**FIRST PAGE OF GRANTS.GOV WEBSITE**

**Section One: Request for Application (RFA) Announcement**

**CAFTA-DR Environmental Cooperation Program**

**Management of Small Grants Program for Public Participation**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Announcement Type:  | New Cooperative Agreement |
| Funding Opportunity Title: | Management of Small Grants Program for Public Participation  |
| Funding Opportunity Number: | S-OES-08-RFA-002 |
| Catalog of Federal Domestic Assistance Number: | 00.000 |
| Key Dates: | 1. Applications must be submitted 6:00 p.m. Eastern Standard Time (EDT) Monday, June 20th, 2008
2. Application review and selection on July, 2008
3. Notification of project approval and grant signing on August, 2008
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**Executive Summary:**

The Office of Environmental Policy of the Bureau of Oceans, Environment, and Science (OES) at the Department of State (DOS) announces the Requests for Applications for Management of the Small Grants program in the Dominican Republic-Central American—United States Free Trade Agreement countries (CAFTA-DR). The purpose of the Small Grants Program is to promote public participation in environmental issues by engaging local organizations in the CAFTA-DR countries (Costa Rica, Dominican Republic, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras, and Nicaragua), such as non-governmental organizations (NGOs), academic institutions, professional organizations, and other civil society organizations, in the public participation opportunities and mechanisms that the CAFTA-DR Environment Chapter and Environmental Cooperation Agreement provide. NGOs and International Organizations (IO) with strong regional presence in the region may submit applications to manage the Small Grants Program. The applicants must demonstrate the ability to manage and coordinate all aspects of the program, including open competition process, review and selection of the sub-grantees, monitoring, reporting, and dissemination of the results in coordination with CAFTA-DR government points of contact and the DOS. For the purpose of this document, the CAFTA-DR countries or region include Costa Rica, Dominican Republic, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras, and Nicaragua. One grant will be awarded in the amount of **$396,000** in Economic Support and Development Assistance FY 2007 funds.

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This solicitation package consists of three sections: 1) RFA Announcement, 2) Program Description including a list of ongoing projects funded in FY 2006 included as Attachment A, and 3) Proposal Submissions Instructions (PSI). Please carefully read the entire solicitation package if you plan to submit an application; there are steps that you should take immediately in order to make your submissions in grants.gov by the deadline.

**Section Two: Program Description**

1. **CAFTA-DR Environmental Cooperation Agreement Funding Opportunity**

Funding Authority for this program rests in sections 534(d) of the Foreign Assistance Act of 1961, as amended, and section 515 of the Foreign Operations Export Financing, and Related Programs Appropriations Act, 2006 (P.L. 109 - 102) as carried forward under the Revised Continuing Appropriations Resolution, 2007 (P.L. 110- 5).

The following sections provide a background of the CAFTA-DR Environmental Cooperation Program, a description of the Small Grants Program, a statement of need for the RFA, and information on performance indicators, budget and timetable.

1. **Background**

On February 18, 2005, the Governments of Costa Rica, the Dominican Republic, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras, Nicaragua, and the United States (hereinafter CAFTA-DR Parties) signed an Environmental Cooperation Agreement (ECA). In the ECA, the CAFTA-DR Parties agreed to cooperate to protect, improve and conserve the environment, including natural resources. They agreed that the objective of the ECA was to establish a framework for such cooperation among the Parties.

On July 17, 2006, the CAFTA-DR Parties agreed on a two-year work plan for implementing the ECA. The Work Plan identifies three priority areas for early action:

* strengthening each Party’s environmental management systems, including reinforcing institutional and legal frameworks for developing, implementing, administering, and enforcing environmental laws, regulations, standards, and policies, including those that implement Multilateral Environmental Agreements to which all CAFTA-DR Parties are a party;
* development and promotion of incentives and other voluntary and flexible mechanisms in order to encourage environmental protection, including the development of market-based initiatives and economic incentives for environmental management; and
* facilitating technology development and transfer and training to promote the use, proper operation, and maintenance of cleaner production technologies.

The Work Plan identifies numerous activities and sub-activities to be carried out under each priority area, subject to availability of resources.

To date, the United States has committed over $38 million to fund cooperative activities under the ECA Work Plan. The United States expects to commit a significant amount of additional funding toward cooperative activities in fiscal years 2008 through 2009.

As implementation of cooperative activities under the Work Plan continues, the CAFTA-DR Parties recognize the importance of: (1) identifying certain overarching goals for that cooperation; and (2) structuring work plan activities within high priority thematic areas.

Goals

The CAFTA-DR Parties recognize that through environmental cooperation they are striving to achieve the following long-term goals:

* compliance with CAFTA-DR Environment Chapter obligations: (1) to ensure that their environmental laws and policies provide for and encourage high levels of environmental protection; (2) to effectively enforce their environmental laws; and (3) to ensure that judicial, quasi-judicial, or administrative proceedings are available to sanction or remedy violations of environmental laws;
* improved protection and conservation of the environment, including natural resources;
* transparency and public participation in environmental decision-making;
* a culture of environmental protection and compliance with environmental laws through, among other things, the promotion of economic opportunities, voluntary measures to enhance environmental performance, and job creation; and
* regional harmonization and integration of environmental laws and policies to facilitate improved environmental protection and parity across the region.

**Themes**

To facilitate Work Plan implementation and achievement of these goals, the CAFTA-DR Parties have decided to structure Work Plan activities under the following themes (referred as CAFTA-DR Environmental Cooperation Program). These themes describe the broad areas in which cooperative activities fall; they do not supplant the Work Plan priority areas.

* Theme A. Institutional Strengthening for Effective Implementation and Enforcement of Environmental Laws;
* Theme B. Biodiversity and Conservation;
* Theme C. Market-based Conservation;
* Theme D. Improved Private-Sector Environmental Performance; and
* Theme E. Implementation of Specific Obligations under CAFTA-DR.

**Public Participation under the CAFTA-DR Environmental Cooperation Program**

The CAFTA-DR Parties recognize that a civil society that is actively engaged in environmental decision-making and helping to enforce environmental laws is crucial to ensuring the sustainability of our cooperative environmental work, ensuring that governments are effectively enforcing their environmental laws, and creating a general culture of environmental protection and sustainable development. Therefore, the CAFTA-DR Environment Chapter, the ECA and Work Plan provide a variety of mechanisms and requirements to encourage input from the public in decision-making, consider submissions from the public on failures to enforce environmental legislation, and define expectations for transparency and accountability in domestic environmental governance. The text of CAFTA-DR Environmental Chapter and its ECA can be found at <http://www.state.gov/g/oes/env/trade/>. **Figure 1** provides a summary of the mechanisms and opportunities for public participation in the Chapter, ECA, and Work Plan.

The CAFTA-DR Environmental Cooperation Program includes public participation cooperative activities in Theme A - Institutional Strengthening for Effective Implementation and Enforcement of Environmental Laws, to achieve objectives set out in the Environment Chapter. The activities are aimed at providing 1) easy access to reliable environmental information in engaging society, 2) creating forums and other institutionalized processes for public involvement, and 3) educating the public about opportunities and methods for engaging in environmental decision-making.

Public participation activities are also included under Theme E - Implementation of Specific Obligations under CAFTA-DR, as it relates to strengthening the capacity of the Secretariat for Environmental Matters (SEM) to accept and process public submissions on environmental enforcement issues. A core obligation of the CAFTA-DR Environment Chapter (Articles 17.7 and 17.8) is the establishment of an independent secretariat to accept submissions, from a “person of a party,” asserting that a Party is failing to effectively enforce one or more of its environmental laws. On February 18, 2005 the CAFTA-DR Parties agreed to establish the SEM to be housed within the Secretariat for Economic Integration of Central America (SIECA) in Guatemala City, Guatemala. The Secretariat performs the functions with respect to submissions on enforcement matters (submissions) and factual records set out in Articles 17.7 and 17.8 of the CAFTA-DR. In addition, the Secretariat plays an important role in promoting public awareness of its functions and how CAFTA-DR has expanded citizen participation and access opportunities on environmental decision-making. This role complements the results indicated above in regards to direct engagement with NGOs and efforts to strengthen the governments’ capacity to conduct outreach and educate the public on opportunities for public involvement in environmental decision-making and enforcement.

**Previous Work with local NGOs and Civil Society**

The Department of State through its Regional Environmental Hub in Costa Rica, with Fiscal Year 2006 funds, launched a small grants program in August 2007 to engage local organizations with the mechanisms and opportunities for public participation. The Department of State awarded six small grants to different local organizations in the CAFTA-DR countries to (1) educate the public about opportunities in the CAFTA-DR Environment Chapter and ECA for public participation; (2) obtain informed, productive public participation in environmental decision-making in CAFTA-DR countries; and (3) promote compliance with environment laws. The name of the local organizations that received funds in 2007 and their project descriptions are included in **Attachment A.**

The Department of State with FY 2007 Economic Support and Development Assistance funds under the CAFTA-DR environment set aside **US$ 396,000** to continue the Small Grants Program building on recent experience in the region. The Department of State through an open competition is seeking an applicant organization with a strong presence in the region to manage and coordinate all aspects of the Small Grants Program, including announcement, review and selection process, oversight, grant administration, and dissemination of results in coordination with CAFTA-DR Points of Contact.

**B. Small Grants Program Description**

**Purpose**

To engage civil society in the CAFTA-DR countries with the mechanisms and opportunities for public participation contained in the CAFTA-DR Environment Chapter and Cooperation Agreement, as well as in the countries own mechanisms through small grants directed at local organizations.

**Eligibility**

Local organizations refer to community groups, non-governmental organizations, indigenous peoples' organizations, charitable organizations, academic institutions, professional associations and foundations which are legal entities in Costa Rica, Dominican Republic, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras or Nicaragua.

**Expected Results**

The following results are expected to achieve the purpose of the Small Grants Program:

* strengthen the capacities of local organizations (small grantees) in the CAFTA-DR countries to conduct public outreach on opportunities for public participation in environmental issues and promote compliance with environmental laws;
* increase public awareness and understanding of CAFTA-DR Environmental Chapter and ECA and the avenues they provide for public participation, including through submissions to the Secretariat on environmental matters;
* increase effective participation of civil society and local NGOs (including indigenous communities) in CAFTA-DR countries in environmental decision-making at the national and local government levels;
* encourage partnerships between civil society and government to develop strategies for getting tools and standards into the hand of the broader public; and
* educate approximately 700 people in the region about opportunities for civil society involvement in environmental decision-making and enforcement.

**Project activities**

Project activities will address, among other things, methods for encouraging public participation during Environmental Affairs Council meetings; workshops on preparing submissions to the Secretariat for Environmental Matters; and innovative means of participating in, or engaging with, national consultative or advisory committees. Other activities may include developing written materials to explain the CAFTA-DR public participation mechanisms to the general public, including, for example, a step-by-step guide for shepherding environmental complaints or information to the appropriate national authorities or CAFTA-DR institutions; promoting public involvement in government (environment and trade) decision-making; or providing technical assistance to citizens in preparing submissions of information or complaints to national authorities or CAFTA-DR institutions.

**C. RFA Statement of Need**

This RFA is for a NGO or international organization with a strong regional profile to manage the Small Grants Program described in Section B. The applicant must demonstrate the ability to manage all aspects of the Small Grants Program—announcement, open competition process, review and selection process, monitoring, and dissemination of the results. The recipient will carry the following activities:

* Develop an Assistance Grant award plan and Grant Administration manual for approval by the DOS grant representative.
* Develop an open competition in the six CAFTA-DR countries in coordination with the CAFTA-DR points of contact and the DOS.
* Announce a request for application through the proper media channels to access different sectors and areas of the population in the six CAFTA-DR countries. Proper communication outlets for rural communities should be included.
* Conduct a review and selection process, which include the organization of a selection committee, in coordination with the CAFTA-DR points of contact and the DOS. The selection committee may include US government representatives from interested agencies and CAFTA-DR points of contact. The final selection of the grant applications should be confirmed by the DOS.
* Award at least one small grant to a local organization in each CAFTA-DR country, before July 2009. The grant manager will work closely with DOS to develop the grant criteria and process to select recipients.
* Administer the Small Grants Program in accordance with the practices established under the Department of State federal assistance programs. Information about grant management can be found in the link: <http://fa.statebuy.state.gov/>
* Oversee implementation of the small grants by conducting site visits (at least one per project) and frequent communications with grantees.
* Submit progress and financial reports to the Department of State every quarter as described in Section IV.
* Coordinate with the Secretariat of Environmental Matters and CAFTA-DR points of contact other public participation outreach activities to find synergies between their efforts and the ones conducted by the Small Grants Program.
* Review written materials (e.g. brochures, presentations, web sites, and others) to ensure that the information is accurate and follow the spirit of the various public participation mechanisms.
* Disseminate success stories and lessons learned resulted from the implementation of the Small Grants Program in coordination with the DOS.

The Department of State will award one Cooperative Agreement for the management of the Small Grants Program. Should an applicant organization wish to work with other organizations in the implementation of this program, the DOS requests that a sub-grant agreement be developed.

In a cooperative agreement, the Office of Environmental Policy (ENV) in the Bureau of Oceans, Environment and Science at the Department of State is substantially involved in program activities. The following activities and responsibilities are as follows:

* Participate in the design of the program announcement
* Participate in development of selection criteria and procedure to select grantees
* Participate in the selection committee
* Approve selected grantees
* Provide guidance or input for the program implementation
* Provide liaison with CAFTA-DR points of contact, the Secretariat for Environmental Matters, and U.S. Embassies in the region.
* Review written materials utilized for public participation outreach
1. **Performance Indicators**

**Performance indicators**

The required performance indicators for this cooperative agreement include:

* a minimum of six (6) local organizations in the CAFTA-DR countries using USG assistance to promote public participation on environmental issues. (at least one local organization in each CAFTA-DR country).
* educate approximately 700 people in the region about opportunities for civil society involvement in environmental decision-making and enforcement (include number of females and males).

Other possible indicators that the recipient may consider when developing the application are:

* Number of outreach campaigns supported by USG assistance
* Number of people who have completed workshops (include number of females and males)
* Number of participants in USG-funded programs supporting participation and inclusion of traditionally marginalized ethnic minority groups. (include number of females and males)
* Number of media outlets that promote public participation mechanisms and opportunities under CAFTA-DR
* Number of educational/outreach materials that promote public participation on environmental issues.
* Number of partnerships involving local organizations, business, and/or academic institutions.
1. **Budget and Term of Performance**

The Department of State set aside US $ 396,000 from the CAFTA-DR Environment FY2007 funds to support the Small Grants Program. This amount includes the administrative and management costs of the program, as well as funds for the small grants. Projects are expected to range from US $ 20,000 to US $ 50,000; however, individual projects could be larger or smaller depending on the selection committee’s review and selection process

The initial period of performance will be two years from the initial award of the Cooperative Agreement with DOS.

 Depending upon quality of performance and other factors, the DOS reserves the right to supplement this budget and extend the period of performance for up to three additional years, as appropriate, and if the DOS and the recipient mutually agreed

1. **Award Information:**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Type of Award | Cooperative Agreement. |
| Fiscal Year Funds | FY 2007 |
| Approximate Total Funding: | $ 396,000  |
| Approximate Number of Awards: | 1 |
| Anticipated Award Date: | August 2008 |
| Anticipated Project Completion Date: | August 2010 |

1. **Application Process**

**A. Eligibility**

Eligible applicants include non-governmental organizations or international organizations with a strong regional profile and experience in grant management and public participation related to environmental issues. The applicant must address all the technical components of this competition.

**B. Review Criteria and Selection Process**

An independent panel will review each application and recommend which application to fund. Officials from the Department of State, and other interested U.S. government agencies, will review the recommendation and make final award decisions. Preference will be given to those organizations with a proven track record administering small grants and that can respond quickly and efficiently to the time frame for awarding the small grants set out in Section C – Timeline.

Technically eligible applications will be competitively reviewed according to the criteria listed below.

* Understanding of CAFTA-DR Environment Chapter and Cooperation Agreement: applications should demonstrate understanding of the various public participation mechanisms and opportunities referred to in the CAFTA-DR Environment Chapter and Cooperation Agreement. (10 points)
* Program Management: the applicants should demonstrate capacity and experience with all aspects of grant-making from the open competition process, to the administration and overseeing of the small grants. (20 points)
* INSTITUTIONAL CAPACITYAND TRACK RECORD IN THE REGION: the applicants must demonstrate that the qualifications of the organization are adequate and appropriate to achieve the program objectives including proposed key personnel and institutional resources. Applications should demonstrate a record of past performance, including a record of fiscal management and full compliance with reporting requirements. The applicants should also demonstrate regional experience (more than 2 countries) and local connections (20 points)
* TECHNICAL MERIT OF APPROACH: the applicants should propose an approach (implementation plan and timelines) to address the purpose, expected results, and activities indicated in Section II. The implementation plan should answer how the applicants proposes to manage and oversee the small grants; coordinate with the target population, host governments, and the DOS; and leverage partnerships that involve multiple sectors (private, university, government, etc.). Applicants may be disqualified if the proposal includes countries outside CAFTA-DR. (20 points)
* COST EFFECTIVENESS: the overhead and administrative components of the proposal, including salaries should be kept as low as possible. All other items should be necessary and appropriate. Whenever possible, applicants are encouraged to maximize cost-sharing through other partnership support as well as institutional funding contributions (20 points);
* Project evaluation and monitoring plan: applications should include a plan to evaluate the success of the Small Grants Program, both before, during, and after the completion of the program. The plan should include a methodology to monitor and evaluate the Small Grant Program, as well as ideas for disseminating success stories and lessons learned. (10 points);

**C. Timeline**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Deadline for applications | June 20, 2008 |
| Application Review and Selection | July 2008 |
| Notification of Project Approval/Disapproval and Grant Signing  | August 2008 |

**D. Application**

Prospective applicants must submit an application to [www.grants.gov](http://www.grants.gov) by 6:00 pm Eastern Standard Time (EST) on June 20, 2008. Submissions should conform to instructions in the submission package, available at <http://grants.gov>. Please read the entire three sections of the solicitation package and follow the guidelines in the Proposal Submission Instructions (PSI) document

1. **Reporting**

The recipient, at a minimum, shall provide the Department of State with the following reports:

**Implementation Plan**

Thirty days after signature of the agreement, the grantee shall provide the DOS with an implementation plan, describing project activities during year one, including the CV’s of key personnel on the implementation team.

**Progress and Financial Reports**

Quarterly progress and financial reports are required that provide reporting on activities the recipient has undertaken during the period of the agreement.

**Final Report.**

Final report should include successes, best practices, lessons learned, challenges, and how the project advances CAFTA-DR implementation efforts in the Region. The final report will be due no later than sixty (60) days after completion or termination of the project.

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1. **Additional Information**

This RFP will appear on www.grants.gov.

Other resources to assist you in the preparation of this application can be found in the following links:

CAFTA-DR Environmental Chapter, Agreement, and Work Plan

<http://www.state.gov/g/oes/env/trade/index.htm>

Understanding Regarding the Establishment of a Secretariat for Environmental Matters under the CAFTA-DR FTA

<http://www.ustr.gov/assets/Trade_Agreements/Bilateral/CAFTA/Briefing_Book/asset_upload_file842_7227.pdf>

Web Site of the Secretariat for Environmental Matters

<http://www.mysem.ws/>

Comisión Centroamericana de Ambiente y Desarrollo

<http://www.ccad.ws/DR-CAFTA.html>

1. **Contact Information**

Contact Carmen Yee-Batista, (202) 647-6777, in the Office of Environmental Policy on all inquiries and correspondence. Please read the complete announcement before sending inquiries or submitting proposals. Once the proposal submission deadline has passed, the DOS staff may not discuss this competition with applicants until the proposal review process has been completed.

**ATTACHMENT A**

**Previous Work with local NGOs and Civil Society**

The Department of State through its Regional Environmental Hub in Costa Rica, with Fiscal Year 2006 funds, launched a small grants program in August 2007 to engage local organizations with the mechanisms and opportunities for public participation. The Department of State awarded six small grants to different local organizations in the CAFTA-DR countries to (1) educate the public about opportunities in the CAFTA-DR Environment Chapter and ECA for public participation; (2) obtain informed, productive public participation in environmental decision-making in CAFTA-DR countries; and (3) promote compliance with environment laws. The name of the local organizations that received funds in 2007 and their project descriptions are indicated below.

1. **Helvetas Swiss Association for International Cooperation, Guatemala**

Project Title: Getting to Know CAFTA-DR Environmental Chapter

The project consists of an awareness raising campaign targeting the general public, including information dissemination through radio, newspaper, mobile information booths, and fairs in three languages of the region (Mam, Quiche and Spanish). In addition, the grantee in collaboration with the Ministry for the Environment and Natural Resources have set up a nation-wide hotline for people to report environmental complaints (hotline #: 1560). This project also aims to inform at least 25 percent of the population in the Departments of Quetzaltenango, Totonicapan, San Marcos, and Huehuetenango about public participation opportunities and mechanisms on environmental issues through cooperatives agreements between the Municipal Development Council (COMUDES) and Department Development Councils (COCODES).

1. **Instituto de Investigación y Promoción Ambiental (IPA), El Salvador**

Project Title: Environmental Units: Mechanisms for Increasing Public Participation in Environmental Management and Enforcement

This one-year pilot project takes place in five municipalities and promotes public participation in the enforcement of environmental laws and compliance of Chapter 17 by building or strengthening their Environmental Units (EUs). The main activities include 1) training the EUs to effectively engage in environmental management, soliciting and disseminating information from and to the public, and ensuring compliance with Chapter 17, 2) promoting that the National System of Environmental Management (SINAMA) and Ministry of the Environment and Natural Resources (MARN) engage in a public relations campaign to inform all citizens of these rights, and 3) assisting the Environmental Units, SINAMA, and the public with the mechanisms necessary to ensure open and effective lines of communication.

1. **Colegio Lincoln, Costa Rica**

Project Title: Environmental Congress

This project consists of organizing a group of no less than 30 interested secondary students from a variety of public and private schools, within the surrounding areas of Barrio Socorro, San Miguel, Santo Domingo, Heredia, to participate in the “ECO 1” Environmental Congress, which will be held in Lincoln School Campus from 05/24 to 05/25). During this event the students will engage in activities regarding the role of the public and obligations in the Environmental Chapter, participate in environmental workshops with scientific professors, discuss environmental problems in Costa Rica, and create an action plan to address environmental issues. Please refer to this web site for additional information: [www.lincoln.ed.cr/eco](http://www.lincoln.ed.cr/eco).

1. **Central America Technological University (UNITEC), Honduras**

Project Title: Support the Diffusion of Opportunities and Informed Participation in the Environmental Decisions within the Framework of CAFTA-DR and the ECA.

This project is aimed at promoting the understanding of the mechanism for public participation included in Chapter 17 of the CAFTA-DR Agreement and ECA through workshops directed at government and non-government sectors and the preparation of a document. The document, expected to be completed in May 2008, will provide a summary of the opportunities and obligations that Honduras has within the framework of CAFTA-DR, a legal interpretation within the Constitution and pertinent laws of Honduras, and suggestions to meet the obligations in Chapter and ECA.

1. **Promoción y Desarrollo Empresarial (PRODEM), Nicaragua**

Project Title: Improving Public Participation in Environmental Decision-making in the Region Encompassed by the CAFTA-DR.

This project increases the participatory efforts of civil society and the private sector in environmental issues by strengthening information flows of approximately 200 organizations, building capacity on environmental issues in small private enterprises, and promoting the establishment of public and private partnerships.

1. **Alianza ONG, Dominican Republic**

Project Title: Promoting Public Participation Mechanisms of the Chapter 17 Environment from CAFTA-DR

This project has two main components to promote public participation mechanisms of the Chapter: 1) outreach using mass media outlets, web site, journals, and the elaboration of didactic guides and 2) four workshops in Santo Domingo and in the east and north regions of the country targeting commerce and production entities, tourism organizations, and economic and environmental journalists.

**Section Three of Solicitation Package**

**Proposal Submission Instructions (PSI)**

**Management of Small Grants Program for Public Participation**

U.S. Department of State

Bureau of Oceans, Environment and Science

Central Programming Unit

Room 2201 C Street, NW

Washington, D.C. 20520

<http://oes.state.gov/>

updated: 01/08

**TECHNICAL ELIGIBILITY**

Technically eligible submissions are those which: 1) arrive electronically via [www.grants.gov](http://www.grants.gov) by Monday, June 20th before 6:00 p.m. Eastern Standard Time (EST); and 2) have heeded all instructions contained in the Request for Application (RFA) and Proposal Submission Instructions (PSI), including length and completeness of submission 3) do not violate any of the guidelines stated in the solicitation and this document.

**QUESTION AND ANSWER PERIOD**

In order to ensure the integrity of the proposal submission process, all questions and correspondence pertaining to this grant must be done via email between **May 21st and June13th**. All questions and answers will be posted on grants.gov. Correspondence after June 14th will be strictly limited to the technical requirements set forth in the PSI.

**PROPOSAL SUBMISSION INSTRUCTIONS**

As of October 1, 2005 the State Department requires proposals be submitted electronically via [www.grants.gov](http://www.grants.gov).

**Please note:** In order to safeguard the security of applicants’ electronic information, [www.grants.gov](http://www.grants.gov) utilizes a credential provider. It is the process of determining, with certainty, that someone really is who they claim to be.

The credential provider for [www.grants.gov](http://www.grants.gov) is Operational Research Consultants (ORC). Applicants MUST register with ORC to receive a username and password which you will need to register with [www.grants.gov](http://www.grants.gov) as an authorized organization representative (AOR). Once your organization's E-Business point of contact has assigned these rights, you will be authorized to submit grant applications through Grants.gov on behalf of your organization.

Each organization will need to be registered with the Central Contractor Registry (CCR) and you will need to have your organization's DUNS number available to complete this process. After your organization registers with the CCR, you must wait 3 business days before you can obtain a username and password.

PLEASE be advised that completing all the necessary steps for obtaining a username and password from [www.grants.gov](http://www.grants.gov) **can take up to 2 full weeks**. The Bureau of Ocean, Environment and Science (OES) strongly urges applicants to begin this process on [www.grants.gov](http://www.grants.gov) well in advance of the submission deadline. No exceptions will be made for organizations that have not completed the necessary steps to post applications on [www.grants.gov](http://www.grants.gov). Please access [www.grants.gov](http://www.grants.gov) for the necessary information.

Faxed, couriered, or emailed documents will not be accepted at any time. Applicants must follow all formatting instructions in the applicable RFA and these instructions.

**TECHNICAL FORMAT REQUIREMENTS**

Applicants must include the following in the proposal submission:

1. Table of Contents that lists application contents and attachments (if any)
2. Completed and signed SF-424, SF-424a and SF424b, as directed on grants.gov
3. Executive Summary (one page, double-spaced in 12 point Times New Roman font in Microsoft Word) that includes:
* the target countries
* name and contact information for the project’s main point of contact,
* the project’s purpose and expected results (include proposed number of projects and sub-grant range),
* target population including type of local NGO’s and or/civil society organizations.
* a one-paragraph statement of work,
* the total amount of funding requested, program length and how the project is innovative, sustainable, and will have a demonstrated impact.
1. Proposal Narrative (Not to exceed ten (10) pages, single-spaced, 12 point Times New Roman font in Microsoft Word, at least one-inch margins) to include:
2. Introduction and rationale of the proposal.
3. Proposed long-term goal and expected results (short-term project goals) of the project and the main activities that are necessary to support each expected result.
4. Implementation plan. The implementation plan should answer questions, such as who are the key stakeholders and their expected participation in the project; what are the assumptions on which the success of the project depends; and the proposed methodology to achieve the expected results.
5. Roles and responsibilities of primary staff
6. A comprehensive monitoring and evaluation plan that includes measurable and time bound outputs and outcomes.
7. Provide a detailed monthly timeline that include target dates for completion of each of the proposed activities.
8. Detailed Budget in spreadsheet format, which includes three (3) columns including OES request, any cost sharing contribution, and total budget (see Budget Guidelines). Costs should be in USD;
9. Budget Narrative (Not to exceed 6 pages) that includes an explanation for each line item in the Excel spreadsheet, as well as the source and description of all cost share offered;
10. Attachments (letters of support, CVs of key personnel, project experience, etc) may not exceed 5 pages;
11. If your organization has a negotiated indirect cost rate agreement (NICRA) and includes NICRA charges in the budget, your latest NICRA must be sent as a pdf file. If your proposal involves subgrants to organizations charging indirect costs, and those organizations also have a NICRA, please submit the applicable NICRA as a pdf file.
12. Number all pages, including budget and addenda
13. Format all pages to standard 8 ½ x 11 paper with a minimum of 1-inch margins.

**INFORMATION ON STANDARD FORMS**

Organizations must also fill out and submit SF-424, SF-424A, and SF-424B forms as directed on [www.grants.gov](http://www.grants.gov).

Please fill in the highlighted yellow fields and use the following guideline for the SF-424:

1. Type of Submission: Application
2. Type of Application: New

5b. Federal Award Identifier: Please enter zeros or leave blank

8a. Please enter name of applicant (organization)

8b. Please enter the organization’s EIN or TIN number

8c. Please enter the organization’s DUNS number

8d. Please enter the organization’s address

8f. Please enter the name, telephone number and e-mail address of the primary contact person for this proposal

9. Please select type of applicant from pull down list

11. The CFDA number is 00.000

15. Please enter descriptive title of project

16a. Please enter congressional district of applicant organization

16b. Please enter N/A or zeros

17. Please enter the approximate start and end dates of the proposed activities

18. Please enter the amount requested from the USG under “Federal,” any cost-share under “Applicant,” fill in the total, and otherwise use zeros.

19. Please enter “c”

20. Complete as indicated

21. Complete as indicated

Please fill in the highlighted yellow fields of the SF 424A with information from your proposed budget.

Please fill in the highlighted yellow fields in the SF-424B:

Page 2 - Complete Applicant Organization and title of authorized official.

**OFFICE OF MANAGEMENT AND BUDGET (OMB) CIRCULARS**

Organizations should be familiar with OMB Circulars A-110 (Revised) 22 CFR 145 (Uniform Administrative Requirements for Grants and Agreements with Institutions of Higher Education, Hospitals and Other Nonprofit Organizations), A-122/A-21 (Cost Principles for Nonprofit Organizations; Indirect Costs), and A-133/A-128 (Audits of Institutions of Higher Education and Other Nonprofit Organizations) on cost accounting principles. For a copy of the OMB circulars cited, please contact Government Publications or download from http://www.whitehouse.gov/omb/circulars/index.html.

**AUDITS**

**The recipient's proposal should include the cost of an audit that**:

(1) complies with the requirements of OMB Circular No. A-133, "Audits for Institutions of Higher Education and Other Nonprofit Institutions";

(2) complies with the requirements of American Institute of Certified Public Accountants (AICPA) Statement of Position (SOP) No. 92-9, "Audits of Not-for-Profit Organizations Receiving Federal Awards";

(3) Complies with AICPA Codification of Statements on Auditing Standards AU Section 551, "Reporting on Information Accompanying the Basic Financial Statements in Auditor-Submitted Documents," where applicable. When U.S. Department of State is the largest direct source of Federal financial assistance (i.e., the cognizant Federal Agency) and indirect costs are charged to Federal grants, a supplemental schedule of indirect cost computation is required.

(4) Organizations that receive more than $500,000 in US government funds are required to have an A-133 audit.

**The audit costs shall be identified separately for**:

1. audit of the basic financial statements, and
2. supplemental reports and schedules required by A-133

**INDIRECT COST-RATE**

An organization with a negotiated indirect cost rate agreement (NICRA) negotiated with a cognizant federal government agency other than the U.S. Department of State should include a copy of the cost-rate agreement as an addendum to the budget. An applicant must indicate in the proposal budget how the rate is applied and if any of the rate will be cost-shared. OES generally does not pay indirect costs against participant expenses. Organizations claiming indirect costs should have an established NICRA. If subgrantees are claiming indirect costs, they should have an established NICRA that is also submitted with the proposal package.

**COST – SHARING**

Cost - sharing is the portion of program cost not borne by the sponsor. OES encourages cost - sharing, which may be in the form of allowable direct or indirect costs, and offered by the applicant and/or in-country partners. Applicants should consider all types of cost sharing. Examples include the use of office space owned by other entities; donated or borrowed supplies and equipment; (non-federal) sponsored travel costs; waived indirect costs; and program activities, translations, or consultations conducted by qualified volunteers. The values of offered cost share should be reported in accordance with (the applicable cost principles outlined in) OMB Circular A-110 (Revised) Subpart C (23) “Cost-sharing or Matching.” **Other federal funding does not constitute cost sharing.**

The recipient of an assistance award must maintain written records to support all allowable costs which 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. The basis for determining the value of cash and in-kind contributions must be in accordance with OMB Circular A-110 (Revised), Subpart C (23) “Cost-sharing or Matching.” In the event the recipient does not meet the minimum amount of cost-sharing as stipulated in the recipient’s budget, the Bureau’s contribution will be reduced in proportion to the recipient’s contribution.

All organizations, including those not offering any cost - sharing, must submit a budget in Excel, formatted to include three columns for each line item: OES funding request, cost – share offered, and total funding. Sources of all cost - share offered in the application must be identified and explained in the budget narrative. When organizations have made a reasonable, good-faith effort to obtain cost sharing or are pursuing avenues to cost share, OES encourages applicants to note this in the proposal (refer to Budget Guidelines).

**PROGRAM MONITORING AND EVALUATION**

Proposals must include a detailed plan on how the project’s impact and effectiveness will be monitored and evaluated throughout the project. Incorporating a well-designed monitoring and evaluation component into a project is one of the most efficient methods of documenting the progress and potential success of a program. Successful monitoring and evaluation depend on the following:

* setting short-term and long-term goals that are clear, attainable, measurable, and placed in a reasonable time frame;
* linking program activities to stated goals;
* developing key performance indicators that are quantifiable, have realistic targets, and are categorized into outputs or outcomes.

Performance indicators are quantifiable measures that assess the progress of a project. Two types of performance indicators are outputs and outcomes. Outputs are products and services delivered from the program activities, often stated as an amount. Output data show the scope or size of project activities, but it cannot substitute information about progress towards outcomes or the project’s impact. Examples of outputs include the number of people trained or the number of seminars conducted. Outcomes, in contrast, represent specific results a project intends to achieve and are usually measured as an extent of change.

Examples of project outcomes include environmental regulatory changes, or a marked improvement in a government’s ability to foster public participation in environmental decision making, better enforcement against illegal logging, or better controls against the trafficking of endangered species, or number of institutions and individuals trained in solar technology. Findings on outputs and outcomes should both be reported, but the focus should be on outcomes since those more accurately assess the program’s true impact.

The Bureau recommends that applicants include a clear description of the methodology and data collection strategies/tools to be employed (e.g. surveys, interviews, focus groups) and, as appropriate, samples of evaluative tools such as draft survey questionnaires. The Bureau expects that the grantee will track participants or partners as appropriate and be able to respond to key evaluation questions, including satisfaction with the program/training, information learned as a result of the program/training, changes in behavior as a result of the program, and effects of the program on institutions in which participants work or partner institutions. Applicants should include a timeline for the monitoring and evaluation process.

Overall, the quality of your monitoring and evaluation plan will be judged on how well it incorporates the abovementioned components. Since a quality evaluation should be as objective and unbiased as possible, OES highly encourages all applicants to include an independent evaluation (e.g., hiring an outside evaluator to assess the program) as part of their overall monitoring and evaluation plan. Costs for an outside evaluation may be charged to the OES grant.

Grantees will be required to provide reports with an analysis and summary of their evaluation findings in their regular program reports to the Bureau. All data collected, including survey responses and contact information, must be maintained for a minimum of three years and provided to the Bureau upon request. OES conducts quarterly reviews of all of its programs in order to meet its PART requirements as set by OMB and to ensure grants are being administered and implemented successfully.

**BUDGET GUIDELINES**

An applicant organization's budget must respond to the solicitation guidelines and be included in the proposal submission. Applicants must provide a detailed line-item budget outlining specific cost requirements for proposed activities. A minimum of three columns must be used to delineate the bureau funding request, cost-share by applicant, and total project funding. Include a budget narrative to explain specific line-items and how the amounts were derived.

The three-column proposal line item budget must include these main components and should follow the format below:

1. Summary Budget
2. Line-Item Administrative and Program Budget

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|   |   | OES Request | Cost Share | Total |
| **ADMINISTRATIVE COSTS** | unit cost |   |   |   |
| a) Personnel: US-based |   |   |   |   |
| Program Officer (X months) | X% of $X/yr |  |   |   |
| Financial Specialist (X months) | X% of $X/yr |  |   |   |
| b) Fringe Benefits: US-based Personnel | fringe=X% salary |   |   |   |
| Program Officer (X months) | X% fringe |  |   |   |
| Financial Specialist (X months) | X% fringe |  |   |   |
| c) Travel |   |   |   |   |
| Monitoring Trip: DC-field (X) | $X/RT flight |  |   |   |
| Per diem (X days) | $X/day |  |   |   |
| e) Supplies (US based, if applicable) |   |   |   |   |
| Printing and Photocopying (X months) | X% of $X/yr |  |   |   |
| j) Indirect Costs |   |   |   |   |
| NICRA (X% on program costs) |   |  |   |   |
| TOTAL Administrative Costs |   |   |   |   |
| **PROGRAM COSTS** |   |   |   |   |
| a) Personnel: Field |   |   |   |   |
| Program Manager (x months) | X% of $X/yr |   |   |   |
| Program Assistant (x months) | X% of $X/yr |   |   |   |
| b) Fringe Benefits: Field Personnel | fringe=X% salary |   |   |   |
| Program Manager (x months) | X% fringe |   |   |   |
| Program Assistant (x months) | X% fringe |   |   |   |
| c) Travel |   |   |   |   |
| Activity 1: Workshop  |   |   |   |   |
| Staff Travel (# staff) | $X/RT flight/# staff |   |   |   |
| Staff Per Diem (X days) | $X/day/# day/# staff |   |   |   |
| Participant Travel (# participants) | $X/trip/# pax |   |   |   |
| Participant Per Diem (X days) | $X/day/# day/# pax |   |   |   |
| Activity 2: Town Hall Meeting  |   |   |   |   |
| Staff Travel (# staff) | $X/RT flight/# staff |   |   |   |
| Staff Per Diem (X days) | $X/day/# day/# staff |   |   |   |
| Participant Travel (# participants) | $X/trip/# pax |   |   |   |
| Participant Per Diem (X days) | $X/day/# day/# pax |   |   |   |
| d) Equipment |   |   |   |   |
| Used laptop for field office | $X/laptop |   |   |   |
| e) Supplies (Field Office) |   |   |   |   |
| Markers and dry erase board | $X/set |   |   |   |
| Telephone (X months) | X% of $X/yr |   |   |   |
| Office Supplies (X months) | X% of $X/yr |   |   |   |
| f) Contractual |   |   |   |   |
| Local Subgrantee | $X/unit |   |   |   |
| g) Consultant Fees |   |   |   |   |
| Media Specialist/Honoraria (X) | $X/consult |   |   |   |
| Independent M & E specialist | $X/unit |   |   |   |
| Translation Fees (X pages) | $X/page |   |   |   |
| h) Other Direct Costs |   |   |   |   |
| Field Office Rent (X months) | X% of $X/mo |   |   |   |

\*Note: This budget is designed to serve as an example of the required format for budget submissions and is NOT exhaustive. Individual line items included in each applicant’s budget should reflect specific program activities. (pax=participants)

**Before grants are awarded, the Bureau reserves the right to reduce, revise, or increase proposal budgets in accordance with the needs of the Bureau’s program and availability of funds.**

**A. SUMMARY BUDGET:**

Please include the applicant organization name, title and duration of the project, and the following:

1. Personnel
2. Fringe Benefits
3. Travel
4. Equipment
5. Supplies
6. Contractual
7. Consultant Fees
8. Other Direct Costs
9. Total direct charges (sum a – h)
10. Indirect Charges
11. Totals

**B. LINE-ITEM BUDGET –**

**Personnel** – Identify staffing requirements by each position title and brief description of duties. List annual salary of each position, percentage of time and number of months devoted to project (e.g., Administrative Director: $30,000/year x 25% x 8.5 months; calculation: $30,000/12 = $2,500 x 25% x 8.5 months = $5,312).

**Fringe Benefits** - State benefit costs separately from salary costs and explain how benefits are computed for each category of employee - specify type and rate.

**Travel** - Staff and any participant travel:

 1) international airfare

 2) in-country travel

 3) domestic travel in the U.S., if any

4) per diem/maintenance: includes lodging, meals and incidentals for both participant and staff travel. Rates of maximum allowances for U.S. and foreign travel are available from the following website: http:/www.policyworks.gov/. Per diem rates may not exceed the published U.S. government allowance rates; however, institutions may use per diem rates lower than official government rates.

Please explain differences in fares among travelers on the same routes: e.g., project staff member traveling for three weeks whose fare is higher than that of staff member traveling for four months. Please note that all travel, where applicable, must be in compliance with the Fly America Act.

**Equipment** – please provide justification for any equipment purchase/rental, defined as tangible personal property having a useful life of more than one year and an acquisition cost of $5000 or more.

**Supplies** - list items separately using unit costs (and the percentage of each unit cost being charged to the grant) for photocopying, postage, telephone/fax, printing, and office supplies (e.g., Telephone: $50/month x 50% = $25/month x 12 months).

**Contractual** – For each subgrant/contract please provide a detailed line item breakdown explaining specific services. In the subgrant budgets, provide the same level of detail for personnel, travel, supplies, equipment, direct costs, and fringe benefits required of the direct applicant.

**Consultant Fees** - For example lecture fees, honoraria, travel, and per diem for outside speakers or independent evaluators: list number of people and rates per day (e.g., 2 x $150/day x 2 days).

**Other Direct Costs** - these will vary depending on the nature of the project. The inclusion of each must be justified in the budget narrative.

**Indirect Charges** - See OMB Circular A-122, "Cost Principles for Non-profit Organizations"

 a. If your organization has an indirect cost-rate agreement with the U.S. Government, please include a copy of this agreement as an addendum to the budget.

 b. Indicate how the rate is applied--to direct administrative expenses, to all direct costs, to wages and salaries only, etc.

 c. Do not include indirect costs against participant expenses in the Bureau budget, as it generally does not pay for these costs.

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**Cost Share -** Explanation of contributions should be included, whether cash or in-kind. Assign a monetary value in U.S. dollars to each in-kind contribution. If the proposed project is a component of a larger program, identify other funding sources for the proposal and indicate the specific funding amount to be provided by those sources.

The Bureau of Oceans, Environment and Science WILL CONSIDER BUDGETED LINE-ITEMS FOR THE FOLLOWING:

* Independent evaluations to assess the project’s impact (costs must be built into the overall original budget proposal and must be reasonable);
* Costs associated with an internal evaluation conducted by the grantee (costs must be built into the overall original budget proposal and must be reasonable).
* Visa Fees and Immunizations associated with program travel.

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The Bureau of Oceans, Environment and Science DOES NOT PAY FOR THE FOLLOWING under any circumstances:

* Administration of a program that will make a profit;
* Expenses incurred before or after the specified dates of the grant (unless prior approval received);
* Projects designed to advocate policy views or positions of foreign governments or views of a particular political faction;
* Entertainment expenses, including alcoholic beverages.
* Contingency funds to cover unexpected costs, including salary increases, increased airfares, and other inflationary factors.

**ADDITIONAL INFORMATION**

**Once the Request for Application deadline has passed, State Department staff in Washington D.C. and overseas at U.S. Embassies/Missions may not discuss this competition with applicants until the review process has been completed**.