not required at the time of application but will be required before an award is processed and/or directed to a subrecipient.

Note: The process of obtaining or renewing a SAM.gov registration may take anywhere from 4-8 weeks. Please begin your registration as early as possible.

- Organizations **based in the United States** or that pay employees within the United States will need an Employer Identification Number (EIN) from the Internal Revenue Service (IRS) and a UEI prior to registering in SAM.gov.

- Organizations **based outside of the United States** and that do not pay employees within the United States do not need an EIN from the IRS but do need a UEI prior to registering in SAM.gov.

- **Organizations based outside of the United States that do not intend to apply for U.S. Department of Defense (DoD) awards are no longer required to have a NATO Commercial and Government Entity (NCAGE) code to apply for non-DoD foreign assistance funding opportunities.** If an applicant organization is mid-registration and wishes to remove an NCAGE code from their SAM.gov registration, the applicant should submit a help desk ticket ("incident") with the Federal Service Desk (FSD) online at www.fsd.gov using the following language: "I do not intend to seek financial assistance from the Department of Defense. I do not wish to obtain an NCAGE code. I understand that I will need to submit my registration after this incident is resolved in order to have my registration activated."

Organizations based outside of the United States and that DO NOT plan to do business with the DoD should follow the below instructions:

- Step 1: Proceed to SAM.gov to obtain a UEI and complete the SAM.gov registration process. SAM.gov registration must be renewed annually.

Exemptions

An exemption from the UEI and sam.gov registration requirements may be permitted on a case-by-case basis. See 2 CFR 25.110 for a full list of exemptions.

Organizations requesting exemption from UEI or SAM.gov requirements must email the point of contact listed in the NOFO at least two weeks prior to the deadline in the NOFO providing a justification of their request. Approval for a SAM.gov exemption must come from the warranted Grants Officer before the application can be deemed eligible for review.

Please note: Any applicant with an exclusion in the System for Award Management (SAM) is not eligible to apply for an assistance award in accordance with the OMB guidelines at 2 CFR 180 that implement Executive Orders 12549 (3 CFR, 1986 Comp., p. 189) and 12689 (3 CFR, 1989 Comp., p. 235), "Debarment and Suspension."

4. Submission Dates and Times

Submission Deadline: All applications must be received by July 6, 2026 – 5:00pm Close of Business – Arab Standard Time (AST) UTC/GMT +3. For the purposes of determining if an award is submitted on time, PDS will utilize the timestamp provided by email. This deadline is firm and is not a rolling deadline. If organizations fail to meet the deadline noted above their application will be considered ineligible and will not be considered for funding.

Submission Method: Submitting all application materials directly to the following email address: ManamaPAO@state.gov. Applicants opting to submit applications via email to ManamaPAO@state.gov **must** include the Funding Opportunity Title and Funding Opportunity Number in the subject line of the email.

5. Funding Restrictions

i. Funding Restrictions for the United Nations Relief and Works Agency (UNRWA): None of the funds awarded resulting from this Notice of Funding Opportunity may be made available for subawards, direct financial support, or otherwise used to provide any payment or transfer to United Nations Relief and Works Agency (UNRWA).

ii. Prohibition on Funding Activities that Encourage Mass-Migration Caravans towards the United States Southwest Border: None of the funds awarded under this grant may be made available to encourage, mobilize, publicize, or manage mass-migration caravans towards the United States southwest border. Funds may not be made available for legal counseling on the United States asylum process; and/or for referrals to legal representation in the United States.

Funds may only be used for cash cards for use in the country in which they are provided or to facilitate assisted voluntary returns and other purposes that do not encourage, mobilize, publicize, or manage mass migration caravans towards the United States southwest border. The provision of humanitarian assistance is permitted.

iii. Certification Regarding Compliance with Applicable Federal Anti-Discrimination Laws" If the place of performance or delivery of any award made under this NOFO will be within the United States, applicants are advised that they will be required to certify the following at the time of award:

a. Its compliance in all respects with all applicable Federal anti-discrimination laws is material to the government's payment decisions for purposes of section 3729(b)(4) of title 31, United States Code and;
b. It does not operate any programs promoting Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion that violate any applicable Federal anti-discrimination laws. A program promoting Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion means a program whose purpose is to promote preferences based on race, color, religion, sex, or national origins, such as in training or hiring.

iv. Certification Regarding Compliance with 20 U.S.C. 1011f and any other applicable foreign funding disclosure requirements: Applicants are advised that IHEs must certify the following at the time of award, and that this certification requirement must be included in any subaward agreements to IHEs:

a. Its compliance in all respects with section 1011f of title 20, United States Code, and any other applicable foreign funding disclosure requirements is material for purposes of section 3729 of title 31, United States Code, and for receipt of appropriate Federal grant funds.
b. Applicants seeking clarification on the reporting requirement are encouraged to review the Frequently Asked Questions resource developed by the U.S. Department of Education.

v. Certification of Trafficking in Persons Compliance and Compliance Plan: Applicants are advised that they will be required to certify the following at the time of award for awards where the estimated value of services to be performed outside the United States exceeds $500,000:

a. To the best of the Recipient's knowledge, neither the Recipient, nor any subrecipient, contractor, or subcontractor of the Recipient or any agent of the recipient or of such a subrecipient, contractor, or subcontractor, is engaged in any of the activities described in 2 CFR 175.105(a);
b. The recipient has implemented a Trafficking in Persons compliance plan to prevent activities described in 2 CFR 175(a) and is compliant with this plan; and the compliance plan must follow the minimum requirements described in 2 CFR 175(b)(5).
c. That the Recipient has and will implement procedures to prevent activities described in 2 CFR 175.105(a) and to monitor, detect, and terminate any subrecipient, contractor, subcontractor, or employee of the recipient engaging in these activities.

i. Recipients do not need to submit a copy of the plan. However, they must provide it to the Grants Officer upon request, and as appropriate, must post the useful and relevant contents of the plan or related materials on its website and at the workplace. Recipients must re-certify on an annual basis for the entire award period of performance.

vi. Prohibition on Unmanned Aircraft Systems Manufactured or Assembled by American Security Drone Act-Covered Foreign Entities

(a) *Definitions.*

American Security Drone Act-covered foreign entity means an entity included on a list developed and maintained by the Federal Acquisition Security Council (FASC) and published in the System for Award Management (SAM) at https://www.sam.gov

FASC-prohibited unmanned aircraft system means an unmanned aircraft system manufactured or assembled by an American Security Drone Act-covered foreign entity.

Unmanned aircraft means an aircraft that is operated without the possibility of direct human intervention from within or on the aircraft.

Unmanned aircraft system means an unmanned aircraft and associated elements (including communication links and the components that control the unmanned aircraft) that are required for the operator to operate safely and efficiently in the national airspace system.

(b) *Prohibition.* Recipients of funding under this Notice of Funding Opportunity (including subawards and subcontracts issued by the recipient) will be prohibited from:

(1) delivering any FASC-prohibited unmanned aircraft system, which includes unmanned aircraft (i.e., drones) and associated elements;
(2)Operating a FASC-prohibited unmanned aircraft system in the performance of the award; and
(3) Using Federal funds for the purchase or operation of a FASC-prohibited unmanned aircraft system .

c) *Exemptions, exceptions, and waivers.* The prohibitions described above will not apply if the agency determines that an exemption, exception, or waiver applies and the award indicates that such a determination has been made. [See sections 1823 through 1825 and 1832 of Public Law 118-31 (41 U.S.C. 3901 note prec.) for statutory requirements pertaining to exemptions, exceptions, and waivers.].

vii. Pre-Award Costs: Pre-award costs are not an allowable expense for this funding opportunity.

viii. Construction: Any award made as a result of this NOFO will not allow for construction activities or costs.

ix. Direct Social Services: Costs that cover and provide direct social services, such as welfare, charity, health or economic relief, are unallowable. Medical assistance, such as costs to include medical professionals, including but not limited to doctors, nurses, and psychiatrists to participate in the project activities are not allowed.

6. Other Submission Requirements: Copyrights and Proprietary Information

If any of the information contained in your application is proprietary, please note in the footer of the appropriate pages that the information is Confidential – Proprietary. Applicants should also note what parts of the application, program, concept, etc. are covered by

copyright(s), trademark(s), or any other intellectual property rights and provide copies of the relevant documentation to support these copyrights.

Applicants must acquire all required registrations and rights in the United States, Bahrain and United Kingdom. All intellectual property considerations and rights must be fully met in the United States Bahrain and United Kingdom.

Any sub-recipient organization must also meet all the U.S., Bahrain and United Kingdom requirements described above.

F. APPLICATION REVIEW INFORMATION

1. Review Criteria

Criteria: Each application submitted under this announcement will be evaluated and rated on the basis of the criteria enumerated below. The criteria are designed to assess the quality of the proposed project, and to determine the likelihood of its success.

- **Quality and Feasibility of the Program Idea** – 30 points: The program idea should be innovative and well developed, with sufficient detail about how project activities will be carried out. The proposals should demonstrate originality and outline clear, achievable objectives that align directly with the priorities and requirements of the NOFO. The proposal includes a reasonable implementation timeline, and the project scope is appropriate and clearly defined. Finally, the proposal aligns with the following:
    - The project clearly demonstrates a direct contribution to current U.S. foreign policy priorities.
    - The project will positively impact America's reputation among foreign government partners.
    - The project will positively impact American's reputation among foreign publics.
    - The proposal does not include any activities contrary to the following Executive Orders:
        - Executive Order 14173: "Ending Illegal Discrimination and Restoring Merit-Based Opportunity
        - Executive Order 14287: "Protecting American Communities from Criminal Aliens"
        - Executive Order 14168: Defending Women from Gender Ideology Extremism and Restoring Biological Truth to the Federal Government

- **Organizational Capacity and Record on Previous Grants** – 25 points:
    - The project proposal demonstrates that the organization has sufficient expertise, skills, and human resources to implement the project, including internal controls in place to manage federal funds.
    - The organization demonstrates that it has a clear understanding of the underlying issue that the project will address.

- The organization demonstrates capacity for successful planning and responsible fiscal management. This includes a financial management system, a bank account, and if applicable, satisfactory audit findings.
- Applicants who have received grant funds previously have been compliant with applicable rules and regulations, including the Award Provisions and Standard Terms and Conditions.
- Where partners are described, the applicant details each partner's respective role and provides curriculum vitae (CVs) for persons responsible for the project and financial administration. Proposed personnel, institutional resources, and partners are adequate and appropriate.

- **Project Planning/Ability to Achieve Objectives** – 20 points: The project plan is well developed, with sufficient detail about how activities will be carried out. The proposal specifies target audiences, participant recruitment, and geographic areas of implementation. The proposal outlines clear, achievable objectives. The proposal includes a reasonable implementation timeline. The project scope is appropriate and clearly defined.

- **Budget** – 10 points: The budget and narrative justification are sufficiently detailed. The budget demonstrates that the organization has devoted time to accurately determine expenses associated with the project instead of providing rough estimates. Costs are reasonable in relation to the proposed activities and anticipated results. The results and proposed outcomes justify the total cost of the project. Budget items are reasonable, allowable, and allocable.

- **Monitoring and Evaluation** - 10 points: There is a complete and thorough draft submission of a M&E Performance Monitoring Plan (PMP). This will include a list of proposed project activities, corresponding milestone, output, and outcome indicators, a description of data collection methods, and a timeline for collecting such information. The proposal presents a clear theory of change on how the program will address that problem. Use of the suggested template (M&E PMP form) will satisfy these requirements. Funded projects will have their plans finalized during the negotiation phase, and monitoring plans may be subject to periodic updates throughout the life of the project.

- **Sustainability** – 5 points: The project proposal describes clearly the approach that will be used to ensure maximum sustainability or advancement of project goals after the end of project activity.

2. Indirect Costs

If two or more applications receive equivalent scores based on the evaluation criteria outlined in this NOFO, preference will be given to the applicant with the lower indirect cost rate, as consistent with Executive Order 14332, Section 4(b)(iii). This preference will only be applied as a tie-breaking mechanism and does not supersede the primary evaluation criteria.

3. Review and Selection Process

a. Acknowledgement of receipt. Applicants will receive acknowledgment of receipt of their proposal.

b. Review. All submissions are screened for technical eligibility. **If a submission is missing any required forms/documents listed above in Section D. Application Contents and Format, it will be considered ineligible and will not be reviewed by the grants review committee.** A technical review panel will review eligible proposals based upon the criteria noted in this NOFO.

c. Follow up notification. Applicants will generally be notified within 120 days after the NOFO deadline regarding the results of the review panel.

2. Risk Review

i. Under the merit review as required by 2 CFR 200.206, prior to making a Federal Award the Department will review and consider the following risk factors:
   a. Financial stability
   b. Management systems and standards
   c. History of performance
   d. Audit reports and findings
   e. Ability to effectively implement project requirements

G. AWARD NOTICES

The award or cooperative agreement will be written, signed, awarded, and administered by the Grants Officer. The award agreement is the authorizing document, and it will be provided to the recipient for review and counter-signature. The recipient may only start incurring project expenses beginning on the start date shown on the award document signed by the Grants Officer.

If a proposal is selected for funding, the Department of State has no obligation to provide any additional future funding. Renewal of an award to increase funding or extend the period of performance is at the discretion of the Department of State.

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.

Payment Method:

Recipients may not draw down funds without the affirmative authorization of the Department of State. In addition, recipients must submit, with each SF-270 payment request, a detailed explanation justifying the request.

H. POST-AWARD REQUIREMENTS AND ADMINISTRATION

1. Administrative and National Policy Requirements

Before submitting an application, applicants should review all the terms and conditions and required certifications which will apply to this award, to ensure that they will be able to comply. These include:

In accordance with the Office of Management and Budget's guidance located at 2 CFR part 200, all applicable Federal laws, and relevant Executive guidance, the Department of State will review and consider applications for funding, as applicable to specific programs, pursuant to this notice of funding opportunity in accordance with the following:

- Guidance for Grants and Agreements in Title 2 of the Code of Federal Regulations (2 CFR), as updated in the Federal Register's 89 FR 30046 on April 22, 2024, particularly on:
    - Selecting recipients most likely to be successful in delivering results based on the program objectives through an impartial process of evaluating Federal award applications (2 CFR part 200.205),
    - Promoting the freedom of speech and religious liberty in alignment with *Promoting Free Speech and Religious Liberty* (E.O. 13798) and *Improving Free Inquiry, Transparency, and Accountability at Colleges and Universities* (E.O. 13864) (§§ 200.300, 200.303, 200.339, and 200.341),
    - Providing a preference, to the extent permitted by law, to maximize use of goods, products, and materials produced in the United States (2 CFR part 200.322), and
    - Terminating agreements pursuant to the U.S. Department of State Standard Terms and Conditions, including, to the greatest extent authorized by law, if an award no longer effectuates the program goals or agency priorities (2 CFR part 200.340). For the avoidance of doubt, the Department has sole discretion over the determination that an award no longer effectuates program goals or agency priorities, and this provision permits awards to be terminated at the Department's convenience, including when it determines that the award no longer advances the national interest.

- 2 CFR 25 - UNIVERSAL IDENTIFIER AND SYSTEM FOR AWARD MANAGEMENT

- 2 CFR 170 - REPORTING SUBAWARD AND EXECUTIVE COMPENSATION INFORMATION

- 2 CFR 175 - AWARD TERM FOR TRAFFICKING IN PERSONS

- 2 CFR 182 - GOVERNMENTWIDE REQUIREMENTS FOR DRUG-FREE WORKPLACE (FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE)
- 2 CFR 183 - NEVER CONTRACT WITH THE ENEMY
- 2 CFR 600 – DEPARTMENT OF STATE REQUIREMENTS
- U.S. DEPARTMENT OF STATE STANDARD TERMS AND CONDITIONS
- Recipients must comply with all applicable Executive Orders. A searchable list can be found in the Federal Register: https://www.federalregister.gov/ .

2. ***Reporting***

Reporting Requirements: Recipients will be required to submit financial reports and program reports. The award document will specify what reports are required and how often these reports must be submitted. ***Note***: most recipients will be required to submit quarterly program progress and financial reports throughout the project period. The quarterly progress report should include an up-to-date copy of the PMP datasheet. Progress and financial reports are due 30 days after the reporting period. Final certified programmatic and financial reports are due 120 days after the close of the project period.

All reports are to be submitted electronically.

The Awardee must also provide the Embassy on an annual basis an inventory of all the U.S. government provided equipment using the SF428 form.

Foreign Assistance Data Review: As required by Congress, the Department of State must make progress in its efforts to improve tracking and reporting of foreign assistance data through the Foreign Assistance Data Review (FADR). The FADR requires tracking of foreign assistance activity data from budgeting, planning, and allocation through obligation and disbursement. Successful applicants will be required to report and draw down federal funding based on the appropriate FADR Data Elements, indicated within their award documentation. In cases of more than one FADR Data Element, typically program or sector and/or regions or country, the successful applicant will be required to maintain separate accounting records.

3. ***Branding and Marking***

The Department of State, its programs, and U.S. Government funding and assistance should be easily identifiable to the Department's global audiences.

Recipients of federal assistance awards must follow the branding guidance published at Guidance for Contracts and Grants - U.S. Department of State Brand System. Branding

policy exceptions are outlined in the U.S. Department of State Foreign Affairs Manual 10 FAM 416, Policy Exceptions.

For more information, visit: https://brand.america.gov/

I. OTHER INFORMATION

Guidelines for Budget Justification

Personnel and Fringe Benefits: Describe the wages, salaries, and benefits of temporary or permanent staff who will be working directly for the applicant on the program, and the percentage of their time that will be spent on the program.

Travel: Estimate the costs of travel and per diem for this program, for program staff, consultants or speakers, and participants/beneficiaries. If the program involves international travel, include a brief statement of justification for that travel.

Equipment: Describe any machinery, furniture, or other personal property that is required for the program, which has a useful life of more than one year (or a life longer than the duration of the program), and costs at least $10,000 per unit.

Supplies: List and describe all the items and materials, including any computer devices, that are needed for the program. If an item costs more than $10,000 per unit, then put it in the budget under Equipment.

Contractual: Describe goods and services that the applicant plans to acquire through a contract with a vendor. Also describe any sub-awards to non-profit partners that will help carry out the program activities.

Other Direct Costs: Describe other costs directly associated with the program, which do not fit in the other categories. For example, shipping costs for materials and equipment or applicable taxes. All "Other" or "Miscellaneous" expenses must be itemized and explained.

Indirect Costs: These are costs that cannot be linked directly to the program activities, such as overhead costs needed to help keep the organization operating. If your organization has a Negotiated Indirect Cost Rate (NICRA) and includes NICRA charges in the budget, attach a copy of your latest NICRA. Organizations that have never had a NICRA may request indirect costs of 15% of Modified Total Direct Costs (MTDC) as defined in 2 CFR 200.1.

"Cost Sharing" refers to contributions from the organization or other entities other than the U.S. Embassy. It also includes in-kind contributions such as volunteers' time and donated venues.

Alcoholic Beverages: Please note that award funds cannot be used for alcoholic beverages and other entertainment related expenses.

STEP Enrollment

U.S. citizens who travel to Bahrain are encouraged to enroll in the Department of State's Smart Traveler Enrollment Program (STEP) available at: https://step.state.gov/step/. Enrollment enables citizens to receive security-related messages from the Embassy and makes it easier for us to locate you in an emergency. The Embassy also recommends that all travelers review the State Department's travel website at travel.state.gov for the Travel Warnings, Travel Alerts, and Bahrain Specific Information.