

agency's estimate of the burden of the collection of information; (c) ways to enhance the quality, utility, and clarity of the information to be collected; and (d) ways to minimize the burden of the collection of information on respondents, including through the use of automated collection techniques or other forms of information technology; and (e) estimates of capital or start-up costs and costs of operation, maintenance, and purchase of services to provide information.

Dated: July 14, 1999.

Dale A. Morgan,

*Departmental Reports Management Officer,
Department of the Treasury.*

[FR Doc. 99-19209 Filed 7-28-99; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 4810-25-P

UNITED STATES INFORMATION AGENCY

International Education and Cultural Activities—Open Grant Program

AGENCY: United States Information Agency (USIA).

ACTION: Notice—Request for proposals.

SUMMARY: The Office of Citizen Exchanges (E/P) of the United States Information Agency's Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs announces an open competition for an assistance award program. For applicants' information, on October 1, 1999, the Bureau will become part of the U.S. Department of State. The integration will not affect the content of this announcement or the nature of the program described. Public or private non-profit organizations meeting the provisions described in IRS regulation 26 CFR 1.501(c) may apply to develop projects that link their international exchange interests with counterpart institutions/groups in ways supportive of the aims of the Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs. Overall grant making authority for this program is contained in the Mutual Educational and Cultural Exchange Act of 1961, as amended, Public Law 87-256, also known as the Fulbright Hays Act.

The purpose of the Act is "to enable the Government of the United States to increase mutual understanding between the people of the United States and the people of other countries * * *, to strengthen the ties which unite us with other nations by demonstrating the educational and cultural interests, developments, and achievements of the people of the United States and other nations * * * and thus to assist in the development of friendly, sympathetic and peaceful relations between the

United States and the other countries of the world." Proposals for exchange projects that address issues of crucial importance to the United States and to proposed partner countries but that do not respond specifically to themes included below will also be considered. Programs and projects must conform with Bureau requirements and guidelines outlined in the Application Package. Bureau projects and programs are subject to the availability of funds.

Interested applicants should read the complete **Federal Register** announcement before addressing inquiries to the Office of Citizen Exchanges or submitting their proposals. Once the RFP deadline has passed, the Office of Citizen Exchanges may not discuss this competition in any way with applicants until after the Bureau program and project review process has been completed.

ANNOUNCEMENT NAME AND NUMBER: All communications concerning this announcement should refer to the Annual Open Grant Program. The announcement number is *E/P-00-1*. Please refer to title and number in all correspondence or telephone calls to the Office of Citizen Exchanges.

Deadline for Proposals: All copies must be received at the Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs by 5 p.m., Washington, D.C. time on Friday, October 15, 1999. Faxed documents will not be accepted at any time. Documents postmarked by the due date but received at a later date will not be accepted. It is the responsibility of each grant applicant to ensure that proposals are received by the above deadline. This action is effective from the publication date of this notice through October 15, 1999, for projects where activities will begin between March 1, 2000 and December 31, 2000.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Interested organizations/institutions must contact the Office of Citizen Exchanges, E/PL, Room 216, United States Information Agency, 301 4th Street, SW., Washington, DC 20547, (202) 619-5348, to request detailed application packets which include award criteria; all application forms; and guidelines for preparing proposals, including specific criteria for preparation of the proposal budget.

To Download a Solicitation Package via Internet: The Solicitation Package may be downloaded from USIA's website at <http://www.usia.gov/education/rfps>. Please read all information before beginning to download.

ADDRESSES: Applicants must follow all instructions given in the Application

Package and send only complete applications with 15 copies to: U.S. Information Agency (until October 1, 1999) or U.S. Department of State (effective October 1, 1999) REF: E/P-00-1 Annual Open Grant Competition Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs Office of Grants Management (E/XE) 301-4th Street, SW, Room 336, Washington, DC 20547.

Applicants must also submit to E/XE the "Executive Summary" and "Narrative" sections of each proposal on a 3.5" diskette, formatted for DOS. This material must be provided in ASCII text (DOS) format with a maximum line length of 65 characters. The Bureau will transmit these files electronically to U.S. embassies overseas for their review, with the goal of reducing the time it takes to get the respective Embassy's comments for the Bureau's grants review process.

Diversity, Freedom and Democracy Guidelines

Pursuant to the Bureau's authorizing legislation, projects must maintain a non-political character and should be balanced and representative of the diversity of American political, social, and cultural life. "Diversity" should be interpreted in the broadest sense and encompass differences including, but not limited to ethnicity, race, gender, religion, geographic location, socio-economic status, and physical challenges. Applicants are strongly encouraged to adhere to the advancement of this principle both in program administration and in program content. Please refer to the review criteria under the 'Support for Diversity' section for specific suggestions on incorporating diversity into the total proposal. Public Law 104-319 provides that "in carrying out programs of educational and cultural exchange in countries whose people do not fully enjoy freedom and democracy," the Bureau "shall take appropriate steps to provide opportunities for participation in such programs to human rights and democracy leaders of such countries." Proposals should account for advancement of this goal, in their program contents, to the full extent deemed feasible.

Year 2000 Compliance Requirement (Y2K Requirement)

The Year 2000 (Y2K) issue is a broad operational and accounting problem that could potentially prohibit organizations from processing information in accordance with Federal management and program specific requirements including data exchange with USIA. The inability to process

information in accordance with Federal requirements could result in grantees' being required to return funds that have not been accounted for properly. The Bureau therefore requires all organizations use Y2K compliant systems including hardware, software, and firmware. Systems must accurately process data and dates (calculating, comparing and sequencing) both before and after the beginning of the year 2000 and correctly adjust for leap years. Additional information addressing the Y2K issue may be found at the General Services Administration's Office of Information Technology website at <http://www.itpolicy.gsa.gov>.

Overview

The Office of Citizen Exchanges works with U.S. private sector, non-profit organizations on cooperative international group projects that introduce American and foreign participants to each others' social, economic, and political structures, and international interests. The Office supports international projects in the United States or overseas involving leaders or potential leaders in the following fields and professions: urban planners, jurists, specialized journalists (specialists in economics, business, political analysis, international affairs), business professionals, NGO leaders, environmental specialists, parliamentarians, educators, economists, and other government officials.

Guidelines

Applicants should carefully note the following restrictions/recommendations for proposals in specific geographical areas:

Central and Eastern Europe (CEE) and the newly Independent States (NIS)

Requests for proposals involving the following countries will be announced in separate competitions: CEE—Albania, Bosnia-Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Croatia, Czech Republic, Estonia, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Macedonia, Poland, Romania, Slovak Republic, and Slovenia; NIS—Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Georgia, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Moldova, Russia, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, Ukraine, and Uzbekistan. Proposals involving these regions will not be accepted under this competition.

Western Europe (WEU)

Proposals involving this region will not be accepted under this competition.

East Asia and the Pacific (EA)

For all of EA: We welcome proposals that track closely with the following suggestions and for the following countries:

For China: We welcome proposals (1) That strengthen the role of NGOs in Chinese society and PRC government cooperation with NGOs through an exchange of representatives from NGOs and public-sector organizations cutting across fields such as legal aid, consumerism, family issues, and environmental protection to examine the role of NGOs and public-private sector cooperation in the U.S.; and (2) the help China learn to keep the social costs of economic reform tolerable through an exchange involving officials from the PRC Ministry of Labor and Social Security, Ministry of Health, local re-employment centers, and other relevant health and social welfare professionals, working with U.S. public- and private sector representatives in those fields, to take a comprehensive look at the American social welfare system.

For Indonesia: We welcome proposals focused on democracy and human rights, especially in the specific areas of (1) Civil society/educational reform, working with reform-minded leaders in the Department of Education and Culture and with NGOs to support a major overhaul of national curricula and teaching practices, especially one that emphasizes civic education, and (2) rule of law/freedom of the press, working with a national NGO of independent journalists and/or legal aid institute to provide training in defending human rights and producing a more independent and honest judiciary.

For Korea: We welcome proposals that would (1) Assist NGO development, through teaching practical management and relevant administrative skills—increasing citizen participation and particularly the role of women in politics and (2) would promote the development of local autonomy by exposing those local government officials whose work will have lasting community impact to ideas and concepts about U.S. local government that they can actually use within the political, economic and social realities of Korea.

For Hong Kong: We welcome proposals that would promote democratic development in the Hong Kong Legislative Council via a two-way exchange on legislative practices and procedures between the Council's Secretariat staff and counterparts in the U.S. Congress or appropriate state legislatures.

For Mongolia: We welcome proposals that, through work with a Mongolian business organization or ad hoc consortium assembled by USIS Ulaanbaatar, would serve as the catalyst for the development of a private-sector, business-oriented, anti-corruption sector. Activities would demonstrate to the Mongolian people that, under the free-market system, the private sector in its own self-interest naturally takes the lead on anti-corruption issues and supports the rule of law in the marketplace and broader society.

For Vietnam: We welcome proposals that would (1) Assist in the critical institution-building effort towards the development of a comprehensive safety program for injury and disability prevention under the auspices of a new national safety board in Vietnam and (2) assist in the development of Vietnam's economic legal framework to support the implementation of the U.S.-Vietnam bilateral trade agreement.

For Japan: We welcome proposals that would foster greater cooperation between media and citizen action groups in Japan by developing cooperative strategies to improve coverage of NGO issues.

E/P contact for EA programs: Bill Dawson, 202/260-5485; E-Mail [WDawson@USIA.GOV]

Western Hemispheric Affairs (WHA)

The Office of Western Hemispheric Affairs includes the countries of Canada, Mexico, Central and South America, and the Caribbean. For all of WHA: We welcome proposals which contribute to strengthening democratic institution building, economic reform, environmental education, public administration, and municipal government for all countries in the region. For the countries mentioned below, some preference may be given to proposals that track closely the following suggestions:

For Central America: We welcome proposals in the field of environmental education. Deforestation and the results of Hurricane Mitch have raised public awareness of the need for environmental education throughout Central America.

Competitive proposals should involve participants in developing pilot environmental education programs in schools and/or with selected municipalities, capitalizing on the new interest of fledgling NGO environmental groups. For example, successful proposals might create regional "Centers of Excellence" that would serve all of Central America in fields such as disaster preparation/relief and local empowerment.

For Mexico: We welcome proposals for projects that would create opportunities for Mexican and U.S. public administration practitioners and academicians to work together. Project activities might focus on such local government issues as responding to the needs of the people it serves; interacting with other levels of government, implementing experimental ideas, and how city administrators communicate with each other. Participants should have opportunities to meet with academics, practitioners, and with NGOs dedicated to improving governance.

For Argentina: We welcome projects that examine capacity building in State (provincial) legislatures. Successful proposals should include two-way exchanges that would include Argentine regional legislators and staff members involved in training, consulting, or legislative information. A U.S. study tour should acquaint Argentines with institutions that will help them understand interrelationship and technical assistance among state legislatures; channels for effective citizen participation in the design of public policies; training and consulting resources; standards and techniques for drafting legislation; and a study of mechanisms that strengthen citizen participation in the formation of public policy such as popular referenda, voter initiatives, public hearings and lobbying.

For Costa Rica: We welcome projects that would explore and strengthen the role of municipal government. Proposals might include an exchange for local mayors to see innovations in city government and citizen participation in municipal affairs; and a return visit by a group of U.S. mayors and city managers and municipal experts to hold larger workshops on the same theme.

For Haiti: We welcome proposals focusing on compromise and conflict resolution training sessions for members of political parties, unions, advocacy groups, civic organizations and police. The most competitive proposals will build on earlier conflict resolution pilot programs in Haiti and make an attempt to institutionalize such training.

For Peru: We welcome proposals on decentralization and resource management issues for local government.

Competitive proposals should include an exchange for a group of local mayors and other decentralization specialists who would meet with U.S. local government representatives, businesses and neighborhood groups in order to gain a more in-depth understanding of local government in the U.S. E/P contact

for WHA programs: Laverne Johnson, 202/619-5337; E-Mail [LJohnson@USIA.GOV].

Africa (AF)

Proposals are requested for projects that would advance sustainable democracy by building human capital in Africa and strengthening partnerships between the United States and Africa in the thematic categories delineated below. Projects that foster networking across political as well as government-civil society divisions are encouraged. Proposals that respond to the following suggested themes and organizational approaches will receive priority consideration in the awarding of grants for exchange activity in Sub-Saharan Africa. While not all countries suggested as participants for each project must be included in the exchange, projects which bring together representatives from multiple countries will be given preference. Proposals for exchange projects that address issues of crucial importance to the United States and to proposed partner countries, without responding specifically to the themes included below, also will be considered. Proposed activities may take place only in those countries in which there is a Public Diplomacy Officer (U.S. Mission). Currently there is no USIA presence in Guinea Bissau, Cape Verde, Gambia, Burundi, Central African Republic, Equatorial Guinea, Gabon, Sao Tome and Principe, Djibouti, Lesotho, Somalia, Sudan, and Mauritania.

Civic Education and Community Life

(Requested by U.S. Missions in Ethiopia, Cote d'Ivoire, Kenya, Nigeria, Tanzania, Uganda, Zambia; proposals welcome throughout region)—Proposals should encourage the effective engagement of citizens in their country's political life. Preference will be given to projects that focus on organizations whose aim is to motivate citizens to exercise their rights and to meet their civic responsibilities, or through projects that assist key institutions of civil society (e.g., women's groups, grassroots/community organizations, youth-oriented organizations, professional associations, other NGOs) in contributing to democracy through volunteerism. Successful proposals will expose NGO leaders to democratic, team-centered approaches to organizational management appropriate to democratic, civil societies. Related themes might include building values of tolerance, pragmatism, cooperation and compromise; building skills and institutions for constructive non-violent change; addressing cultural and other obstacles to civic participation;

inculcating a commitment to rule of law; and teaching and encouraging citizens to participate fully in community and national development. Priority will be given to projects that encourage the development of networks or coalitions to address the advancement of civic society.

Community Dialogue and Inter-Ethnic Understanding: Seeking Common Ground

(Requested by U.S. Missions in Cote d'Ivoire, Benin, Tanzania)—We welcome proposals focusing on inter-ethnic compromise and conflict resolution training sessions for members of political parties, university student/teacher/trade unions, advocacy groups, civic organizations and other stakeholders. The most competitive proposals will build on earlier conflict resolution pilot programs undertaken in recent years and make an attempt to institutionalize such training in partner countries.

Democratic Governments

(Requested by U.S. Missions in Angola, Cote d'Ivoire, Tanzania)—Proposals should work to strengthen institutions of government whose work has a direct impact on the quality of a country's democracy and to increase their transparency, accountability, responsiveness, and effectiveness of operations. Especially welcome would be proposals that address anti-corruption methods. Projects might focus on local government or elements of executive branches, legislatures, or judicial systems.

Professionalism in Media and Strengthening Journalistic Independence

(Requested by U.S. Missions in Ethiopia, Angola, Benin, Niger, Senegal, Tanzania, Togo, Zambia; proposals welcome on a regional basis)—Proposals are sought to improve professionalism, independence, and good management in the media of Sub-Saharan Africa. African journalists would benefit greatly from partnership with U.S. institutions for a wide variety of journalism education, including reporting, writing and editing techniques, and media ethics. Proposals also are welcome for projects that focus on newspapers as a business. Successful proposals should focus on capacity building and networking among journalists and media professionals. Projects could link a U.S. organization of journalists to facilitate training and networking of African participants through visits to the U.S., and follow-up consultations by American journalists to host countries

to solidify linkages and assist in efforts to train media professionals and organize associations in the participating countries. Using the Internet as a tool might be a component of the proposal.

U.S.-Africa Partnership in the 21st Century: Economic Development and Private Sector Reform

(Requested by U.S. Missions in Cote d'Ivoire, Ethiopia, Benin, Botswana, Zambia, Togo, Tanzania)—Proposals in the area of economic development and private sector expansion should address either the creation of free trade areas or the empowerment of women entrepreneurs.

Free Trade Areas: Following the recent inaugural US-SADC Forum which focused on trade, USIA welcomes proposals which would encourage the creation of free trade areas through reduced tariff and non-tariff barriers. Such a project might be carried out with regional chambers of commerce and/or the Southern African Development Community (SADC) Secretariat. Proposals on free trade areas also would be of interest to posts in West and East Africa. Projects should foster an understanding of and commitment to policies and practices that support economic growth in a democratic framework through the private sector and international trade. Especially encouraged are proposals that focus on creating an "enabling environment" supportive of these goals. Related issues might include intellectual property rights, trade liberalization (e.g., tax and investment laws, along with other incentives), mechanisms of transparency and accountability, the role of business associations, and regional economic cooperation/integration.

Women as Economic Partners in Nation Building: In many countries in Africa, women are the backbone of the economy and yet they remain relatively unorganized and unconnected from one another. The organizations for business women that do exist currently have the capacity to effect little systemic change, but have the potential to have a profound impact on the economy. Priority will be given to proposals that offer African business women the opportunity to interact with U.S. women-owned businesses and interest groups, and to see first hand the work they do to enable business women to network and profit from relationships they create, both domestically and internationally. Successful proposals will expose business leaders to democratic, team-centered approaches to organizational management

appropriate to democratic, civil societies. Proposals may also encourage the development of self-help/micro-enterprise programs for women in disadvantaged communities. Contact for AF programs: Orna Tamches, 202/260-2754; E-mail [OTamches@USIA.GOV]

Near East, North Africa and South Asia (NEA)

Proposals that respond to the following suggested themes and organizational approaches will receive priority consideration in the awarding of grants for exchange activity in the Near East, North Africa, and South Asia. While not all countries suggested as participants for each project must be included in the exchange, projects bringing together representatives from three or more countries will be given preference. Proposals for exchange projects that address issues of crucial importance to the United States and to proposed partner countries but that do not respond specifically to the themes included below will also be considered.

The countries/entities comprising the NEA AREA are listed below. Currently there is no USIA presence in Afghanistan, Iran, Iraq, Libya, or Mauritania. Please consider countries listed as potential exchange partners in projects that address the theme.

Countries/Entities of the Near East, North Africa, and South Asia— Afghanistan; Algeria; Bahrain; Bangladesh; Egypt; India; Iran; Iraq; Israel; Jordan; Kuwait; Lebanon; Libya; Mauritania; Morocco; Nepal; Oman; Pakistan; the Palestinian Authority; Qatar; Saudi Arabia; Sri Lanka; Sudan; Syria; Tunisia; the United Arab Emirates (UAE); Yemen.

Citizen Participation and Advocacy (Building and Strengthening Non-governmental Organizations) Region-wide (any country or group of countries). Of specific interest for Bangladesh; Egypt; Pakistan; the Palestinian Authority; Syria; Saudi Arabia Social and political activism, encouraged, focussed, and channeled through non-governmental organizations, is a basic underpinning of democratic society. Strengthening NGO advocacy skills, management, grassroots support, recruitment and motivation of volunteers, fundraising and financial management, media relations, and networking for mutual support and reinforcement will reinforce democratic trends in the region. Among other emphases, this project should focus on computer training and on developing cooperation between educators and NGO's for community action. It is essential that organizations submitting proposals in this category recognize that

democratic activism is viewed with distrust by a number of governments in the area and that foreign involvement with local NGO's must be carefully thought out and approached with subtlety, as such involvement is viewed with suspicion. Close consultation with American Embassy/Consulate officers is critical.

Women's Activism and Political Leadership Region-wide (any country or group of countries). Of specific interest for Pakistan; Egypt; Israel. Throughout the region, women exercise disproportionately little political and social influence. While some women's groups have organized themselves and actively campaign for equal rights and a greater say in local issues, women need to learn how to mobilize support and raise money at the municipal, state, and national levels and how to win elections. Once elected, how can they most effectively represent the interests of their constituents? What can women activists do, in the political realm on issues of health care, education, domestic violence, and equal treatment under the law?

Professionalism in Media and the Strengthening of Journalistic Independence

Region-wide (any country or group of countries). Of specific interest for Jordan; Tunisia; Morocco The development of professionalism in media—gaining an appreciation for the importance of objective reporting; developing subject specialization; applying rational management techniques to newspaper publishing; etc.—remains an area in which serious efforts must be expended if the fourth estate is to fulfill its potential as a pillar of democratic society. Concomitantly, laws throughout the region constrain press freedoms, and journalists, editors, and publishers are forced to self-censor, lest governments punish the media for having conveyed the message. Projects are needed to address professionalism and to focus on training and advice to individuals and organizations devoted to the protection of press freedoms and to the defense of journalists and their right to practice their profession with integrity.

Judicial Reform and the Administration of Justice

Egypt; Morocco; Tunisia; Oman; Israel; Pakistan. A well trained, independent judiciary is fundamental to a democratic political and social system. The integrity of the judicial process and, by extrapolation, public confidence in the ability of the judicial process to deliver justice, is threatened in diverse

countries by political interference in legal proceedings and by public perception of unequal and unfair treatment before the bench of women, members of ethnic minority communities, and the poor. Even well qualified and well intentioned judges are obstructed in their efforts to deliver justice by case backlog, by procedural delay, and by insufficient authority to exercise judicial discretion in court management. It is important that judges of both lower and higher courts be introduced to the principles and practices of U.S. jurisprudence and that such fundamental procedures as alternative dispute resolution, early neutral evaluation, case management, the acceptance of guilty pleas, continuous trial proceedings, and arbitration/mediation be familiar to them.

Anti-Incitemment and Conflict Resolution

Egypt; Israel; Jordan; the Palestinian Authority. The Wye Memorandum, signed by the representatives of Israel and the Palestinian Authority in November 1998, mandates that the problems of incitement to hatred and violence, as well as the ethnic/religious stereotyping that has plagued the region, be addressed. If peace is to have meaning, citizens of the region must begin to address one another in new ways, overcoming the fears and resentments that have built up over generations. A project that includes Israelis, Palestinians, Jordanians, and Egyptians is solicited in an effort to expand the dialogue of coexistence that must accompany formal peace agreements. Two major components of any effort to focus on anti-incitement are the media and the educational establishment. One of the most important areas for the promotion of dialogue and mutual respect as well as the management of conflict is the media. Any effort in this area would need to involve expertise in conflict resolution as well as in professional journalism ethics and the addressing of problems of prejudice, discrimination, and outright incitement to violence. Incitement via curriculum and teacher prejudice is also a legitimate focus. A regional project to examine how contentious historical events are treated, how former enemies are portrayed, and how curricula can help advance tolerance and peace is a high priority.

Civic Education: Educating for Democracy

Region-wide (any country or group of countries). Of specific interest for Egypt; Israel; Pakistan. Enhanced citizen awareness of and increased

participation in those activities that support democratic goals are a high priority. Regional or single-country exchange projects should be designed to assist educators, community activists, and journalists teach about and demonstrate the efficacy of civic responsibility, citizens' initiative, and tolerance while avoiding direct political advocacy for the establishment of "liberal democracy." The importance of active citizenship and the potent role of democratically oriented institutions in social change should be highlighted, with emphasis on average citizens sharing a sense of responsibility for their national future, voluntarism, and promoting community initiatives for change. Participants might include teachers, administrators, curriculum planners, Ministry of Education policy-makers, community activists, journalists, etc.

Young Leaders and the Building of Civil Society

Region-wide (any country or group of countries). Of specific interest for Jordan and the Palestinian Authority.

Proposals should focus on the role young leaders should and can play in building civil society. Participants would be emergent leaders—recent graduates—who appear to be on a trajectory to prominent positions in their societies and/or work with youth organizations and non-governmental organizations. Issues to be addressed would include the meaning of civil society, the role of a responsible citizenry, the separation of powers, the role of non-governmental organizations, components of democracy, the centrality of human rights, issues of national identity, etc. The exchange should encompass both the theoretical and the experiential, with participants working with and learning from American young leaders active in the development and strengthening of civil society.

International Confidence Building

India and Pakistan

The stability of any international relationship complicated by weapons of mass destruction depends on the willingness and ability of states to understand the dynamic of mutual vulnerability, to recognize the potential for disaster if deterrence fails, and to assume the responsibilities of nuclear ownership. South Asia is becoming increasingly militarized, and regional disputes continue to escalate. Confidence building measures appropriate to the region must be devised through dialogue among South

Asians, and this might best be accomplished with a third-party facilitator.

Strategy sessions across borders, led by young, independent thinkers—political scientists and peace activists who are not political stakeholders—could be based on research papers commissioned for the purpose. Ideally these sessions would widen the discussion, build toward consensus, and sow the seeds for the group to develop into an independent institution of new thinkers with influence and credibility. An independent, American institution with South Asian specialists ready to help build a South Asian institution of new thinkers on strategic issues should be prepared to identify central issues and develop a framework for dialogue in the context of South Asia.

Economic Policy, Investment, and the Norms of International Commerce

Tunisia; Morocco; Algeria

The countries of North Africa would welcome proposals to strengthen ongoing efforts to establish a degree of regional economic integration, to stimulate serious thinking about transnational trade and investment, and to link North African business groups with American counterparts. Relevant issues to be incorporated into an exchange would be decentralization of commercial regulation, support for privatization, and competitiveness.

E/P contact for NEA programs: Tom Johnston, 202/619-5325; E-Mail [TJohnston@USIA.GOV]

The Office of Citizen Exchanges strongly encourages the coordination of activities with respected universities, professional associations, and major cultural institutions in the U.S. and abroad, but particularly in the U.S. Projects should be intellectual and cultural, not technical. Vocational training (an occupation other than one requiring a baccalaureate or higher academic degree; *i.e.*, clerical work, auto maintenance, etc., and other occupations requiring less than two years of higher education) and technical training (special and practical knowledge of a mechanical or a scientific subject which enhances mechanical, narrowly scientific, or semi-skilled capabilities) are ineligible for support. In addition, scholarship programs are ineligible for support.

The Office does not support proposals limited to conferences or seminars (*i.e.*, one to fourteen-day programs with plenary sessions, main speakers, panels, and a passive audience). It will support conferences only insofar as they are part of a larger project in duration and scope

that is receiving Bureau funding from this competition. Bureau-supported projects may include internships; study tours; short-term, non-technical training; and extended, intensive workshops taking place in the United States or overseas. The themes addressed in exchange programs must be of long-term importance rather than focused exclusively on current events or short-term issues. In every case, a substantial rationale must be presented as part of the proposal, one that clearly indicates the distinctive and important contribution of the overall project, including, where applicable, the expected yield of any associated conference. No funding is available exclusively to send U.S. citizens to conferences or conference-type seminars overseas; nor is funding available for bringing foreign nationals to conferences or to routine professional association meetings in the United States. Projects that duplicate what is routinely carried out by private sector and/or public sector operations will not be considered. The Office of Citizen Exchanges strongly recommends that applicants consult with host country U.S. Embassies *prior* to submitting proposals.

Selection of Participants

All grant proposals should clearly describe the type of persons who will participate in the program as well as the process by which participants will be selected. It is recommended that programs in support of U.S. internships include letters tentatively committing host institutions to support the internships. In the selection of foreign participants, the Bureau and U.S. Embassies abroad retain the right to nominate all participants and to accept or deny participants recommended by grantee institutions. However, grantee institutions are often asked by the Bureau to suggest names of potential participants. The grantee institution will also provide the names of American participants and brief (two pages) biographical data on each American participant to the Office of Citizen Exchanges for information purposes. Priority will be given to foreign participants who have not previously traveled to the United States.

Additional Guidance

The Office of Citizen Exchanges offers the following additional guidance to prospective applicants:

1. The Office of Citizen Exchanges encourages project proposals involving more than one country. Pertinent rationale which links countries in multi-country projects should be included in

the submission. Single-country projects that are clearly defined and possess the potential for creating and strengthening continuing linkages between foreign and U.S. institutions are also welcome.

2. Proposals for bilateral programs are subject to review and comment by the Embassy representative in the relevant country, and pre-selected participants will also be subject to Embassy review.

3. Bilateral programs should clearly identify the counterpart organization and provide evidence of the organization's participation.

4. The Office of Citizen Exchanges will consider proposals for activities that take place exclusively in other countries when U.S. Embassies are consulted in the design of the proposed program and in the choice of the most suitable venues for such programs.

5. Office of Citizen Exchanges grants are not given to support projects whose focus is limited to technical or vocational subjects, or for research projects, for publications funding, for student and/or teacher/faculty exchanges, for sports and/or sports related programs. Nor does this office provide scholarships or support for long-term (a semester or more) academic studies. Competitions sponsored by other Bureau offices are also announced in the **Federal Register**.

For projects that would begin after December 31, 2000, competition details will be announced in the **Federal Register** on or about June 1, 2000. Inquiries concerning technical requirements are welcome prior to submission of applications.

Funding

Although no set funding limit exists, proposals for less than \$135,000 will receive preference. Organizations with less than four years of successful experience in managing international exchange programs are limited to \$60,000. Applicants are invited to provide both an all-inclusive budget as well as separate sub-budgets for each program component, phase, location, or activity in order to facilitate Bureau decisions on funding. While an all-inclusive budget must be provided with each proposal, separate component budgets are optional. Competition for Bureau funding support is keen.

The selection of grantee institutions will depend on program substance, cross-cultural sensitivity, and ability to carry out the program successfully. Since Bureau grant assistance constitutes only a portion of total project funding, proposals should list and provide evidence of other anticipated sources of financial and in-kind support. Proposals with substantial

private sector support from foundations, corporations, other institutions, et al. will be deemed highly competitive. The Recipient must provide a minimum of 33 percent cost sharing of the total project cost.

The following project costs are eligible for consideration for funding:

1. International and domestic air fares; visas; transit costs; ground transportation costs.

2. Per Diem. For the U.S. program, organizations have the option of using a flat \$160/day for program participants or the published U.S. Federal per diem rates for individual American cities. For activities outside the U.S., the published Federal per diem rates must be used.

Note: U.S. escorting staff must use the published Federal per diem rates, not the flat rate. Per diem rates may be accessed at [www.usia.gov/agency/ebur-ref.html].

3. Interpreters: if needed, interpreters for the U.S. program are provided by the State Department's Language Services Division. Typically, a pair of simultaneous interpreters is provided for every four visitors who need interpretation. Bureau grants do not pay for foreign interpreters to accompany delegations from their home country. Grant proposal budgets should contain a flat \$160/day per diem for each Department of State interpreter, as well as home-program-home air transportation of \$400 per interpreter plus any U.S. travel expenses during the program. Salary expenses are covered centrally and should not be part of an applicant's proposed budget.

4. Book and cultural allowance: Participants are entitled to and escorts are reimbursed a one-time cultural allowance of \$150 per person, plus a participant book allowance of \$50. U.S. staff do not get these benefits.

5. Consultants. May be used to provide specialized expertise or to make presentations. Daily honoraria generally do not exceed \$250 per day. Subcontracting organizations may also be used, in which case the written agreement between the prospective grantee and subcontractor should be included in the proposal.

6. Room rental, which generally should not exceed \$250 per day.

7. Materials development. Proposals may contain costs to purchase, develop, and translate materials for participants.

8. One working meal per project. Per capita costs may not exceed \$5-8 for a lunch and \$14-20 for a dinner, excluding room rental. The number of invited guests may not exceed participants by more than a factor of two-to-one.

9. A return travel allowance of \$70 for each participant which is to be used for

incidental expenditures incurred during international travel.

10. All Bureau-funded delegates will be covered under the terms of a Bureau-sponsored health insurance policy. The premium is paid by the Bureau directly to the insurance company.

11. Other costs necessary for the effective administration of the program, including salaries for grant organization employees, benefits, and other direct and indirect costs per detailed instructions in the application package.

Note: The 20 percent limitation of "administrative costs" included in previous announcements does not apply to this RFP. Please refer to the Application Package for complete budget guidelines.

Review Process

The Bureau will acknowledge receipt of all proposals and will review them for technical eligibility. Proposals will be deemed ineligible if they do not fully adhere to the guidelines established herein and in the Application Packet. Eligible proposals will be forwarded to panels of Bureau officers for advisory review. All eligible proposals will also be reviewed by the program office, as well as the U.S. Embassy officers for advisory review, where appropriate. Proposals may also be reviewed by the Office of the Legal Advisor or by other offices in the Department of State. Funding decisions will be made at the discretion of the Assistant Secretary of State for Educational and Cultural Affairs. Final technical authority for assistance awards (grants or cooperative agreements) will reside with a contracts officer with competency for Bureau programs.

Review Criteria

The Bureau will consider proposals based on their conformance with the objectives and considerations already stated in this RFP, as well as the following criteria:

1. *Quality of Program Idea:* Proposals should exhibit originality, substance,

precision, and relevance to the Agency mission.

2. *Program Planning/Ability to Achieve Program Objectives:* Detailed agenda and relevant work plan should demonstrate substantive undertakings and logistical capacity. Agenda and plan should adhere to the program overview and guidelines described above. Objectives should be reasonable, feasible, and flexible. Proposals should clearly demonstrate how the institution will meet the program objectives and plan.

3. *Multiplier Effect/Impact:* Proposed programs should strengthen long-term mutual understanding, including maximum sharing of information and establishment of long-term institutional and individual linkages.

4. *Support of Diversity:* Proposals should demonstrate the substantive support of the Bureau's policy on diversity. Achievable and relevant features should be cited in both program administration (selection of participants, program venue, and program evaluation) and program content (orientation and wrap-up sessions, program meetings, resource materials, and follow-up activities).

5. *Institutional Capacity/Reputation/Ability:* Proposed personnel and institutional resources should be adequate and appropriate to achieve the program's or project's goal. Proposals should demonstrate an institutional record of successful exchange programs, including responsible fiscal management and full compliance with all reporting requirements for past Bureau grants as determined by USIA's Office of Contracts. The Bureau will consider the past performance of prior recipients and the demonstrated potential of new applicants.

6. *Follow-up Activities:* Proposals should provide a plan for continued follow-on activity (without Bureau support) which ensures that Bureau-supported programs are not isolated events.

7. *Evaluation Plan:* Proposals should provide a plan for a thorough and objective evaluation of the program/project by the grantee institution.

8. *Cost-Effectiveness/Cost Sharing:* The overhead and administration components of the proposals, including salaries and honoraria, should be kept as low as possible. All other items should be necessary and appropriate. Proposals should maximize cost-sharing through other private sector support as well as institutional direct funding contributions.

Notice

The terms and conditions published in this RFP are binding and may not be modified by any USIA representative. Explanatory information provided by USIA that contradicts published language will not be binding. Issuance of the RFP does not constitute an award commitment on the part of the Government. The Bureau reserves the right to reduce, revise, or increase proposal budgets in accordance with the need of the program and the availability of funds. Organizations will be expected to cooperate with the Bureau in evaluating their programs under the principles of the Government Performance and Results Act of 1993, which requires federal agencies to measure and report on the results of their programs and activities.

Notification

Final awards cannot be made until funds have been fully appropriated by the Congress, allocated, and committed through internal Bureau procedures. Awarded grants will be subject to periodic reporting and evaluation requirements.

Dated: July 21, 1999.

William B. Bader,

Associate Director, Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs.

[FR Doc. 99-19460 Filed 7-28-99; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 8230-01-M