

NOTICE OF FUNDING OPPORTUNITY (NOFO)

Announcement Type: New Announcement
Funding Opportunity Title: Preventing Recruitment through Ex-combatant Reintegration (PRE-R)
Awarding Agency/Bureau: Department of State/Bureau of Conflict and Stabilization Operations
Catalog of Federal Domestic Assistance (CFDA) Number: 19.121
Funding Amount: \$1,500,000.00
Number of Awards: One or Multiple
Cost Sharing Requirement: Not Required

Assistance Type: Cooperative Agreement
Funding Type: Discretionary
Authority: FY 2017 Security Assistance Appropriations Act
Source of Funding: Economic Support Funds (ESF)
Funding Activity Category: Overseas Contingency Operations
NOFO Issuance Date: April 13, 2018
Submission Date: Complete proposal packages must be submitted through SAMS Domestic (www.mygrants.service-now.com) by June 1, 2018; 11:59 pm Eastern Standard Time (EST)

Deadline for Receipt of Questions: May 30, 2018, 5:00 pm, EST

Eligibility Category: U.S. - based non-profit/non-governmental organizations (NGOs) having a 501(c) (3) status with the IRS; commercial entities; for profit organizations; overseas non-governmental organizations; Foreign Public Entities and Public International Organizations (PIOs).

Type of Applicant: Organizations only.

Electronic Requirement: Yes. All applications must be submitted through SAMS. E-mailed or faxed proposal packages will not be considered.

Number of Applications: One (1) per applicant organization

NOTE: Organizations may form consortia and submit a combined proposal. However, only one organization must be designated as the lead applicant. The lead applicant must meet the eligibility criteria listed above.

Anticipated Award Date: Within approximately six to nine weeks of the closing of this announcement, the successful applicant will receive notification. The U.S. Department of State is under no obligation to fund any of the proposals submitted under this funding opportunity.

Est. Project Start Date: July 2018
Est. Project End Date: December 2019

Project Duration: 18 Months
Pending availability of additional funding and satisfactory performance of the recipient, the award may be extended.

Submission of Applications: For more information, see Proposal Submission Instructions (PSI)

This funding opportunity is posted on SAMS Domestic, and it may be amended. Answers to questions from potential applicants will be posted as an attachment to this NOFO. Applicants should regularly check the www.mygrants.servivice-now.com website for the most recent information pertaining to this NOFO. Department of State, Bureau of Conflict and Stabilization Operations (CSO) bears no responsibility for data errors resulting from transmission or conversion processes associated with electronic submissions.

SAM.gov registration (www.sam.gov) is required in order to receive a federal assistance award. See the Proposal Submission Instructions (PSI) for more information. Applicants that do not have a valid DUNS number will be considered ineligible.

All applicants must provide a Unique Entity Identifier, or Data Universal Numbering System (DUNS), when submitting application on SAMS. Applicants that do not have a valid DUNS number may be considered ineligible.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

CSO announces a NOFO to support planning for reintegrating ex-combatants into their communities in an effort to prevent a reoccurrence of fighting and recruitment by violent extremist organizations (VEOs) and other non-state armed groups (NSAGs). The project aims to create conditions on the ground that facilitate a sustained political process among parties to the conflict. The program, PRE-R, will focus on two connected activity streams, both of which should include considerations related to preventing enlistment or reenlistment into VEOs and NSAGs: phase I) conduct analysis to identify which communities will likely receive ex-combatants before and after a peace agreement; community perception of reintegration; what those communities and their local institutions need to reintegrate ex-combatants; and the capacity of those communities and local institutions to meaningfully participate in reintegration programs; and phase II) develop a series of local advisory councils with community leaders, including religious leaders, and other influential personalities identified in phase I of the program, who can advise on relevant planning themes for reintegration including, but not limited to, how to:

develop a Yemeni-driven Disarmament, Demobilization, and Reintegration (DDR) strategy; cater reintegration messaging to targeted areas; engage mid-level commanders (MLC) and key civilian actors in Yemen to support reintegration activities; and develop specific reintegration program initiatives for future implementation supported by Yemeni and regional actors. If the assessment identifies areas (geographic, demographic, or topical) where there is need and space to conduct programming in the current context, pilot programs could potentially be implemented.

CSO reserves the right to fund any or none of the proposals submitted and reserves the right to reduce, revise, or increase proposal budget in accordance with the needs of the project and the availability of funds.

The Federal award signed by the Grants Officer is the only authorizing document.

This NOFO consists of this cover page plus the following sections:

- I.** Funding Opportunity Description
- II.** Award Information and Application Evaluation and Scoring
- III.** Eligibility Information
- IV.** Agency Contacts

The complete solicitation package also includes the mandatory Proposal Submission Instructions (PSI) and Application Review Information.

Eligible organizations interested in submitting an application are encouraged to review this NOFO thoroughly to understand the type of project sought and the application submission requirements and review process.

I. FUNDING OPPORTUNITY DESCRIPTION

BACKGROUND

Yemen has been in the current conflict for over three years, with varying levels of optimism about a negotiated agreement on the horizon. The UN and international community agree that the day after the parties to the conflict sign a peace agreement, the most difficult work will begin. Following a peace agreement, internationally-recognized DDR experts estimate that Yemen may have up to one million ex-combatants coming off the battlefield from both formal armed forces and NSAGs. These are mostly men who are breadwinners for their families, but who do not have other sources of income or a profession to which to return. A peace agreement aims to halt fighting, but if successful, will lead to a dramatic increase in unemployed fighters – potential recruits for VEOs and other NSAGs. Without planned economic and social reintegration strategies supported by local and regional partners and creating conditions for a sustained political process, combatants coming off the battlefield will be vulnerable to recruitment by VEOs, specifically Al-Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula (AQAP) and ISIS-Yemen (ISIS-Y), and other NSAGs intending to act as spoilers to an agreement. Instability resulting from three years of conflict in Yemen has also allowed VEOs to make strides by recruiting young, unemployed

men in need of an income and seeking a sense of purpose and dignity. [Note: PRE-R focuses on preventing NSAG recruitment as an important step to curb VEO expansion because NSAG activities create insecure environments where VEOs flourish and can recruit more effectively.] If ex-combatants do not see alternatives to fighting (as part of reintegration programming provided by the Government of Yemen and regional partners), involvement in a VEO will be an attractive choice for these individuals to provide for their families and maintain their warrior status.

With the threat of AQAP and ISIS-Y expansion after a peace agreement in mind, CSO and the Yemen Affairs Unit (YAU) created and now lead the international Sub-Working Group to Support Disarmament, Demobilization, and Reintegration in Yemen (DDR Sub-WG) in coordination with the UN Office of the Special Envoy of the Secretary-General for Yemen (UN OSESGY). The DDR Sub-WG collaborates on analysis, program design, and program implementation to prepare for Yemen's considerable DDR and Security Sector Reform (SSR) needs, stated above. The DDR Sub-WG has members from the European Union, UK, U.S., Germany, and multiple UN agencies.

PROJECT'S GOALS

The project aims to create conditions on the ground that facilitate a sustained political process among parties to the conflict. CSO seeks to identify and evaluate host communities' (these can be the ex-combatants' community of origin, opportunity, or exile in Yemen) and institutions' capacities and needs to successfully reintegrate ex-combatants into society; and establish local advisory councils to help develop honorable alternatives to fighting as a way to deter ex-combatants from joining VEOs and NSAGs in Yemen. The program will inform Yemenis, regional actors, and the UN on effective scalable reintegration efforts. Based on our assumptions, a "successful reintegration approach" will meet the social, psychological, and economic needs of ex-combatants more so than the lure of inclusion, structure, and employment of VEOs and other NSAGs. According to the World Bank, "best practices in DDR indicate that in-depth understanding of local context facilitates programming that addresses the underlying issues leading to recruitment into armed groups and needs of individuals associated with these groups, vulnerable populations and host communities. Such analytical foundation provides required information for engaging with stakeholders and designing a well-informed and inclusive DDR program." This captures the essence of phase I of this program: increasing the body of knowledge to best understand the local context and improve targeted assistance. Building on phase I, phase II convenes local actors for reintegration planning, project identification, and potential pilot implementation.

PROJECT'S OBJECTIVES

Through this NOFO, CSO seeks applications for proposals to implement the following project:

In phase I, CSO anticipates that PRE-R will need to complete a series of assessments, using multiple tools and techniques, to gain a deeper understanding of how the war has impacted combatants and their communities, and what is required for successful reintegration. Specific assessments should include:

- Identify where communities of opportunity, exile, and origin are located, to map where the most ex-combatants will seek reintegration.
- Identify and evaluate conditions necessary to bolster resiliencies to VEO recruitment after combatants stop fighting, for example: stable source of income, medical and psychosocial treatment, acceptance by family and friends, accountability if necessary (for those who have committed crimes), and a permanent place to live (especially for those whose families became IDPs while they were fighting). The program must also conduct an initial study on drivers of fighter recruitment in the area of potential programming (are men and women coerced; pulled by financial incentives; drawn by dignity and wanting to belong to a group; and/or pushed out by family members to provide from them?) so local advisory councils (in phase II) can address those drivers and resiliencies in discussions on relevant reintegration themes.
- Identify and assess localities affected by presence/activities of armed groups and VEOs and those with potential to host reintegration activities for near-term disengaged fighters and post-agreement ex-combatants. Map basic demographics, socioeconomic community conditions, infrastructure, job opportunity, service delivery and humanitarian needs in target communities. Include specifics like status of social cohesion and strength, justice redress mechanisms, grievances with armed groups, impact of conflict and non-conflict crime and violence on the community, community response to recruitment and conflict, local resilience and ongoing tensions, perception towards future return and reintegration of former combatants in communities, ongoing and local security and stabilization initiatives, community violence reduction, security sector reform attitudes, potential social barriers to reintegration, and overall security conditions in community.
- Provide an analysis of local institutions' capacities to provide for near-term disengaged fighters and for post-agreement ex-combatants. Map governmental and non-governmental local and international entities currently active in possible target locations that could potentially support near-term and post-agreement DDR programs.

In phase II, PRE-R will build on phase I assessments and findings to establish and convene a series of local advisory councils around relevant themes for reintegration planning. The local advisory councils in communities of return, opportunity, and exile will address specific communities' requirements for successful reintegration of disengaged fighters in the near-term and ex-combatants after an agreement. Specific local advisory council discussions could include planning themes for reintegration such as how to:

- Develop a national and subnational Yemeni DDR strategy
- Cater demobilization and reintegration messaging to different areas
- Get mid-level commanders (MLC) and key civilians in Yemen to support DDR activities
- Develop specific, strategic reintegration program ideas for donors to support
- Identify existing programs which might provide or is already providing assistance to returnees (e.g., psychological support, income generation/employment, healthcare and counseling, re-education, etc.)

If the assessment identifies areas (geographic, demographic, or topical) where there is need and space to initiate appropriate programming in the current context, pilot projects could potentially be implemented. Phase II can inform the DDR Sub-WG on what programmatic activities have

the best likelihood of being effective and scalable for inclusion in official reintegration programming and recommended for potential inclusion in a UN-led peace agreement among the parties to the conflict.

ADDITIONAL GUIDELINES

If project involves training of law enforcement personnel, recipients will be required to coordinate with the Department of State to ensure compliance with the human rights vetting requirements under the Leahy Law. Additional vetting requirements of assistance beneficiaries will be determined by CSO after final scope of work is approved to ensure assistance programming is in compliance with all statutory and policy rules governing such assistance.

The implementer must coordinate with the DDR Sub-WG and demonstrate community buy-in wherever their research, consultative workshops, local advisory councils, or potential pilot projects are located. The implementer will also coordinate closely with CSO and other USG entities as designated by CSO. Activities in phases I and II must be community-led, to ensure that combatants are not favored over the other community members who stayed out of the fight. Activities in both phases must also include female participation, preferably at 50% participation. Female head of households are the most vulnerable in Yemen, and we assume young men from these families are most at risk for recruitment. Women may even serve as in-home recruiters, encouraging men and boys to join an armed group to bring in money for the family. We also assume that when ex-combatants return to their families, the women, who have been running the household for 3+ years, will need to bear the burden of reintegrating the men and boys back into civilian life.

Yemeni ex-combatants and Yemeni communities will directly benefit from this initiative in phase I through inclusion in the assessments, and in phase II through participation with the local advisory councils. Indirect beneficiaries will be UN Office of the Special Envoy of the Secretary General for Yemen (OSESGY), the DDR Sub-WG, and USG officials. Input from assessments and local advisory councils can be used by other international partners in the DDR Sub-WG to shape longer term programs incorporating ex-combatant reintegration planning for Yemen post peace agreement.

Applicants must provide proof of prior or ongoing work in Yemen, expertise in information collection in Yemen or similar conflict zones, and deep understanding of reintegration best practices. CSO encourages consortiums so that local Yemeni organizations and reintegration subject matter experts can contribute to PRE-R with contextual assumptions.

II. AWARD INFORMATION AND APPLICATION EVALUATION AND SCORING

The U.S. government may issue an award resulting from this NOFO to the responsible applicant whose application is the most responsive to the goals and objectives set forth in this NOFO. The U.S. government may (a) reject any or all applications, and/or (b) waive informalities and minor irregularities in applications received.

The U.S. government may make an award on the basis of initial applications received without discussion or negotiations. Therefore, applications should contain the applicant's best terms from a cost and technical standpoint.

U.S. government also reserves the right, but is not obliged, to enter into discussions with an applicant in order to obtain clarification, additional detail, or to suggest refinements in the project's description, budget, or other aspects of an application.

Applicants should note that the following criteria will serve as a standard against which all applications will be evaluated. Department of State will issue an award to the applicant whose proposal represents the best value to the U.S. Government on the basis of technical merit, efficient use of USG funds, and satisfactory organizational capacity. In addition, each application will be evaluated and scored on the Proposal Components using a 100-point scale by a peer review committee of Department of State.

CSO will conduct a merit review of all *eligible* applications as outlined in this NOFO. Applications will be reviewed by an independent review panel consisting of qualified representatives from other DoS bureaus, offices, and Posts. Final approval resides with the CSO Grants Office.

Based on eligible applications that are responsive to the requirements outlined above, the review panel will use the following criteria when rating proposals:

Quality of Project Idea (Total Possible 25 points)

Responsive to the solicitation and appropriate in the country context (10 points)

- Theory of change is clearly stated (5)
- Direct connection established between proposed activities and the desired results (5)
- Exhibits originality, prioritizes innovation, but is feasible (5)

Project Planning/Ability to Achieve Objectives (Total Possible 30 points)

- Includes a clear articulation of how the proposed project activities contribute to the overall project objectives (5)
- Activities are developed and detailed. Objectives are clear, specific, attainable, measurable results-focused and placed in a reasonable time frame (4)
- Flexibility and ability to adapt based on Post and CT feedback is addressed (4)
- Provides a comprehensive quarterly work plan for project activities (3)
- Describes the division of labor among the direct applicant, any partners, and any potential sub-grantees; addresses how the project will engage or obtain support from relevant stakeholders; and identifies local partners where appropriate (3)
- Includes contingency plans for potential difficulties in executing the original work plan (3)

- The proposal demonstrates an institutional record of successful projects in the target country or content area (7)

Cost Effectiveness (Total Possible 15 points)

- The overhead and administration of the proposal, including salaries and honoraria, are explained and justified for the work involved (5)
 - All budget items are necessary, appropriate and linked to program objectives and demonstrate efficient use of U.S. Government funds (10)
- Note: Cost share is not required. Applicants may offer cost share, however cost share will not be considered or factored in when proposals are reviewed.

Project Monitoring and Evaluation (Total Possible 20 points)

- The Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) Plan includes:
 - Narrative explaining how monitoring and evaluation will be carried out and who will be responsible for monitoring and evaluation activities (10)
 - Table listing by project objectives the output- and outcome-based performance indicators with baselines and (yearly and cumulative) targets; data collection tools; data sources; types of data disaggregation, if applicable; and frequency of monitoring and evaluation (10)

Multiplier Effect/Sustainability of Impact (Total Possible 10 points)

- Clearly delineates how elements of the project will have a multiplier effect (5)
- Clearly delineates how impact will be sustainable beyond the life of the grant (5)

APPLICATION AND SUBMISSION INFORMATION:

Please refer to the Proposal Submission Instructions (PSI) for more information and complete instructions on how to apply to this NOFO, including information on proposal’s content and formatting. Please use both the PSI and the NOFO to ensure that the proposal submission is in full compliance with the requirements. Proposal submissions that do not meet all of the requirements outlined in the NOFO and PSI will NOT be considered.

FEDERAL AWARD ADMINISTRATION INFORMATION:

Pursuant to 2 CFR 200.400 g, it is U.S. Department of State policy **not** to award profit under assistance instruments.

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 an application. In addition, a final award cannot be made until funds have been fully appropriated, allocated, and committed through internal CSO procedures. While it is anticipated that these procedures will be successfully completed, potential applicants are hereby notified of these requirements and conditions for award. Applications are submitted at the risk of the applicant. All preparation and submission costs are at the applicant’s expense.

It is the responsibility of the recipient of this NOFO to ensure that it has been recorded as received by SAMS in its **entirety**. Incomplete applications will be considered **ineligible**.

The Department of State bears no responsibility for data errors resulting from transmission or conversion processes associated with electronic submissions.

The Federal award signed by the Grants Officer is the only authorizing document.

Reporting Requirements

Recipients will, at a minimum, be required to submit Quarterly Progress Reports and Quarterly Financial Reports (SF-425) describing key activities undertaken during the preceding month towards accomplishment of the stated objectives. Progress Reports will compare actual to planned performance and indicate the progress made in accomplishing each assistance award task/goal noted in the grant agreement and will contain analysis and summary of findings, both quantitative and qualitative, for key indicators. Financial Reports will provide a means of monitoring expenditures and comparing costs incurred with progress. In difficult environments CSO may require additional spot reporting and monthly reporting in order to monitor program developments. Applicants should account for this in their M&E staffing plans.

NOTE: It is Department of State policy that English is the official language of all documents. If reports or any supporting documents are provided in both English and a foreign language, it must be stated in each version that the **English language version is the controlling version. U.S. dollar is the controlling currency.**

Mandatory disclosures (2 CFR 200.113)

The non-federal entity or applicant for a federal award must disclose, in a timely manner, in writing to the federal awarding agency or pass-through entity all violations of federal criminal law involving fraud, bribery, or gratuity violations potentially affecting the federal award. Non-federal entities that have received a Federal award including the term and condition outlined in Appendix XII of the 2 CFR 200—Award Term and Condition for Recipient Integrity and Performance Matters are required to report certain civil, criminal, or administrative proceedings to SAM. Failure to make required disclosures can result in any of the remedies described in §200.338 Remedies for noncompliance, including suspension or debarment.

Federal Awardee Performance and Integrity Information System (FAPIIS)

A federal awarding agency, prior to making a federal award will review and consider any information about the applicant that is in the designated integrity and performance system accessible through SAM (currently FAPIIS) (see 41 U.S.C. 2313). Applicant, at its option, may review information in the designated integrity and performance systems accessible through SAM and comment on any information about itself that a Federal awarding agency previously entered and is currently in the designated integrity and performance system accessible through www.sam.gov. Federal awarding agency will consider any comments by the applicant, in addition to the other information in the designated integrity and performance system, in making a judgment about the applicant's integrity, business ethics, and record of performance under

Federal awards when completing the review of risk posed by applicants as described in §200.205
Federal awarding agency review of risk posed by applicants.

OTHER INFORMATION

Applicant organizations must demonstrate adherence to equal opportunity employment practices and commitment to non-discrimination with respect to beneficiaries. Non-discrimination includes equal treatment without regard to race, religion, ethnicity, gender, and political affiliation. Applicants are reminded that U.S. Executive Orders and U.S. law prohibits transactions with or support to individuals or organizations associated with terrorism.

Proposals that reflect any type of support for any member, affiliate, or representative of a designated to terrorist organization or narcotics trafficker, including elected members of government, will NOT be considered. This provision must be included in any sub-awards/sub-contracts issued under this award.

III. ELIGIBILITY INFORMATION

Applicant must have acute awareness of conflict-related sensitivities in Yemen, through prior work in Yemen or through thematic expertise. Applicants are encouraged to partner with relevant organizations with the ability to execute such programming throughout Yemen.

IV. AGENCY CONTACTS

Any prospective applicant desiring an explanation or interpretation of this NOFO must request it in writing by the *deadline for questions* specified in the cover letter to allow a reply to reach all prospective applicants before the submission of their applications. Any information given to a prospective applicant concerning this NOFO will be furnished promptly to all other prospective applicants as a Questions and Answers attachment to this NOFO, if that information is necessary in submitting applications or if the lack of it would be prejudicial to any other prospective applicants.

Any questions concerning this NOFO must be submitted in writing by email to:

U.S. Department of State
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