

United States Department of State
Bureau of Cyberspace and Digital Policy, International Cyberspace Security Unit
(Formerly S/CCI, Office of the Coordinator for Cyber Issues)
Notice of Funding Opportunity (NOFO): Advancing Cybersecurity Policies in support of
an Open, Interoperable, Reliable, and Secure Internet

This is the announcement of funding opportunity number SFOP0009040

Catalog of Federal Domestic Assistance Number: 19.665

Type of Solicitation: Open Competition

Questions Deadline: 11:59 PM EST on Thursday, 14 JULY 2022

Application Deadline: 11:59 PM EST on Thursday, 28 JULY 2022

Total Funding Ceiling: \$1,000,000.00 USD

Anticipated Number of Awards: One

Type of Award: Cooperative Agreement

Period of Performance: 24-36 months/2-3 years

Anticipated Time to Award, Pending Availability of Funds: September 2022

A. PROJECT DESCRIPTION

The U.S. Department of State, Bureau of Cyberspace and Digital Policy, International Cyberspace Security (CDP/ICS) unit, announces an open competition for organizations interested in submitting applications for projects that support and encourage the adoption and/or promulgation by partner nations of cybersecurity policies, legal frameworks, and standards consistent with the United States' efforts to promote an open, interoperable, reliable, and secure Internet.

Pending the availability of funds, CDP/ICS anticipates awarding one cooperative agreement of up to \$1,000,000.00 USD.

CDP/ICS invites organizations interested in potential funding to submit proposals outlining program concepts that reflect the following:

Priority Regions/Countries: Global

Target Audience: Activities should target foreign assistance eligible civilian government officials. Suggestions for beneficiaries of the cooperative agreement award may also be provided by the State Department and will be drawn from countries that: 1.) may be at particular

risk for emulating certain legal or regulatory approaches similar to the cybersecurity policies of authoritarian governments (e.g., the People’s Republic of China); and/or 2.) could be force-multipliers in the United States’ efforts to encourage more open and progressive cyber policy approaches (e.g., in countries that are actively developing their own laws and frameworks, particularly in the developing world). It is expected that the prospective grantee coordinates closely with CDP/ICS to appropriately target the support. All research and analysis products from this cooperative agreement, including an externally facing website, shall be made publicly available.

Background:

As countries around the world work to develop domestic legislation, policies, standards, and regulatory frameworks to strengthen cybersecurity, the United States has a vested interest in promoting approaches that are consistent with its efforts to advance a more open, interoperable, reliable, and secure Internet. The United States’ vision for an open, secure, interoperable, reliable Internet not only fosters free expression and innovation, but also supports international trade and commerce, and strengthens international security. At present, however, the U.S. approach is increasingly in competition with that of other governments, some of which have comparatively restrictive, state-centric models, that particularly appeal to countries in the developing world.

For example, the People’s Republic of China (PRC) comparatively state-centric, top-down approach to regulation, as reflected in its Cybersecurity Law, Multi-Level Protection Scheme 2.0, Encryption Law, Personal Information Protection Law, and numerous other domestic regulatory measures, includes a range of provisions inconsistent with the U.S. approach to cyberspace. Other countries have started to adopt similar authoritarian and top-down regulatory approaches to “cybersecurity,” particularly developing economies, that find more centralized forms of governance appealing to protect and/or advance their own national security and economic interests.

As countries consider models for their own legislation and domestic regulation and develop national positions in international forums and bodies, it is important that they avoid prioritizing unchecked state control over resources and information in a manner that could enable oppression, undermine security, restrict cross-border data flows, limit economic growth and development, stifle innovation, and/or potentially harm human rights online.

Project Goal/Objectives:

CDP/ICS’s **goal** with this project is to:

1. understand the priorities or “drivers” of certain governments, particularly from the developing world, that find authoritarian models for cybersecurity related policies, legal/regulatory frameworks and technical standards more appealing, and
2. initiate proactive and informed capacity building engagements with foreign assistance eligible foreign partners to advance alternative, yet practical approaches that ensure states can achieve their own national priorities and interests while also remaining consistent with the U.S. approach for an open, interoperable, reliable, and secure Internet.

This project will focus on the following areas:

- a. Understanding the challenge: What aspects of various domestic cybersecurity laws and policies are being exploited for authoritarian purposes? Which aspects of these approaches are most likely to be replicated internationally? What are the domestic or international drivers for governments that are likely to adopt similar approaches?
- b. Identifying the target audience: What approach can we use to identify foreign governments that are most at risk for emulating these or similar approaches? What are their unique priorities and/or the perceived challenges that would drive them to emulate policies or approaches of authoritarian governments? Which governments could be potential influencers or force-multipliers in U.S. efforts to encourage more progressive policies, particularly in the developing world?
- c. Countering the authoritarian narrative: Explore in detail and develop effective messaging on the downsides of authoritarian approaches to cybersecurity policies and frameworks as they have been implemented, including negative impacts on national security, economic growth, development, data flows, innovation, freedom online, etc.
- d. Identifying alternative models: Develop briefings on U.S. and likeminded models or approaches that could be considered as alternatives as states attempt to develop domestic legislative and policy solutions, linked to data and experiences that can demonstrate the advantages of open, democratic policies.
- e. Designing a program of engagement: Shape and implement a program of engagement (e.g., targeted outreach, awareness raising activities, technical assistance, peer-to-peer learning opportunities) that will influence target countries to adopt U.S. and likeminded approaches and better understand the downsides of authoritarian models.

CDP/ICS anticipates the following **long-term impacts** from this project:

- Civilian government officials will better understand the policy and legal approaches advocated by the United States and likeminded partners, including the benefits of these models for security, economic growth, and online freedom.
- Target governments will strengthen and expand direct engagement with U.S. and likeminded governments as they develop domestic laws, policies, and national positions, including in relevant international forums (e.g., the United Nations, including its various committees and technical organizations; the ASEAN Regional Forum; Organization of American States; Organization for Security Cooperation in Europe, etc.)
- Civilian government officials will better understand the challenges and limitations of adopting overly restrictive legal and regulatory frameworks or approaches currently implemented by authoritarian governments, such as the PRC.
- Partner nation governments strengthen their communication and relationships with stakeholders such as citizens, non-government organizations, civil society organizations, the private sector, and others.
- In the long-term, improved knowledge, access to and technical assistance in applying U.S. aligned models of governance, and increased engagement with the U.S. will lead to the development and implementation of policies in line with U.S. values and the rejection of authoritarian policies.

Project activities may include, but are not limited to:

- In-depth research and/or analysis that explores factors that drives certain governments to emulate authoritarian approaches to cybersecurity policy, related legal/regulatory frameworks and technical standards in their domestic policies; what foreign governments are most at risk for emulating these or similar approaches; and what governments could be potential influencers or force-multipliers in U.S. efforts to encourage more progressive policies, particularly in the developing world, in order to inform the capacity building activities for target beneficiaries. **Applicants should consider focusing on specific areas of cybersecurity policy of most interest to key states as they explore in detail the downsides of authoritarian models as they have been implemented, including effects on national security, economic growth and development, innovation, freedom online, etc.**
- A combination of delivery mechanisms to directly engage civilian government officials on U.S. values and Internet governance approaches, including, but not limited to, face-to-face workshops, scenario-based exercises, virtual education, facilitated peer-to-peer learning, etc.
- Equipping civilian government officials to develop effective collaboration and consultative processes between governments and the private sector, non-governmental organizations, and other relevant stakeholders when developing domestic policies and regulations.
- Raising awareness and sharing information on the broader political, economic, and strategic interests driving authoritarian policies and the limitations of those approaches; and raising awareness of alternative policies and approaches.
- Developing practical strategies to mitigate the driving forces behind the adoption of authoritarian approaches.

Key Project Considerations:

The following list of project considerations is provided to help applicant(s) develop a responsive, robust proposal. Strong preference will be given to applicant(s) that:

- Demonstrate a track record in delivering effective education and trainings, especially to civilian government audiences from foreign assistance eligible countries. Applicants are strongly encouraged to think imaginatively about the combination of delivery mechanisms that will deliver the best learning outcomes.
- Demonstrate strong international understanding of the strategic, operational, policy, economic, and legal aspects of cybersecurity policy, including the ability to conduct global comparative public policy and economic analysis.
- Exhibit demonstrated subject matter expertise on U.S.-China relations, China's domestic, and foreign policy, and/or China's broader strategic and economic ambitions.
- Possess a strong understanding of the characteristics of effective public-private partnership, including the role that the private sector, non-governmental organizations, academic institutions, and standards bodies play in shaping cybersecurity legislation and policies.

- Foster collaborative and substantive partnerships, including where applicable with local organization in other countries. As appropriate, **applicants are also strongly encouraged to form consortia that leverages each organization's respective resources and expertise when submitting a combined proposal.**

Activities that are not typically considered competitive include, but are not limited to:

- Projects that focus on one country rather than a regional or global approach.
- Purchases of hardware or software (including licenses) for commercial technology products.

The proposal may span multiple years as appropriate, but applicants should anticipate a start date no later than September 2022.

This project will be undertaken in coordination with the Digital Connectivity and Cybersecurity Partnership (DCCP) managed by CDP.

CDP/ICS's preference is to avoid duplicating past efforts by supporting new and creative approaches. This does not exclude from consideration projects that improve upon or expand existing successful projects in a new and complementary way.

This notice is subject to availability of funding.

B. FEDERAL AWARD INFORMATION

Primary organizations can submit one application in response to the NOFO.

The U.S. government may: (a) reject any or all applications; (b) accept other than the lowest cost application; (c) accept more than one application; and (d) waive irregularities in applications received.

The U.S. government may make award(s) on the basis of initial applications received, without discussions or negotiations. Therefore, each initial application should contain the applicant's best terms from a cost and technical standpoint. The U.S. government reserves the right (though it is under no obligation to do so), however, to enter into discussions with one or more applicants in order to obtain clarifications, additional detail, or to suggest refinements in the project description, budget, or other aspects of an application.

CDP/ICS anticipates having approximately \$1,000,000.00 of FY 2021 Economic Support Funds (ESF) available to support one successful application submitted in response to this NOFO, subject to the availability of funding.

Applicants should include an anticipated start date no later than September 2022 and the period of performance should be between two to three years.

CDP/ICS anticipates awarding one cooperative agreement depending on the needs and risk factors of the program. The final determination on award mechanism will be made by the Grants Officer. The distinction between grants and cooperative agreements revolves around the existence of “substantial involvement.” Cooperative agreements require greater Federal government participation in the project. If a cooperative agreement is awarded, CDP/ICS will undertake reasonable and programmatically necessary substantial involvement. Examples of substantial involvement can include, but are not limited to:

- Active participation or collaboration with the recipient in the implementation of the award;
- Review and approval of one stage of work before another can begin;
- Review and approval of substantive provisions of proposed sub-awards or contracts beyond existing Federal policy;
- Approval of the recipient’s budget or plan of work prior to the award.

The authority for this funding opportunity is found in the Foreign Assistance Act of 1961, as amended (FAA).

To maximize the impact and sustainability of the award(s) that result(s) from this NOFO, CDP/ICS reserves the right to execute a non-competitive continuation amendment(s). Any non-competitive continuation is contingent on performance and availability of funds. A non-competitive continuation is not guaranteed; the Department of State reserves the right to exercise or not exercise the option to issue non-competitive continuation amendment(s).

C. ELIGIBILITY INFORMATION

C.1 Eligible Applicants

CDP/ICS welcomes applications from U.S.-based non-profit/non-governmental organizations subject to section 501(c) (3) of the U.S. tax code; foreign-based non-profit organizations/nongovernment organizations (NGO); Public International Organizations; Foreign Public Organizations; private, public, or state institutions of higher education; and for-profit organizations or businesses.

Applications submitted by for-profit entities may be subject to additional review following the panel selection process. Additionally, the Department of State prohibits profit to for-profit or commercial organizations under its assistance awards. Profit is defined as any amount in excess of allowable direct and indirect costs. The allowability of costs incurred by commercial organizations is determined in accordance with the provisions of the Federal Acquisition Regulation (FAR) at 48 CFR 30, Cost Accounting Standards Administration, and 48 CFR 31 Contract Cost Principles and Procedures.

Please see 2 CFR 200.307 for regulations regarding program income.

C.2 Cost Sharing or Matching

Providing cost sharing, matching, or cost participation is not an eligibility factor or requirement for this NOFO and providing cost share will not result in a more favorable competitive ranking.

C.3 Other

Applicants must have existing, or the capacity to develop, active partnerships local in-country partners, entities, and relevant stakeholders and have demonstrable experience in administering successful and preferably similar projects.

Any applicant listed on the Excluded Parties List System in the [System for Award Management \(SAM.gov\)](http://www.sam.gov) (www.sam.gov) and/or has a current debt to the U.S. government 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.” Additionally, no entity or person listed on the Excluded Parties List System in SAM.gov can participate in any activities under an award. All applicants are strongly encouraged to review the Excluded Parties List System in SAM.gov to ensure that no ineligible entity or person is included in their application.

D. APPLICATION AND SUBMISSION INFORMATION

D.1 Address to Request Application Package

Applicants can find application forms, kits, or other materials needed to apply on www.grants.gov and SAMS Domestic (<https://mygrants.servicenowservices.com>) under the announcement title “Advancing Cybersecurity Policies in support of an Open, Interoperable, Reliable, and Secure Internet,” funding opportunity number “SFOP0009040” Please contact the CDP/ICS point of contact listed in Section G if requesting reasonable accommodations for persons with disabilities or for security reasons. Please note that reasonable accommodations do not include deadline extensions.

D.2 Content and Form of Application Submission

For all application documents, please ensure:

- All documents are in English and all costs are in U.S. Dollars. If an original document within the application is in another language, an English translation must be provided (please note the Department of State, as indicated in 2 CFR 200.111, requires that English is the official language of all award documents). If any document is provided in both English and a foreign language, the English language version is the controlling version;
- All pages are numbered, including budgets and attachments;
- All documents are formatted to 8 ½ x 11 paper; and,
- All documents are single-spaced, 12-point Times New Roman font, with 1-inch margins. Captions and footnotes may be 10-point Times New Roman font. Font sizes in charts and tables, including the budget, can be reformatted to fit within 1 page width.

D.2.1 Application Requirements

Complete applications must include the following:

- 1) Completed and signed **SF-424**, **SF-424A**, and **SF-424B** forms.
- 2) Organizations that engage in lobbying the U.S. government, including Congress, or pay for another entity to lobby on their behalf, are also required to complete the **SF-LLL** “Disclosure of Lobbying Activities” form (**only if applicable**).
- 3) **Cover Page/Executive Summary** (not to exceed one (2) pages, preferably as a Word Document) that includes a table with the organization name, project title, target country/countries, and name and contact information for the application’s main point of contact and brief section that clearly outlines the (1) the problem statement addressed by the project (2) research-based evidence justifying the applicant’s approach, and (3) quantifiable project outcomes and impacts.
- 4) **Proposal Narrative** (not to exceed ten (10) pages, preferably as a Word Document). Please note the ten-page limit **does not include** the **Cover Page/Executive Summary, Table of Contents, Detailed Budget, Budget Narrative, Logic Model, Program Monitoring and Evaluation Narrative and Plan, Key Personnel, Timeline, Contingency Plan, and Attachments (Single Audit or NICRA)**. Applicants are encouraged to combine multiple documents into a single Word Document (i.e., Cover Page, Table of Contents, and Executive Summary in one file). The Proposal Narrative must include the following:
 - **Introduction to the Organization:** A description of past and present operations, showing ability to carry out the project, including information on all relevant or similar type projects from previous grants from the U.S. Embassy and/or U.S. government agencies.
 - **Program Methods and Design:** A description of how the program is expected to work to solve the stated problem and achieve the goal.
 - **Program Goal:** The “goal(s)” describe the larger outcome intended
 - **Program Objectives:** The intermediate accomplishments and measurable targets to achieve a goal. Objectives of the program should be SMART:
 - **Specific:** Detailed and specifies what will be achieved
 - **Measurable:** have associated metrics or measurements of success
 - **Attainable:** appropriately challenging, objectives can be reasonably attained given the available resources
 - **Relevant:** align with the policy/program goal and appropriate within the country or beneficiary audience
 - **Time-Bound:** achievable within the timeframe of the program
 - **Program Activities:** Describe specific actions taken under Objective. All activities should be clearly developed and sufficiently explain the resource and time requirements (inputs) and things done or produced (outputs). Activities

should detail: target areas, participant groups or selection criteria for participants; how relevant stakeholders will be engaged; actions taken by local partners as appropriate/relevant.

- **Future Funding or Sustainability** Applicant's plan for continuing the program beyond the grant period, or the availability of other resources, if applicable. Include ways program activities will ensure sustainability
- **Risk Analysis** Identify the internal and external risks associated with the proposed project, rate the likelihood of the risks, rate the potential impact of the risks on the project, and identify actions that could help mitigate the risks.

- 5) **Detailed Budget** (preferably as an Excel workbook) that includes three (3) columns containing the request to CDP/ICS, any cost sharing contribution, and the total budget. A summary budget should also be included using the OMB-approved budget categories (see SF-424A as a sample) in a separate tab. Costs must be in U.S. Dollars. Detailed line-item budgets for sub-grantees should be included as additional tabs within the Excel workbook (if available at the time of submission).

Please see Attachment 1) *Budget Guidance and Template for New Awards (FY2021)* for more information.

- 6) **Budget Narrative** (preferably as a Word Document) Justify each line-item in the budget and explain how the amounts were derived, consistency with the applicant's documented policies, as well as the source and description of all proposed costs (and cost-share, if applicable). The narrative should complement the budget rather than repeat information provided in the budget. For example, the narrative should provide details on the purpose of costs, reasonability of costs, cost price analysis, explain allocations, explain any yearly variances, and tie expenses to program activities and/or objectives where appropriate. Sources of all cost-share offered in the application should be identified and explained in the budget narrative. See Attachment 1), Tab 1, *Budget Guidance and Template for New Awards (FY2021)* for more information.

- 7) **Logic Model** (preferably as a Word Document). Logic models, and alternative approaches, can be helpful when planning and designing programs. These tools can be used to visually depict or outline how and why a project will work—i.e., the rationale behind your project approach. Detailing how a program's planned activities lead to certain outcomes can often help applicants understand the assumptions within the approach. Detailing factors outside your control, such as policy shifts (i.e., external factors) within a logic model can identify areas that should be included within your program's risk analysis. It details planned activities, the immediate services or product of project activities (outputs), and the expected changes or benefits that occur after activities have been implemented (outcomes). Applicants should specify objectives, identify what resources (inputs) are needed, outline proposed activities (outputs) and beneficiaries, and illustrate how activities lead to expected results. Applicants are encouraged to use the attached Program Design and Logic Model Template, but are welcome to use their own templates so long as it provides the requisite information for thorough review of the proposed project. See Attachment 2) Program Design and Logic Model Template.

8) **Program Monitoring and Evaluation Narrative and Plan:**

- An M&E Narrative (maximum one page) outlines how a project's M&E system will be carried out and by whom. It details how you will track your project's performance toward its objectives, over time. Provide a clear description of the approach and data collection strategies and tools to be employed (e.g., pre- and post-test surveys, interviews, focus groups). The description should include how the applicant will track and document whether activities occurred (outputs) and the results or changes caused by these activities (outcomes). If the project includes work with local partners or sub-partners, explain how M&E efforts will be coordinated amongst these organizations. Explain if an external evaluation will be included. Evaluations, internal or external, should be systematic studies that use research methods to address specific questions about project performance. They should provide a valuable supplement to ongoing monitoring activities. Evaluation activities generally include baseline assessments, mid-term and final evaluations.
- The M&E plan should draw on the objectives, activities and expected changes from the logic model, and link those areas to indicators. The M&E plan is generally structured as a table with output- and outcome-based indicators. It explains how data will be collected (data collection methods) to show that certain changes occurred. It outlines baselines (where your project is starting) and quarterly targets (what you would like to achieve) for each indicator. Applicants are encouraged to refer to the attachment titled "Defining M&E Terms" for concise explanations of M&E terms and definitions used by the Department of State.
See Attachment 3) *Defining M&E Terms*.

9) **Key Personnel** (not to exceed two (2) pages, preferably as a Word Document). Include short bios that highlight relevant professional experience. Provides names, titles, roles, and experience/qualifications of key personnel involved in the program. Given the limited space, CVs are not recommended for submission.

10) **Timeline** (not to exceed one (1) page, preferably as a Word Document or Excel Sheet). The timeline of the overall proposal should include activities, evaluation efforts, and program closeout.

11) **Contingency Plan** (not to exceed three (3) pages) for proposed activities should the originally planned activities not be able to be implemented. The Contingency Plan should be submitted as an additional annex. Applicants should demonstrate consideration of the risks identified in the submitted risk assessment and include specific alternative activities or locations as part of the Contingency Plan. Any proposed "plan" must comply with 2CFR200.433 – Contingency provisions. Plans must not include unallocable or unallowable expenses and must not result in a larger Total Award Value than the identified as the "competition ceiling." CDP/ICS requires prior approval by the Grants Officer of the "plan" before any activities can take place, or costs can be incurred against the "plan."

12) Attachments:

- **Single Audit** a PDF file copy of your organization's most recent single audit is required, if your organization meets the threshold as defined in 2 CFR 200 Subpart F. If your organization has not had a recent single audit (within your organization's previous 3 fiscal years), you must submit your organization's most recent independent financial audit.
- **NICRA** If your organization has a Negotiated Indirect Cost Rate Agreement (NICRA) and includes NICRA charges in the budget, your latest NICRA letter should be included as a PDF file. This document will not be reviewed by the Merit Review Panel but will be used by project and grant team if the submission is recommended for funding. Organizations that have previously established indirect cost rates must submit timely indirect cost proposals to their cognizant agency as required by Appendix III & IV of 2 CFR 200. If indirect cost proposals have not been submitted for re-negotiation, as required, out-of-date NICRAs may not be considered. If your proposal involves subawards to organizations charging indirect costs, please submit their NICRA, if applicable.
- Letters of support from program partners describing the roles and responsibilities of each partner, if applicable/pre-identified.
- Official permission letters, if required for project activities.

Applications that do not include the elements listed above will be deemed technically ineligible. To ensure that all applications receive a balanced evaluation, the review panel will review from the first page of each section up to the page limit and no further.

D.2.2 Additional Information Requested For Those Receiving Notification of Intent

Successful applicants must submit, after notification of intent to make a Federal award, but prior to issuance of a Federal award:

- Written responses and revised application documents addressing conditions and recommendations from the review panel;
- A copy of the applicant's latest NICRA as a PDF file, if the applicant has a NICRA and includes NICRA charges in the budget;
- A completed copy of the Department's Financial Management Survey, if receiving USG funding for the first time;
- Submission of required documents to register in the Payment Management System managed by the Department of Health and Human Services, if receiving CDP/ICS funding for the first time (unless an exemption is provided);
- Other requested information or documents included in the notification of intent to make a Federal award or subsequent communications prior to issuance of a Federal award;
- Applicants who submit their applications through Grants.gov will be required to create a SAMS Domestic account in order to accept the final award. Accounts must be logged into to every 60 days in order to maintain an active account.

D.3 Unique Entity Identifier and System for Award Management (SAM)

All prime organizations, whether based in the United States or in another country, must have a Unique Entity Identifier (UEI), formerly referred to as DUNS, and an active registration with the SAM.gov **before submitting an application**. CDP/ICS may **not** review applications from or make awards to applicants that have not completed all applicable UEI and SAM.gov requirements. 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.

The 2 CFR 200 requires that sub-grantees obtain a UEI number. Please note the UEI for sub-grantees is not required at the time of application but will be required before the award is processed and/or directed to a sub-grantee.

Note: The process of obtaining 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), a Commercial and Government Entity (CAGE) code, and a UEI number 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 NATO CAGE (NCAGE) code and UEI number prior to registering in SAM.gov.

All organizations applying for grants (except individuals) must obtain these registrations. All are free of charge:

- NCAGE/CAGE Code
- Unique Entity Identifier from SAM.gov
- SAM.gov registration

Step 1: Apply for a NCAGE Code

NCAGE application: Application page here:

<https://eportal.nspa.nato.int/AC135Public/scage/CageList.aspx>

Instructions for the NCAGE application process:

<https://eportal.nspa.nato.int/AC135Public/Docs/US%20Instructions%20for%20NSPA%20NCAGE.pdf>

For NCAGE help from within the U.S., call 1-888-227-2423

For NCAGE help from outside the U.S., call 1-269-961-7766

Email NCAGE@dliis.dla.mil for any problems in getting an NCAGE code.

Step 2: After receiving the NCAGE Code, proceed to register in SAM.gov by logging onto:

<https://www.sam.gov>.

All prime organizations must, at all times during which they have an active Federal award or application under consideration by any Federal awarding agency, maintain an active SAM.gov registration with current information. SAM.gov requires all entities to renew their registration once a year to maintain an active registration status in SAM.gov. It is the responsibility of the applicant to ensure it has an active registration in SAM.gov and to maintain that active registration. If an applicant has not fully complied with the requirements at the time of application, the applicant may be deemed technically ineligible to receive an award and use that determination as a basis for making an award to another applicant.

Note: SAM.gov is not the same as SAMS Domestic. It is free to register in both systems, but the registration processes are different.

Information is included on the SAM.gov website to help international registrations, including “Quick Start Guide for International Registrations” and “Helpful Hints.” Navigate to www.SAM.gov, click “HELP” in the top navigation bar, then click “International Registrants” in the left navigation panel. Please note, guidance on SAM.gov and the guidance on GSA’s website about requirement for registering in SAM.gov is subject to change. Applicants should review the website for the most up-to-date guidance.

D.3.1 Exemptions

An exemption from these requirements may be permitted on a case-by-case basis if:

- An applicant’s identity must be protected due to potential endangerment of their mission, their organization’s status, their employees, or individuals being served by the applicant.

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.

Note: Foreign organizations will be required to register with the NATO Support Agency (NSPA) to receive a NCAGE code in order to register in SAM.gov. NSPA will forward your registration request to the applicable National Codification Bureau (NCB) if your organization is located in a NATO or Tier 2 Sponsored Non-NATO Nation. As of September 2021, NATO nations included Albania, Belgium, Bulgaria, Canada, Croatia, Czech Republic, Denmark, Estonia, France, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Iceland, Italy, Latvia, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Montenegro, Netherlands, North Macedonia, Norway, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Slovakia, Slovenia, Spain, Turkey, United Kingdom, and the United States of America. As of September 2021, Tier 2 nations included Argentina, Australia, Austria, Brazil, Colombia, Finland, India, Indonesia, Israel, Japan, Republic of Korea, Malaysia, Morocco, New Zealand, Serbia, Singapore, Sweden, Ukraine, and United Arab Emirates.

NSPA and/or the appropriate NCB forwards all NCAGE code information to all Allied Committee 135 (AC/135) nations, which as of September 2021 also included Algeria, Belarus, Bosnia & Herzegovina, Brunei Darussalam, Chile, Egypt, Georgia, Jordan, Oman, Pakistan,

*Peru, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, South Africa, and Thailand. **All organizations are strongly advised to take this into consideration when assessing whether registration may result in possible endangerment.***

D.4 Submission Dates and Times

Applications are due no later than 11:59 PM Eastern Standard Time (EST), on Thursday, 28 JULY, 2022 on <https://www.grants.gov/> or SAMS Domestic (<https://mygrants.servicenowservices.com>) under the announcement title “Advancing Cybersecurity Policies in support of an Open, Interoperable, Reliable, and Secure Internet,” funding opportunity number “SFOP0009040.”

Grants.gov and SAMS Domestic automatically log the date and time an application submission is made, and the Department of State will use this information to determine whether an application has been submitted on time. Late applications are neither reviewed nor considered. Known system errors caused by Grants.gov or SAMS Domestic (<https://mygrants.servicenow.com>) that are outside of the applicant’s control will be reviewed on a case-by-case basis. Applicants should not expect a notification upon CDP/ICS receiving their application.

D.5 Funding Limitations, Restrictions, and other Considerations

CDP/ICS will not consider applications that reflect any type of support for any member, affiliate, or representative of a designated terrorist organization. Please refer the link for Foreign Terrorist Organizations: <https://www.state.gov/foreign-terrorist-organizations/> Project activities whose direct beneficiaries are foreign militaries or paramilitary groups or individuals will not be considered for CDP/ICS funding given purpose limitations on funding.

The Leahy Law prohibits Department foreign assistance funds from supporting foreign security force units if the Secretary of State has credible information that the unit has committed a gross violation of human rights. Per [22 USC §2378d\(a\) \(2017\)](#), “No assistance shall be furnished under this chapter [FOREIGN ASSISTANCE] or the Arms Export Control Act [22 USC 2751 et seq.] to any unit of the security forces of a foreign country if the Secretary of State has credible information that such unit has committed a gross violation of human rights.” Restrictions may apply to any proposed assistance to police or other law enforcement. Among these, pursuant to section 620M of the Foreign Assistance Act of 1961, as amended (FAA), no assistance provided through this funding opportunity may be furnished to any unit of the security forces of a foreign country when there is credible information that such unit has committed a gross violation of human rights. In accordance with the requirements of section 620M of the FAA, also known as the Leahy law, project beneficiaries or participants from a foreign government’s security forces may need to be vetted by the Department before the provision of any assistance. If a proposed grant or cooperative agreement will provide assistance to foreign security forces or personnel, compliance with the Leahy Law is required.

Organizations should be cognizant of these restrictions when developing project proposals as these restrictions will require appropriate due diligence of program beneficiaries and collaboration with CDP/ICS to ensure compliance with these restrictions. Program beneficiaries subject to due diligence vetting will include any individuals or entities that are beneficiaries of

foreign assistance funding or support. Due diligence vetting will include a review of open-source materials.

D.6 Other Submission Requirements

All application submissions must be made electronically via www.grants.gov or SAMS Domestic (<https://mygrants.servicenowservices.com>). Both systems require registration by the applying organization. Please note that the Grants.gov registration process can take ten (10) business days or longer, even if all registration steps are completed in a timely manner.

It is the responsibility of the applicant to ensure that it has an active registration in SAMS Domestic or Grants.gov. Applicants are required to document that the application has been received by SAMS Domestic or Grants.gov in its entirety. CDP/ICS bears no responsibility for disqualification that result from applicants not being registered before the due date, for system errors in either SAMS Domestic or Grants.gov, or other errors in the application process. Additionally, applicants must save a screen shot of the checklist showing all documents submitted in case any document fails to upload successfully.

Faxed, couriered, or emailed documents will not be accepted. Reasonable accommodations may, in appropriate circumstances, be provided to applicants with disabilities or for security reasons. Applicants must follow all formatting instructions in the applicable NOFO and these instructions.

CDP/ICS encourages organizations to **submit applications during normal business hours** (Monday – Friday, 9:00AM-5:00PM Eastern Standard Time (EST)). If an applicant experiences technical difficulties and has contacted the appropriate helpdesk but is not receiving timely assistance (e.g. if you have not received a response within 48 hours of contacting the helpdesk), you may contact the CDP/ICS point of contact listed in the NOFO in Section G. The point of contact may assist in contacting the appropriate helpdesk.

Note: The Grants Officer will determine technical eligibility of all applications.

SAMS Domestic Applications:

Applicants using SAMS Domestic for the first time should complete their “New Organization Registration.” To register with SAMS Domestic, click “Login to <https://mygrants.servicenowservices.com>” and follow the “create an account” link.

Organizations must remember to save a screen shot of the checklist showing all documents submitted in case any document fails to upload successfully.

SAMS Domestic Help Desk:

For assistance with SAMS Domestic accounts and technical issues related to the system, please contact the ILMS help desk by phone at +1 (888) 313-4567 (toll charges apply for international callers) or through the Self Service online portal that can be accessed from <https://afsitsm.service-now.com/ilms/home>. Customer support is available 24/7.

Grants.gov Applications:

Applicants who do not submit applications via SAMS Domestic may submit via www.grants.gov.

Please be advised that completing all the necessary registration steps for obtaining a username and password from Grants.gov **can take ten (10) business days or longer**.

Please refer to the Grants.gov website for definitions of various "application statuses" and the difference between a submission receipt and a submission validation. Applicants will receive a validation e-mail from Grants.gov upon the successful submission of an application. Validation of an electronic submission via Grants.gov can take up to two business days. Additionally, organizations **must** remember to save a screenshot of the checklist showing all documents submitted in case any document fails to upload successfully.

Grants.gov Helpdesk:

For assistance with Grants.gov, please call the Contact Center at +1 (800) 518-4726 or email support@grants.gov. The Contact Center is available 24 hours a day, seven days a week, except federal holidays.

See <https://www.opm.gov/policy-data-oversight/pay-leave/federal-holidays/> for a list of federal holidays.

E. APPLICATION REVIEW INFORMATION***E.1 Proposal Review Criteria***

The CDP/ICS review panel will evaluate each application individually against the following criteria, listed below in order of importance, and not against competing applications. Please use the below criteria as a reference, but **do not structure your application according to the subsections**.

Quality and Program Design – 35 points: The program idea is well developed and responsive to the policy and program objective of the NOFO. The applicant describes the project's potential contribution to solving the problem addressed in the problem statement. The application clearly defines the problem; its causes; stakeholders; and existing research/data; the approach taken to solve the problem; realistic milestones to indicate progress.

Program Planning/Ability to Achieve Objectives – 25 points: Goals and objectives are clearly stated and project approach is likely to provide maximum impact in achieving the proposed results. The applicant proposes activities that are feasible, and are also practical, and/or experiential in nature to encourage innovation. The applicant addresses how the project will engage or obtain support from relevant stakeholders and/or identifies local partners. Program logic is sound showing plausible pathways to achieve project outcomes. Key assumptions and risks have been identified and their potential influences described. The applicant acknowledges if activities similar to those proposed are already taking or have taken place previously and

provides an explanation as to how proposed new activities will not duplicate or merely add to existing/recent activities.

Monitoring & Evaluation/Sustainability – 15 points: Applicant demonstrates it is able to measure program success against key indicators and provides milestones to indicate progress toward goals outlined in the proposal. The program includes output and outcome indicators and shows how and when those will be measured and who will be responsible for them. The applicant clearly details how activities will result in benefits that will continue beyond the funding period.

Organizational Capacity – 15 points: The applicant demonstrates an institutional record of successful projects in the content area proposed. The applicant demonstrates experience (e.g., has previously worked and/or has established contacts/partners) in the proposed country/territory/region. The organization has expertise in its stated field and has adequate staffing to manage the proposed project. The applicant demonstrates capacity for responsible fiscal management of donor funding (e.g., successful management of a previous grant or sub-award).

Budget & Budget Narrative – 10 points: The budget justification is detailed, accounting for all necessary expenses to achieve proposed activities. Costs are reasonable in relation to the proposed activities and anticipated results and provide detail of calculations, including estimation methods, quantities, unit costs, labor in-pur and responsibilities, procurement practice and policy information, and other similar quantitative detail.

E.2 Review and Selection Process

The Department of State is committed to ensuring a competitive and standardized process for awarding funding. Applications will be screened initially in a Technical Eligibility Review stage to determine whether applicants meet the eligibility requirements outlined in section C and have submitted all required documents outlined in section D. Applications that do not meet these requirements will not advance beyond the Technical Eligibility Review stage and will be deemed ineligible for funding under this NOFO.

All applications that are deemed eligible will proceed to the Merit Review Panel consisting of U.S. government subject matter and/or country-specific experts and will be rated on a 100-point scale. CDP/ICS reserves the right to request the assistance of non-US government Subject Matter Experts (SMEs), if appropriate to the solicitation. Point values for individual elements of the application are presented in Part VII, Section A. Panel Reviewers' ratings, and any resulting recommendations, are advisory. Panel Reviewers may provide conditions and recommendations on applications to enhance the proposed project, which must be addressed by the applicant before further consideration of the award.

Final selection authority resides with CDP/ICS's senior level official. Final award decisions will be influenced by whether the application meets the Department of State's programmatic goals and objectives, how it supports the Department's overarching foreign policy priorities, and the geographic distribution of the top-ranking applications.

F. FEDERAL AWARD ADMINISTRATION INFORMATION

F.1 Federal Award Notices

CDP/ICS will provide a separate notification to applicants on the result of their applications. Successful applicants will receive a letter electronically via email requesting that the applicant respond to review panel conditions and recommendations. This notification is not an authorization to begin activities and does not constitute formal approval or a funding commitment.

Final approval is contingent on the applicant successfully responding to the review panel's conditions and recommendations; being registered in required systems; and completing and providing any additional documentation requested by CDP/ICS or the Grants Officer. Final approval is also contingent on Congressional Notification requirements being met and final review and approval by the Department's warranted Grants Officer.

The notice of Federal award signed by the Department's warranted Grants Officers is the sole authorizing document. The recipient may only start incurring program expenses beginning on the start date shown on the grant award document signed by the Grants Officer. If awarded, the notice of Federal award will be provided to the applicant's designated Authorizing Official via SAMS Domestic to be electronically counter-signed in the system.

Payments under this award will be made through the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) Payment Management System (PMS). Unless otherwise stipulated, the Recipient may request payments on a reimbursement or advance basis. Instructions for requesting payments are available at: <https://pms.psc.gov/>. Advance payments must be limited to the minimum amounts needed and be timed to be in accordance with the actual, immediate cash requirements of the Recipient in carrying out the purpose of this award. The timing and amount of advance payments must be as close as is administratively feasible to the actual disbursements by the Recipient for direct program or project costs and the proportionate share of any allowable indirect costs.

F.2 Administrative and National Policy and Legal Requirements

CDP/ICS requires all recipients of foreign assistance funding to comply with all applicable Department and Federal laws and regulations, including but not limited to the following: The Uniform Administrative Requirements, Cost Principles and Audit Requirements for Federal Awards set forth in 2 CFR Chapter 200 (Sub-Chapters A through F) shall apply to all non-Federal entities, except for assistance awards to Individuals and Foreign Public Entities. Sub-Chapters A through E shall apply to all foreign organizations, and Sub-Chapters A through D shall apply to all U.S. and foreign for-profit entities. The applicant/recipient of the award and any sub-recipient under the award must comply with all applicable terms and conditions, in addition to the assurance and certifications made part of the Notice of Award. The Department's Standard Terms and Conditions can be viewed at <https://www.state.gov/about-us-office-of-the-procurement-executive/>.

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:

- [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](#)

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 85 FR 49506 on August 13, 2020, particularly on:
 - Selecting recipients most likely to be successful in delivering results based on the program objectives through an objective process of evaluating Federal award applications (2 CFR part 200.205),
 - Prohibiting the purchase of certain telecommunication and video surveillance services or equipment in alignment with section 889 of the National Defense Authorization Act of 2019 (Pub. L. No. 115—232) (2 CFR part 200.216),
 - 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 in whole or in part to the greatest extent authorized by law, if an award no longer effectuates the program goals or agency priorities (2 CFR part 200.340).

Additional requirements may be included depending on the content of the program.

F.3 Reporting

Applicants should be aware that CDP/ICS awards will require that all reports (financial and progress) be uploaded to the grant file in SAMS Domestic on a quarterly basis. The Federal Financial Report (FFR or SF-425) is the required form for the financial reports and must be

submitted in PMS, as well as a copy from PMS then uploaded to the grant file in SAMS Domestic. The progress reports uploaded to the grant file in SAMS Domestic must include a narrative as described below and Project Indicators (or other mutually agreed upon format approved by the Grants Officer) for the F Framework indicators. The F Framework indicators will be reviewed and negotiated during the final stages of issuing an award.

Narrative performance progress reports should reflect the focus on measuring the project's progress on the overarching objectives and should be compiled according to the objectives, outcomes, and outputs as outlined in the award's Logic Model and in the Monitoring & Evaluation Narrative. An assessment of the overall project's impact should be included in each progress report. Where relevant, progress reports should include the following sections:

- Relevant contextual information (limited);
- Explanation and evaluation of significant activities of the reporting period and how the activities reflect progress toward achieving objectives, including meeting benchmarks/targets as set in the M&E Plan. In addition, attach the M&E Plan, comparing the target and actual numbers for the indicators;
- Any tangible impact or success stories from the project, when possible;
- Copy of mid-term and/or final evaluation report(s) conducted by an external evaluator; if applicable;
- Relevant supporting documentation or products related to the project activities (such as articles, meeting lists and agendas, participant surveys, photos, manuals, etc.) as separate attachments;
- Description of how the recipient is pursuing sustainability, including looking for sources of follow-on funding;
- Any problems/challenges in implementing the project and a corrective action plan with an updated timeline of activities;
- Reasons why established goals were not met;
- Data for the required F Framework indicator(s) for the quarter as well as aggregate data by fiscal year;
- Program Indicators or other mutually agreed upon format approved by the Grants Officer;
- Proposed activities for the next quarter; and,
- Additional pertinent information, including analysis and explanation of cost overruns or high unit costs, if applicable.

A final narrative performance progress report and financial report will be required within 120 days after the completion of the award. The final narrative performance progress report should include an in-depth impact assessment and/or project evaluation.

CDP/ICS reserves the right to request any additional programmatic and/or financial project information during the award period of performance

Applicants should be aware of the post award reporting requirements reflected in [2 CFR 200 Appendix XII—Award Term and Condition for Recipient Integrity and Performance Matters](#).

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.

A final narrative and financial report must also be submitted within 120 days after the expiration of the award.

Please note: Delays in reporting may result in delays of payment approvals and failure to provide required reports may jeopardize the recipient's' ability to receive future U.S. government funds. CDP/ICS reserves the right to request any additional programmatic and/or financial project information during the award period.

G. CONTACT INFORMATION

For technical submission questions related to this NOFO, please contact: Lisa S. Ji, JiLS@state.gov.

For assistance with SAMS Domestic accounts and technical issues related to the system, please contact the ILMS help desk by phone at +1 (888) 313-4567 (toll charges apply for international callers) or through the Self Service online portal that can be accessed from <https://afsitsm.service-now.com/ilms/home>. Customer support is available 24/7.

Please note that establishing an account in SAMS Domestic may require the use of smartphone for multi-factor authentication (MFA). If an applicant does not have accessibility to a smartphone during the time of creating an account, please contact the helpdesk and request instructions on MFA for Windows PC.

For assistance with Grants.gov accounts and technical issues related to using the system, please call the Contact Center at +1 (800) 518-4726 or email support@grants.gov. The Contact Center is available 24 hours a day, seven days a week, except federal holidays. For a list of federal holidays visit: <https://www.opm.gov/policy-data-oversight/pay-leave/federal-holidays/>

Except for technical submission questions, during the NOFO period U.S. Department of State staff in Washington and overseas shall not discuss this competition with applicants until the entire proposal review process has been completed and rejection and approval letters have been transmitted.

H. OTHER INFORMATION

Applicants should be aware that CDP/ICS understands that some information contained in applications may be considered sensitive or proprietary and will make appropriate efforts to

protect such information. However, applicants are advised that CDP/ICS cannot guarantee that such information will not be disclosed, including pursuant to the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) or other similar statutes.

The information in this NOFO is binding and may not be modified by any CDP/ICS representative. Explanatory information provided by CDP/ICS that contradicts this language will not be binding. 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.

Background Information on CDP/ICS

CDP/ICS has the mission of The Bureau of Cyberspace and Digital Policy leads and coordinates the Department's work on cyberspace and digital diplomacy to encourage responsible state behavior in cyberspace and advance policies that protect the integrity and security of the infrastructure of the Internet, serve U.S. interests, promote competitiveness, and uphold democratic values. The Bureau addresses the national security challenges, economic opportunities, and values considerations presented by cyberspace, digital technologies, and digital policy and promotes standards and norms that are fair, transparent, and support our values.

Additional background information on CDP/ICS and its efforts can be found on <https://www.state.gov/bureaus-offices/deputy-secretary-of-state/bureau-of-cyberspace-and-digital-policy/>.

Attachments:

- 1) *Budget Guidance and Template for New Awards (FY2021)*
- 2) *Program Design and Logic Model Template*
- 3) *Defining M&E Terms*