United States Department of State
Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights and Labor (DRL)
Notice of Funding Opportunity (NOFO): Supporting Critical Open Source Technologies That Enable a Free and Open Internet

This is the announcement of funding opportunity number **SFOP0009392**

Catalog of Federal Domestic Assistance Number: 19.345

Type of Solicitation: Open Competition

Application Deadline: 11:59 PM EST on 19, April, 2023

Total Funding Floor: $500,000

Total Funding Ceiling: $1,000,000

Anticipated Number of Awards: 1-2

Type of Award: Grant or Cooperative Agreement

Period of Performance: 2-3 years

Anticipated Time to Award, Pending Availability of Funds: 7 months

A. PROJECT DESCRIPTION

The U.S. Department of State, Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights and Labor (DRL) announces an open competition for organizations interested in submitting applications for projects to strengthen the protection of human rights and fundamental freedoms online through an open, interoperable, reliable, and secure global Internet, with a focus on technology development. Competitive proposals will develop and implement programs to develop, improve, implement, and sustain open-source technologies which serve as critical foundations for a free and open Internet.

Protecting the open, interoperable, reliable, and secure Internet requires a precise technical understanding of the open-source communication protocols and systems that operate behind the scenes to enable secure and private communications online (such as certificate authorities and the TLS protocol suite). The successful development, testing, security auditing, standardization, and implementation of these protocols and systems in ways that actively support a free and open internet has a critical impact on protections for human rights online. However, because these protocols and systems do not directly face the end-user, they are often unknown, overlooked, and unfunded.

In addition, authoritarian governments such as the PRC attempt to influence the fundamental character of the global Internet with the advancement of protocols and standards that enable more centralized Internet control, for the purposes of censorship and surveillance, as well as the abuse of other human rights. This initiative will allow DRL to invest in critical open source software and systems to protect the security and integrity of communications on the global Internet; to popularize, deploy, and sustain such technologies; and thus support the outcome that Internet infrastructure is designed to enable protections for fundamental freedoms and democratic principles, rather than enabling authoritarianism. This program will ensure that the Internet's future evolution will remain consistent with its original democratic vision.

Consistent with the standards and goals of DRL's Internet Freedom technology programs, the successful program will enable and encourage the protection and exercise of fundamental freedoms and human rights in contexts in which those rights are not otherwise respected by means of technologies that can restore or protect those rights and freedoms by design. DRL recognizes that a free and open Internet is necessary for the exercise of human rights and flourishing of democratic principles. The goal of such technology investment is the protection of human rights online through the development and implementation of open-source technology, and corresponding technical standards, that protect the open, interoperable, reliable, and secure internet at the level of the libraries (e.g. encryption or censorship circumvention software libraries), Internet communication protocols (e.g. Encrypted Client Hello [ECH], DNS Encryption [EDNS]) , and systems (e.g. certificate authorities, DNS providers) that undergird the operations of the internet itself.

In support of this goal, DRL is requesting program proposals to produce, support, innovate, implement, or advance the standardization of open-source internet technologies that provide software infrastructure and protocol functions for the sustainable protection and operation of an open, interoperable, reliable, and secure internet in ways that actively counter the progression of growing Internet restrictions by combatting repressive surveillance, censorship, and internet splintering. Objectives may include, but are not limited to:

1. Developing, improving, or implementing internet communication protocols, software suites, or core Internet services, such as browsers or secure and resilient traffic routing and encryption, in ways that are necessary to and supportive of an open internet, with a focus on non-user-facing technologies. Improve upon or further develop, strengthen, or audit the censorship resistance and/or security properties of existing open-source internet communication technologies.
2. Implement or advance technical standards or policies that govern internet communication technologies, which enable and/or protect censorship resistance and/or security properties of open-source Internet technology, including in contexts such as international standard-setting bodies, to better serve the needs of at-risk and marginalized communities.
3. Provide or implement a sustainability plan, addressing issues such as ongoing maintenance of existing rights-enabling open-source technologies or protocols.

Key Program Considerations:
This list of considerations is provided as a guide to help applicants develop responsive, robust program strategies.

Competitive programs **must**
- Be based on open-source software.
- Have direct applicability to communication on the existing global internet.
- Include sustainability plans that account for ongoing and long-term maintenance of open-source software.
- Maintain high standards of security and reliability.
- Prioritize approaches that emphasize decentralized ownership, community stewardship, and co-design processes, consistent with open-source technology culture.

Competitive programs **must not**
- Be based on closed-source or proprietary software.
- Reflect or be based on aspirational technologies with no immediate applicability to the current global internet, or requiring large-scale adoption or integration for the achievement of programmatic objectives and goals.

All programs should aim to have **impact that leads to reforms** and have the **potential for sustainability** beyond DRL resources. DRL'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.

DRL is committed to **advancing equity and support for underserved and underrepresented communities**. In accordance with the Executive Order on Advancing Racial Equity and Underserved Communities, programs should implement strategies for integration and inclusion of individuals/organizations/beneficiaries that can bring perspectives based on their religion, sex, disability, race, ethnicity, sexual orientation, gender identity, gender expression, sex characteristics, national origin, age, genetic information, marital status, parental status, pregnancy, political affiliation, or veteran's status. Programs should be demand-driven and locally led to the extent possible.

DRL **requires all programs to be non-discriminatory** and expects implementers to include strategies for nondiscrimination of individuals/organizations/beneficiaries based on race, color, religion, sex, gender identity, gender expression, sex characteristics, sexual orientation, pregnancy, national origin, disability, age, genetic information, marital status, parental status, political affiliation, or veteran's status.

Competitive proposals may also include a summary budget and budget narrative for 12 additional months following the proposed period of performance, indicated above. This information should indicate what objective(s) and/or activities could be accomplished with

additional time and/or funds beyond the proposed period of performance.

Where appropriate, competitive proposals may include:
- Opportunities for beneficiaries to apply their new knowledge and skills in practical efforts;
- Solicitation of feedback and suggestions from beneficiaries when developing activities in order to strengthen the sustainability of programs and participant ownership of project outcomes;
- Input from participants on sustainability plans and systematic review of the plans throughout the life of the project, with adjustments made as necessary;
- Inclusion of vulnerable populations;
- Joint identification and definition of key concepts with relevant stakeholders and stakeholder input into project activities;
- Systematic follow up with beneficiaries at specific intervals after the completion of activities to track how beneficiaries are retaining new knowledge as well as applying their new skills.

Activities that are **not** typically allowed include, but are not limited to:

- The provision of humanitarian assistance;
- English language instruction;
- Development of high-tech computer or communications software and/or hardware;
- Purely academic exchanges or fellowships;
- External exchanges or fellowships lasting longer than six months;
- Off-shore activities that are not clearly linked to in-country initiatives and impact or are not necessary per security concerns;
- Theoretical explorations of human rights or democracy issues, including projects aimed primarily at research and evaluation that do not incorporate training or capacity-building for local civil society;
- Micro-loans or similar small business development initiatives;
- Initiatives directed towards a diaspora community rather than current residents of targeted countries.

This notice is subject to availability of funding.

B. FEDERAL AWARD INFORMATION

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.

DRL anticipates awarding either a grant or 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, DRL 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 from this NOFO, DRL retains the right to execute non-competitive continuation amendment(s). The total duration of any award, including potential non-competitive continuation amendments, shall not exceed 54 months, or four and a half years. Any non-competitive continuation is contingent on performance and **pending availability of funds.** A non-competitive continuation is not guaranteed, and the Department of State reserves the right to exercise or not to exercise this option.

C. ELIGIBILITY INFORMATION

FOR APPLICATION INFORMATION, PLEASE SEE THE PROPOSAL SUBMISSION INSTRUCTIONS (PSI), UPDATED DECEMBER 2022 ON OUR WEBSITE.

C.1 Eligible Applicants

DRL welcomes applications from U.S.-based and foreign-based non-profit organizations/nongovernmental organizations (NGO) and public international organizations; private, public, or state institutions of higher education; and for-profit organizations or

businesses. DRL's preference is to work with **non-profit entities**; however, there may be some occasions when a for-profit entity is best suited.

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 should have existing, or the capacity to develop, active partnerships with thematic or in-country partners, entities, and relevant stakeholders, including private sector partners and NGOs, and have **demonstrable experience** in administering successful and preferably similar projects. DRL encourages applications from foreign-based NGOs headquartered in the geographic regions/countries relevant to this NOFO. Applicants may **form consortia** in order to bring together organizations with varied expertise to propose a comprehensive program in one proposal. However, one organization should be designated in the proposal as the lead applicant, with the other members designated as sub-award partners. DRL reserves the right to request additional background information on applicants that do not have previous experience administering federal grant awards, and these applicants may be subject to limited funding on a pilot basis.

DRL is committed to an **anti-discrimination** policy in all of its programs and activities. DRL welcomes applications irrespective of race, ethnicity, color, creed, national origin, gender, sexual orientation, gender identity, disability, or other status. DRL seeks applications that demonstrate that the recipient does not discriminate against any beneficiaries in implementation of a potential award, such as, but not limited to, by withholding, adversely impacting, or denying equitable access to the benefits provided through this award on the basis of any factor not expressly stated in the award. This includes, for example, race, color, religion, sex (including gender identity, gender expression, sex characteristics, sexual orientation, and pregnancy), national origin, disability, age, genetic information, marital status, parental status, political affiliation, or veteran's status. The recipient should insert this provision, including this paragraph, in all sub-grants and contracts under a potential award.

Any applicant listed on the Excluded Parties List System in the [System for Award Management (SAM.gov)](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](https://mygrants.servicenowservices.com)) under the announcement title "Supporting Critical Open Source Technologies That Enable a Free and Open Internet," funding opportunity number "**SFOP0009392**" Please contact the DRL 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 one 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. Please see SF-424 instructions in Section 2B of the PSI.

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**). Please see SF-LLL guidance in Section 2B of the PSI.

3) **Cover Page** (not to exceed one (1) page, preferably as a Word Document) that includes a table with the organization name, project title, target country/countries, project synopsis, and name and contact information for the application's main point of contact. Please see *Cover Page* Section 2C of the PSI for a template and more details.

4) **Executive Summary** (not to exceed one (1) page, preferably as a Word Document) that outlines project goals, objectives, activities, etc.
   - **The Executive Summary should include a brief section that explicitly states: (1) the problem statement addressed by the project, (2) research-based evidence justifying the unique project approach, and (3) quantifiable project outcomes and impacts.**

5) **Table of Contents** (not to exceed one (1) page, preferably as a Word Document) listing all documents and attachments with page numbers.

6) **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, Attachments, Detailed Budget, Budget Narrative, Audit, or NICRA. Applicants are encouraged to combine multiple documents into a single Word Document or PDF (i.e. Cover Page, Table of Contents, Executive Summary, and Proposal Narrative in one file). Please see *Proposal Narrative Guidelines* in Section 2F of the PSI for more details.
   - The Proposal Narrative should demonstrate the applicant's commitment to ensuring the participation of all people as a strategy for implementation. Please integrate inclusion strategies in all sections of the Proposal Narrative to enhance programmatic impact.

7) **Budget** (preferably as an Excel workbook) that includes three (3) columns containing the request to DRL, 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 *Budget Guidelines* Section 2G of the PSI for more information.

- o The programming approach should be dedicated to strengthening inclusive societies as a necessary pillar of strong democracies. Please include costs associated with this commitment in the Budget and Budget Narrative.
- o Competitive proposals may include a summary budget for 12 additional months following the proposed period of performance.

8) **Budget Narrative** (preferably as a Word Document) that includes substantive explanations and justifications for each line item in the detailed budget spreadsheet, as well as the source and a description of all cost-share offered. Please see *Budget Guidelines* Section 2G of the PSI for more information.
- o Competitive proposals may include a summary budget narrative for 12 additional months following the proposed period of performance.

9) The organization's most recent **audit**, if applicable. This should be a single audit, program-specific audit, or other audit in accordance with Generally Accepted Government Auditing Standards (GAGAS). Please see *Audit* Section 2H of the PSI for more information.

10) **Logic Model** (preferably as a Word Document). Please see *Logic Model* Section 2I of the PSI for more information.

11) **Monitoring and Evaluation Narrative** (not to exceed four (4) pages, preferably as a Word Document). Please see *Monitoring and Evaluation Narrative* Section 2J of the PSI for more information.
- o As stated within the DRL Guide to Program Monitoring and Evaluation (p. 6): DRL strongly encourages applicants to consider whether their monitoring and evaluation systems are utilizing human rights-based approaches, applying a gender and equity lens, and/or include the participation of sub-grantees and project participants. Within the Monitoring and Evaluation Narrative, applicants should demonstrate their commitment to inclusive strategies and consider whether evaluation design, data collection, analysis, reporting and learning are conducted in an ethical and responsible way with all project participants (e.g. direct beneficiaries, sub-grantees). Applicants should still make adequate provisions to protect the privacy of human subjects when collecting data from individuals. For instance, when collecting data from project participants, consider whether your organization will have the necessary informed consent forms, confidentiality agreements, and data security protocols. Applicants should be aware that, should an application move forward for funding consideration, DRL will request a detailed Monitoring and Evaluation Plan for further review and approval.

12) **Monitoring and Evaluation Plan** (preferably as a Word Document or Excel Sheet). Please see *Monitoring and Evaluation Plan* Section 2J of the PSI for more information.

13) **Risk Analysis** (preferably as a Word Document). Please see *Risk Analysis* Section 2K of the PSI for more information on this requirement, including Do No Harm principles and Preventing Sexual Exploitation and Abuse (PSEA) policies/plans.

14) **Key Personnel** (not to exceed two (2) pages, preferably as a Word Document). Please include short bios that highlight relevant professional experience. Given the limited space, CVs are not recommended for submission.

15) **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.

16) **Gender and Inclusion Analysis** (not to exceed three (3) pages, preferably as a Word Document) that provides a concise analysis of relevant gender norms, equity and equality for underserved communities and marginalized populations, power relations, and conflict dynamics in target countries. Potential domains of analysis include institutional practices and barriers, cultural norms, gender roles, access to and control over assets and resources, and patterns of power and decision-making. Applicants should briefly explain how they have integrated findings from their analysis into project design and/or other proposal documents, including a plan for regularly reviewing and updating the gender and inclusion analysis with local partners/beneficiaries, and making any necessary adjustments to project implementation. A set of guiding questions can be found in Section 2L of the PSI.

17) **Psychosocial Assistance** (to be incorporated into the ten (10) pages allowed for "Proposal Narrative," and into "Budget" and "Budget Narrative"). A section in the proposal, budget, and budget narrative to reflect appropriate resources and support for the psychosocial health of staff (i.e., activities can range from access to educational materials and training opportunities to counseling services to other contextually relevant support).
   o References: For reference to international guidance, please see the following: Core Humanitarian Standard Commitment 8.9 (https://corehumanitarianstandard.org/files/files/CHS-Guidance-Notes-and-Indicators.pdf); and IASC Guidelines on Mental Health and Psychosocial Support in Emergency Settings Action Sheet 4.4 (http://www.who.int/mental_health/emergencies/guidelines_iasc_mental_health_psychosocial_june_2007.pdf).

18) **Country Activity Table** that provides precise detail on types of activities within intended target countries under the program proposed, not to exceed one (1) page. This should take the form of the following table. Any and all countries applicable to any category relevant to the program's implementation should be included.

Category	[Definition]	Countries
A. Countries with Direct (In-Country) Activities	[Countries in which direct activities will take place under this program, with prime grantee's operations, staff, and (potentially) engagement with beneficiaries operating there.]	
B. Countries Targeted with Remote Activities via Local Partnerships	[Countries in which the prime grantee does not itself intend to directly operate under this program, but in which it will maintain engagements with partners. These engagements are contractual, and involve money (subawards or subcontracts), and are predetermined (outlined in the proposal).]	
C. Countries Targeted with Remote Activities via Ad-Hoc (or Potential) Local Partnerships	[Countries in which the prime grantee does not itself intend to directly operate under this program, but in which it will maintain engagements with partners. These engagements are contractual, and involve money, but are ad hoc (example: competition run in-country, such as a small grants program, where subaward recipients are not determined at the time of the grant award).]	
D. Countries Targeted with Remote Activities for Local Beneficiaries (Non-Financial, Predetermined)	[Countries in which the prime grantee does not itself intend to directly operate under this program, but in which it will provide support services / resources / other engagements to a predetermined set of groups in the target country (example: online training for a pre-selected group in a target country, or research with a marginalized group).]	
E. Countries Targeted with Remote Activities for Local Beneficiaries (Ad-hoc)	[Countries in which the prime grantee will provide a remote training or engagement (online or out of country) that is public or semi-public, where attendees are not pre-determined (example: an online training open for anyone to attend, targeted to a broad group in a given country).]	
F. Countries Targeted with Remote Activities to Provide Service / Technology Broadly	[Countries or regions targeted by a prime grantee for the development of a technology or a remote service, but without a plan to engage with local users directly. This may include marketing, online distribution, or localization of a technology in the target country's language.]	
G. Countries of Potential Impact For Service / Technology	[Countries or regions that could be impacted by the technology or service developed by the prime grantee, though the country is not directly targeted.	

	Technology or resource is distributed by natural diffusion (word of mouth, etc.)]	

Applications that do not include the elements listed above will be deemed technically ineligible.

D.2.2 Additional Application Documents

Strong applications will also contain the following:

- Individual Letters of Support and/or Memorandum of Understanding. Letters of support and MOUs must be specific to the project implementation (e.g. from proposed partners or sub-award recipients) and will not count towards the page limit.

Please refer to the Proposal Submission Instructions (PSI), updated December 2022, on DRL's website for detailed guidance on the documents above: https://www.state.gov/bureau-of-democracy-human-rights-and-labor/programs-and-grants/. For an application checklist and sample templates please see the Resources page on DRL's website: https://www.state.gov/resources-for-programs-and-grants/. The sample templates provided on the DRL website are suggested, but not mandatory.

DRL reserves the right to request additional documents not included in this NOFO. Additionally, to ensure that all applications receive a balanced evaluation, the DRL review panel will review from the first page of each section up to the page limit and no further.

Note: If ultimately provided with a notification of non-binding intent to make a federal award, applicants typically have two to three weeks to provide additional information and documents requested in the notification of intent. The deadlines may vary in each notification of intent and applicants must adhere to the stated deadline in the notification of intent.

D.2.3 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 DRL 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 DRL 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 DRL 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) and an active registration with the SAM.gov **before submitting an application**. DRL 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.

Note: As of April 2022, a DUNS number is no longer required for federal assistance applications.

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 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 number prior to registering in SAM.gov. **Please note that as of February 2023, organizations based in the United States that do not intend to apply for U.S. Department of Defense (DoD) awards are no longer required to have a Commercial and Government Entity (CAGE) 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 a CAGE 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 pay employees within the United States do not need an EIN from the IRS, but do need a UEI number prior to registering in SAM.gov. **Please note that as of December 2022, 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 CAGE (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.

Organizations based outside of the United States and that DO plan to do business with the DoD should follow the below instructions:

Step 1: Apply for an NCAGE code by following the instructions on the NSPA NATO website linked below:

NCAGE Homepage:
https://eportal.nspa.nato.int/AC135Public/sc/CageList.aspx

NCAGE Code Request Tool (NCRT):
https://eportal.nspa.nato.int/Codification/CageTool/home

For NCAGE help from within the United States, call +1 (888) 227-2423.
For NCAGE help from outside the United States, call +1 (269) 961-7766.
Or, email NCAGE@dlis.dla.mil for any problems in applying for an NCAGE code.

Step 2: After receiving an NCAGE code, proceed to SAM.gov to obtain a UEI and complete the SAM.gov registration process. SAM.gov registration must be renewed annually.

All prime organizations must also continue to maintain active SAM.gov registration with current information at all times during which they have an active Federal award or application under consideration by a federal award agency. SAM.gov requires all entities to renew their registration once a year in order 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.

Please refer to 2 CFR 25.200 for additional information.

Note: SAM.gov is not the same as SAMS Domestic. It is free of charge 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 "Explore" and "New to SAM.gov?" for general information. Please note, guidance on SAM.gov and the guidance on GSA's website about requirement for registering in SAM.gov is subject to change and is currently being updated. Applicants should review the website for the most up-to-date guidance.

The attached "AQM Guidance for NCAGE-SAM.gov for Grant Applicants as of Dec. 2022" is a compilation of resources gathered by the Department's Office of Acquisitions Management (AQM). Any content shown from SAM.gov is not owned by the Department of State. This guidance and instruction are to the best of our knowledge based at the time of posting this solicitation. **Where guidance in these attachments differs from the SAM.gov website, SAM.gov prevails and the applicant is encouraged to seek and document responses provided by the SAM.gov help desk.**

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.
- For an applicant, if the federal awarding agency makes a determination that there are exigent circumstances that prohibit the applicant from receiving a UEI and completing SAM.gov registration prior to receiving a federal award. In these instances, federal awarding agencies must require the recipient to obtain a UEI and complete SAM.gov registration within 30 days of the federal award date.

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: As of December 2022, 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 CAGE (NCAGE) code to apply for non-DoD foreign assistance funding opportunities. As of February 2023, organizations **based in the United States** that do not intend to apply for U.S. DoD awards are no longer required to have a Commercial and Government Entity (CAGE) code to apply for non-DoD foreign assistance funding opportunities.*

D.4 Submission Dates and Times

Applications are due no later than <u>11:59 PM</u> Eastern Standard Time (EST), on 19, April, 2023 on https://www.grants.gov/ or SAMS Domestic [(https://mygrants.servicenowservices.com](https://mygrants.servicenowservices.com)) **under the announcement title "Supporting Critical Open Source Technologies That Enable a Free and Open Internet," funding opportunity number "SFOP0009392."**

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.service-now.com](https://mygrants.service-now.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 DRL receiving their application.

D.5 Funding Restrictions

Prior to issuing a federal award with a total amount of federal share greater than $250,000, the Department of State is required to review and consider any information about the applicant that is found in the designated integrity and performance system accessible through SAM.gov (41 USC §2313). An applicant, at its option, may review information in the designated integrity and performance systems accessible through SAM.gov 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 SAM.gov. The Department of State 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 2 CFR 200.206.

DRL 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 DRL funding given purpose limitations on funding.

In accordance with Department of State policy for terrorism, applicants are advised that successful passing of vetting to evaluate the risk that funds may benefit terrorists or their

supporters is a condition of award. If chosen for an award, applicants will be asked to submit information required by DS Form 4184, Risk Analysis Information (attached to this solicitation) about their company and its principal personnel. Vetting information is also required for all sub-award performance on assistance awards identified by the Department of State as presenting a risk of terrorist financing. Vetting information may also be requested for project beneficiaries and participants. Failure to submit information when requested, or failure to pass vetting, may be grounds for rejecting your proposal prior to award.

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.

U.S. foreign assistance for Burma or Burmese beneficiaries is subject to restrictions. This includes restrictions, pursuant to section 7043(a)(3) of the Department of State, Foreign Operations, and Related Programs Appropriations Act, 2020 (Div. G, P.L. 116-94)(SFOAA), on funds appropriated under title III of the act for assistance for Burma. Section 7043(a)(3) provides that such funds "may not be made available to any organization or entity controlled by the armed forces of Burma, or to any individual or organization that advocates violence against ethnic or religious groups or individuals in Burma, as determined by the Secretary of State." In addition, funds cannot be made available to any individual or organization that has committed serious human rights abuse.

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 DRL 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.

Federal awards generally will not allow reimbursement of pre-award costs; however, the Grants Officer may approve pre-award costs on a case-by-case basis. Generally, construction costs are not allowed under DRL awards. For additional information, please see the DRL Proposal

Submission Instructions (PSI) for Applications: https://www.state.gov/bureau-of-democracy-human-rights-and-labor/programs-and-grants/.

D.6 Application Submission

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. DRL 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.

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

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://mygrants.servicenowservices.com . 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 DRL 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 sub-
sections**.

Quality of Project Idea
Applications should be responsive to the program framework and policy objectives identified in
the NOFO, appropriate in the country/regional context, and should exhibit originality,
substance, precision, and relevance to DRL's mission of promoting human rights and
democracy. Projects should have the potential to have an immediate impact leading to long-
term, sustainable reforms. DRL prefers new approaches that do not duplicate efforts by other
entities. This does not exclude from consideration projects that improve upon or expand
existing successful projects in a new and complementary way. In countries where similar
activities are already taking place, an explanation should be provided as to how new activities
will not duplicate or merely add to existing activities and how these efforts will be coordinated.

Proposals that promote creative approaches to recognized ongoing challenges are highly encouraged. DRL prioritizes project proposals with inclusive approaches for advancing these rights.

Project Planning/Ability to Achieve Objectives

A strong application will include a clear articulation of how the proposed project activities contribute to the overall project objectives, and each activity will be clearly developed and detailed. A comprehensive monthly work plan should demonstrate substantive undertakings and the logistical capacity of the organization. Objectives should be ambitious yet measurable, results-focused and achievable in a reasonable timeframe. A complete application must include a Logic Model to demonstrate how the project activities will have an impact on its proposed objectives. The Logic Model should match the objectives, outcomes, key activities, and outputs described in the narrative. Applications should address how the project will engage relevant stakeholders and should identify local partners as appropriate.

If local partners have been identified, DRL strongly encourages applicants to submit letters of support from proposed in-country partners. Additionally, applicants should describe the division of labor among the direct applicant and any local partners. If applicable, applications should identify target geographic areas for activities, target participant groups or selection criteria for participants, and the specific roles of sub-awardees, among other pertinent details.

DRL recognizes that all programs have some level of risk due to internal/external variables that have the potential to adversely affect a program. Risk management should address how the project design incorporates the identification, assessment, and management of key risk factors. DRL will review the Risk Analysis based on the organization's ability to identify risks that could have an impact on the overall program as well as how the organization will manage these risks.

Institution's Record and Capacity

DRL will consider the past performance of prior recipients and the demonstrated potential of new applicants. Applications should demonstrate an institutional record of successful democracy and human rights programs, including responsible fiscal management and full compliance with all reporting requirements for past grants. Proposed personnel and institutional resources should be adequate and appropriate to achieve the project's objectives. Projects should have potential for continued funding beyond DRL resources.

Addressing Barriers to Equal Participation

DRL strives to ensure its projects advance the rights and uphold the dignity of all persons. As the U.S. government's lead bureau dedicated to promoting democratic governance, DRL requests a programming approach dedicated to strengthening inclusive societies as a necessary pillar of strong democracies. Discrimination, violence, inequity, and inequality targeting any members of society undermines collective security and threatens democracy. DRL prioritizes inclusive and integrated program models that assess and address the barriers to access for individuals and groups based on their race, ethnicity, religion, income, geography, gender identity, sexual orientation, or disability. The proposal should also demonstrate how the

project will further engagement in underserved communities and with individuals from underserved communities. Applicants should describe how programming will impact all of its beneficiaries, including support for underserved and underrepresented communities. This approach should be an integral part of both the concept and explicit design, and implementation of all proposed project activities, objectives, and monitoring. Strong proposals will provide specific analysis, measures, and corresponding targets as appropriate. Stakeholders shall identify the difference between opportunities and barriers to access, and design projects accordingly to not perpetuate these inequalities, but rather enhance programmatic impact by including all people in society. The goal of this approach is to bring communities and those in power together in support of more stable and secure societies.

Cost Effectiveness

DRL strongly encourages applicants to clearly demonstrate project cost-effectiveness in their application, including examples of leveraging institutional and other resources. However, cost-sharing or other examples of leveraging other resources are not required. Inclusion of cost-sharing in the budget does not result in additional points awarded during the review process. Budgets should have low and/or reasonable overhead and administration costs, and applicants should provide clear explanations and justifications for these costs in relation to the work involved. All budget items should be clearly explained and justified to demonstrate necessity, appropriateness, and connection to the project objectives.

Please note: If cost share is included in the budget, the recipient must maintain written records to support all allowable costs that are claimed as its contribution to cost share, as well as costs to be paid by the Federal government. Such records are subject to audit. In the event the recipient does not meet the minimum amount of cost-sharing as stipulated in the recipient's budget, DRL's contribution may be reduced in proportion to the recipient's contribution.

Multiplier Effect/Sustainability

Applications should clearly delineate how elements of the project will have a multiplier effect and be sustainable beyond the life of the grant. A good multiplier effect will have an impact beyond the direct beneficiaries of the grant (e.g. participants trained under a grant go on to train other people; workshop participants use skills from a workshop to enhance a national level election that affects the entire populace). A strong sustainability plan may include demonstrating continuing impact beyond the life of a project or garnering other donor support after DRL funding ceases.

Project Monitoring and Evaluation

Complete applications will include a detailed M&E Narrative, which detail how the project's progress will be monitored and evaluated. Incorporating well-designed monitoring and evaluation processes into a project is an efficient method for documenting the change (intended and unintended) that a project seeks. Applications should demonstrate the capacity to provide objectives with measurable outputs and outcomes.

The quality of the M&E sections will be judged on the narrative explaining how both monitoring and evaluation will be carried out and who will be responsible for those related activities. The M&E Narrative should explain how evaluation(s), internal or external, will be incorporated into the project implementation plan or how the project will be systematically assessed in the absence of one. Please see the section on *Monitoring and Evaluation Narrative* in the Proposal Submission Instructions (PSI) for more information on what is required in the narrative.

Note: Applicants are no longer required to submit a detailed Monitoring and Evaluation Plan in their proposals. However, applicants should be aware that, should an application move forward for funding consideration, DRL will request a detailed Monitoring and Evaluation Plan for further review and approval.

The output and outcome-based performance indicators should not only be separated by project objectives but also should match the objectives, outcomes, and outputs detailed in the Logic Model and Proposal Narrative. Performance indicators should be clearly defined (i.e., explained how the indicators will be measured and reported) either within the table or with a separate Performance Indicator Reference Sheet (PIRS). For each performance indicator, the table should also include baselines and quarterly and cumulative targets, data collection tools, data sources, types of data disaggregation, and frequency of monitoring and evaluation. There should also be metrics to capture how project activities target those who face discrimination due to their religion, gender, disabilities, ethnicity or sexual orientation and gender identity, where applicable. Please see the section on *Monitoring and Evaluation Plan* in the Proposal Submission Instructions (PSI) for more information on what is required in the plan.

E.2 Review and Selection Process

DRL strives to ensure that each application receives a balanced evaluation by a DRL review panel. AQM will determine technical eligibility for all applications. All technically eligible applications for a given NOFO are reviewed against the same seven criteria, which include quality of project idea, project planning/ability to achieve objectives, institutional record and capacity, inclusive programming, cost effectiveness, multiplier effect/sustainability, and project monitoring and evaluation.

Additionally, the DRL review panel will evaluate how the application addresses the NOFO request, U.S. foreign policy goals, and the priority needs of DRL overall. DRL may also take into consideration the balance of the current portfolio of active projects, including geographic or thematic diversity, if needed.

In most cases, the DRL review panel includes representatives from DRL, the appropriate Department of State regional bureau (to include feedback from U.S. embassies), and U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) (to include feedback from USAID missions). In some cases, additional panelists may participate, including from other Department of State bureaus or offices; U.S. government departments, agencies, or boards; representatives from partner governments; or representatives from entities that are in a public-private partnership

with DRL. At the end of the panel's discussion about an application, the review panel votes on whether to recommend the application for approval by the DRL Assistant Secretary. If more applications are recommended for approval than DRL can ultimately fund, the review panel will rank the recommended applications in priority order for consideration by the DRL Assistant Secretary. The Grants Officer Representative (GOR) for the eventual award does not vote on the panel. All panelists must sign non-disclosure agreements and conflicts of interest agreements.

DRL review panels 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. To ensure effective use of DRL funds, conditions or recommendations may include requests to increase, decrease, clarify, and/or justify costs and project activities.

F. FEDERAL AWARD ADMINISTRATION INFORMATION

F.1 Federal Award Notices

DRL 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, including the U.S. government's Payment Management System (PMS), unless an exemption is provided; and completing and providing any additional documentation requested by DRL or AQM. 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. 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.

F.2 Administrative and National Policy and Legal Requirements

DRL 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/.

Additionally, DRL supports implementation of the **National Strategy on Gender Equity and Equality**; the **Women Peace and Security (WPS) Act of 2017**, which highlights the U.S. commitment to the meaningful participation of women in conflict prevention, management, and resolution; and the Department of State WPS Implementation Plan. For additional information, please refer to the following link: https://www.congress.gov/bill/115th-congress/senate-bill/1141.

Due to the determination made under the **Trafficking Victims Protection Act (TVPA)** for funds obligated during FY 2023, assistance that benefits the governments of the following countries may be subject to a restriction under the TVPA. The Department of State determines on a case-by-case basis what constitutes assistance to a government; the general principles listed below apply.

Assistance to the government includes:
- All branches of government (executive, legislative, judicial) at all levels (national, regional, local);
- Public schools, universities, hospitals, and state-owned enterprises, as well as government employees;
- Cash, training, equipment, services, or other assistance provided directly to the government, assistance provided to an NGO or other implementer for the benefit of the government, and assistance to government employees.

Subject to TVPA for funds obligated during FY 2023:
AF: Eritrea, Guinea-Bissau, South Sudan
EAP: Burma, China (PRC), Macau, North Korea
EUR: Belarus, Russia
NEA: Iran, Syria
SCA: Afghanistan
WHA: Cuba, Curacao, Nicaragua, Sint Maarten

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

F.3 Reporting
Applicants should be aware of the post-award reporting requirements for federal assistance awards as reflected in 2 CFR 200 Appendix XII - Award Term and Condition for Recipient Integrity and Performance Matters.https://www.ecfr.gov/cgi-bin/retrieveECFR?gp=&SID=027fb85899500d580fc71df69d11573a&mc=true&n=pt2.1.200&r=PART&ty=HTML - ap2.1.200_1521.i DRL awards require that all reports (financial and progress) are

uploaded to the federal award file in SAMS Domestic on a quarterly basis. The Federal Financial Report (FFR or SF-425) is the required form for financial reports and must be submitted in PMS, and a copy of the report submitted in PMS then uploaded to the award file in SAMS Domestic. Progress reports uploaded to the award file in SAMS Domestic must include a narrative as described below as well as Program Indicators (or other mutually agreed upon format approved by the Grants Officer), including standard (F) framework indicators and DRL framework indicators. F and DRL framework indicators will be reviewed and negotiated during the final stages of issuing an award on a project-by-project basis.

Narrative 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 Scope of Work (SOW) and in the Monitoring & Evaluation Narrative. An assessment of the overall project's achievements 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 approved M&E Plan. In addition, attach the M&E Plan, comparing the target and actual numbers for the indicators;
- Any qualitative impact or success stories from the project, when possible;
- Copy of baseline, 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 and/or DRL 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.

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. DRL 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 InternetFreedom@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 DRL 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 DRL 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 and "Proposal Submission Instructions for Applications" is binding and may not be modified by any DRL representative. Explanatory information provided by DRL that contradicts this language will not be binding. Issuance of the NOFO and negotiation of applications does not constitute an award commitment on the part of the U.S. government. DRL reserves the right to reduce, revise, or increase proposal budgets.

This NOFO will appear on www.grants.gov, SAMS Domestic, and DRL's website https://www.state.gov/bureau-of-democracy-human-rights-and-labor/programs-and-grants/.

Background Information on DRL and General DRL Funding
DRL has the mission of promoting democracy and protecting human rights and fundamental freedoms globally. DRL supports projects designed through an evidence-based framework that empower local civil society partners to promote and defend democracy globally, including efforts to counter authoritarianism, promote human rights, and meaningfully address diversity, equity, and inclusion as a core element of good governance. DRL typically focuses its work in countries facing human rights violations and abuses, where democracy and human rights defenders are under pressure, and where governance infrastructure is undemocratic, in transition, or at risk of backsliding.

Additional background information on DRL and its efforts can be found on https://www.state.gov/bureaus-offices/under-secretary-for-civilian-security-democracy-and-human-rights/bureau-of-democracy-human-rights-and-labor/.