

**U.S. DEPARTMENT OF STATE  
U.S. EMBASSY THE HAGUE PUBLIC AFFAIRS SECTION  
Notice of Funding Opportunity**

**Funding Opportunity Title: Funding for New Counter-Disinformation Game**  
**Funding Opportunity Number: S-NL800-20-GR-3011**  
**Deadline for Applications: August 19, 2021 6PM Local Time**  
**CFDA Number: 19.040 – Public Diplomacy Programs**  
**Total Amount Available: \$275,000**

**A. PROGRAM DESCRIPTION**

The U.S. Embassy The Hague Public Affairs Section announces an open competition for organizations to submit applications to 1) produce an English- and Dutch-language pilot version of a counter-disinformation game (requirements below), 2) produce a French version of the game, 3) produce one additional translation into a European, Asian, and/or African language, to be determined at a later date 4) host the game on the company's own servers, and 5) develop and implement data collection and analysis methodologies to demonstrate the project's achievement of expected results, and 6) promote games to target audiences. Please carefully follow all instructions below.

Digital games have proven to be an effective tool in building cognitive resistance to disinformation across diverse environments and cultural contexts. The U.S. Embassy in The Hague is accepting proposals for the development of a digital game that incorporates active inoculation theory<sup>1</sup> along with other digital media literacy education methods in a fun, interactive experience targeting global internet users ages 15 and up. Primary gameplay should simulate the experience of engaging in common disinformation and propaganda activities, while educating the user on digital literacy applicable in the real world.

Successful proposals will incorporate active inoculation theory and address current disinformation and propaganda tactics. The delivered product should be modular, scalable, and expandable so that later iterations could address additional problem sets, such as violent extremism and health misinformation. The game will be piloted simultaneously with players in the United Kingdom and the Netherlands, and lessons learned from these pilots will inform the final version of the game intended ultimately for global audiences. The next translation will be produced for French speakers in Europe and Africa, followed by one more translation into a European, Asian, or African language to be determined later. Ideally, the proposed project would use in-game surveys or other in-game methods to measure effectiveness. The total amount of funds available for a successful proposal would be \$275,000.

**Priority Region:** Global

**Program Goal:** Degrade malign actors' ability to diffuse disinformation among target audiences.

## **Expected Results**

Objective 1: Target audiences have increased their ability to discern disinformation, self-confidence in these abilities, and motivation to share factual narratives.

Outcome 1.1: Members of the target audiences played the game to completion.

Output 1.1.1: Produced counter-disinformation game consistent with funding requirements.

Output 1.1.2: Launched pilot versions and gathered lessons learned

Output 1.1.3: Updated game based on pilot lessons learned

Output 1.1.4: Translated and launched game for specific target audiences.

Output 1.1.5: Promoted game through key channels for each target audience

Outcome 1.2: Players of the game participated in pre and post survey to gauge the effectiveness of the game.

Output 1.2.1: Developed and implemented methodology to collect and analyze data on the effectiveness of the game.

## **Main Activities**

To contribute to the stated goals and achieve expected results, the awardee will carry out the following activities:

- Produce an English- and Dutch-language pilot version of a counter-disinformation game and gather lessons learned
- Produce a translation for a French-speaking audience
- Produce a translation of the game into one more European, Asian, or African language (to be determined in consultation with Grant Administrators during development)
- Host the game on the company's own servers
- Develop and implement data collection and analysis methodologies to demonstrate the project's achievement of expected results
- Promote games including translated versions to target audiences, may use up to \$10,000 of award funds for paid promotion (paid promotion is optional)

## **Performance Indicators**

The project should monitor and report on performance indicators that are specific, measurable, achievable, reasonable, and time-bound. Prior to implementation, the implementer shall produce a monitoring and evaluation plan documenting indicators for each expected result, key definitions, performance baselines (where possible), performance targets, justification of performance targets, sources of data, methods of data collection, methods of analysis, frequency of measurement, and units of measurement. In addition to disaggregation by target audiences, all indicators should also be disaggregated by sex and age where feasible. Preferably, the project should establish an automated means of collecting and analyzing performance metrics, with a dashboard displaying these metrics for easy sharing or review by Grant Administrators.

Potential indicators may include:

Objective 1

- Average change in surveyed individuals' abilities to discern disinformation
- Average change in surveyed individuals' self-confidence in discerning disinformation

- Average change in the proportion of surveyed individuals reporting that they are less likely to share disinformation and more likely to share factual narratives
- Outcome 1.1
- # of individuals that completed the game
  - # of individuals that started but did not complete the game
- Output 1.1.1
- # of counter-disinformation games produced and launched following funding requirements
- Output 1.1.2
- # of pilot versions launched
- Output 1.1.3
- # of updated games produced based on pilot lessons learned
- Output 1.1.4
- # of translated versions produced and launched
- Output 1.1.5
- # of promotion activities conducted, by type of promotion (ex. social media ads)
  - # of individuals reached by promotion activities
  - # of articles covering project-funded game
  - # of key stakeholders promoting project-funded game
- Outcome 1.2
- # of individuals that completed the pre and post surveys
  - # of individuals that responded to pre and post surveys
- Output 1.2.1
- # of survey methodologies developed to measure the effectiveness of the game in Objective 1
  - # of times that the developed data collection method was implemented

## **B. FEDERAL AWARD INFORMATION**

Length of performance period: 12 months - 6 months to develop the game, starting no later than October 1 2021 and extending no later than March 31 2022. Projected 2 months for prototyping, 2 months to beta, 2 months for finalization. Grant administrators will work with grant awardee to agree on the basic game design and mechanics within the first month and would oversee development milestones and provide feedback as appropriate. Then, up to 6 months for evaluation of the game's impact, extending no later than September 30 2022, and promotion of the game.

Number of awards anticipated: 1 award

Total available funding: \$275,000

Type of Funding: FY20/21 *Smith Mundt Public Diplomacy Funds*

Anticipated program start date: no later than October 1, 2021

**This notice is subject to availability of funding.**

**Funding Instrument Type:** Grant

**Program Performance Period:** Proposed programs should be completed in 1 year or less.

The Department of State will entertain applications for continuation grants funded under these awards beyond the initial budget period on a non-competitive basis subject to availability of funds, satisfactory progress of the program, and a determination that continued funding would be in the best interest of the U.S. Department of State.

### **C. ELIGIBILITY INFORMATION**

#### 1. Eligible Applicants

The following organizations are eligible to apply:

- *Both US and foreign organizations*
- *Not-for-profit organizations, including think tanks and civil society/non-governmental organizations*
- *Public and private educational institutions*
- *For Profit Commercial Entities*
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#### 2. Cost Sharing or Matching

N/A

#### 3. Other Eligibility Requirements

In order to be eligible to receive an award, all organizations must have a unique entity identifier (Data Universal Numbering System/DUNS number from Dun & Bradstreet), as well as a valid registration on [www.SAM.gov](http://www.SAM.gov). Please see Section D for information on how to obtain these registrations.

- *Applicants are only allowed to submit one proposal per organization.*

### **D. APPLICATION AND SUBMISSION INFORMATION**

Please follow all instructions below carefully. Proposals that do not meet the requirements of this announcement or fail to comply with the stated requirements will be ineligible.

- All Organizations must register with SAMs and obtain a DUNS number: <https://www.sam.gov/portal/SAM/> (see required registrations below)

#### **Content of Application**

Please ensure:

- The proposal clearly addresses the goals and objectives of this funding opportunity
- All documents are in English
  - All budgets are in U.S. dollars
  - All pages are numbered

- All Microsoft Word documents are single-spaced, 12 point Times New Roman font, with a minimum of 1-inch margins.

The following documents are **required**:

### 1. Mandatory application forms

- SF-424 (Application for Federal Assistance – organizations)
  - [http://www.fws.gov/endangered/grants/pdf/SF424\\_2\\_1-V2.1.pdf](http://www.fws.gov/endangered/grants/pdf/SF424_2_1-V2.1.pdf)
  - Instructions (PDF 32 KB): • Instructions (PDF 15 KB):
- Monitoring and Evaluation Plan
- Detailed Budget
- Include IBAN BIC code

**2. Summary Page:** Cover sheet stating the applicant name and organization, proposal date, program title, program period proposed start and end date, and brief purpose of the program.

**3. Proposal:** The proposal should contain sufficient information that anyone not familiar with it would understand exactly what the applicant wants to do. You may use your own proposal format, but it must include all the items below.

- **Proposal Summary:** Short narrative that outlines the proposed program, including program objectives and anticipated impact.
- **Introduction to the Organization or Individual applying:** A description of past and present operations, showing ability to carry out the program, including information on all previous grants from the U.S. Embassy and/or U.S. government agencies.
- **Problem Statement:** Clear, concise and well-supported statement of the problem to be addressed and why the proposed program is needed
- **Program Goals and Objectives:** The “goals” describe what the program is intended to achieve. The “objectives” refer to the intermediate accomplishments on the way to the goals. These should be achievable and measurable.
- **Program Activities:** Describe the program activities and how they will help achieve the objectives.
- **Program Methods and Design:** A description of how the program is expected to work to solve the stated problem and achieve the goal. Include a logic model as appropriate.
- **Proposed Program Schedule and Timeline:** The proposed timeline for the program activities. Include the dates, times, and locations of planned activities and events.
- **Key Personnel:** Names, titles, roles and experience/qualifications of key personnel involved in the program. What proportion of their time will be used in support of this program?
- **Program Partners:** List the names and type of involvement of key partner organizations and sub-awardees.
- **Program Monitoring and Evaluation Plan:** This is an important part of successful grants. Throughout the time-frame of the grant, how will the activities be

monitored to ensure they are happening in a timely manner, and how will the program be evaluated to make sure it is meeting the goals of the grant?

- **Future Funding or Sustainability** Applicant's plan for continuing the program beyond the grant period, or the availability of other resources, if applicable.

### **Required Registrations:**

Any applicant listed on the Excluded Parties List System (EPLS) in the System for Award Management (SAM) is not eligible to apply for an assistance award in accordance with the OMB guidelines at 2 CFR 180 that implement Executive Orders 12549 (3 CFR, 1986 Comp., p. 189) and 12689 (3 CFR, 1989 Comp., p. 235), "Debarment and Suspension." Additionally, no entity listed on the EPLS can participate in any activities under an award. All applicants are strongly encouraged to review the EPLS in SAM to ensure that no ineligible entity is included.

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

- Unique entity identifier from Dun & Bradstreet (DUNS number)
- NCAGE/CAGE code
- [www.SAM.gov](http://www.SAM.gov) registration

Step 1: Apply for a DUNS number and an NCAGE number (these can be completed simultaneously)

DUNS application: Organizations must have a Data Universal Numbering System (DUNS) number from Dun & Bradstreet. If your organization does not have one already, you may obtain one by calling 1-866-705-5711 or visiting <http://fedgov.dnb.com/webform>

NCAGE application: Application page

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

Instructions for the NCAGE application process:

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

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

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

Email [NCAGE@dliis.dla.mil](mailto:NCAGE@dliis.dla.mil) for any problems in getting an NCAGE code.

Step 2: After receiving the NCAGE Code, proceed to register in SAM.gov by logging onto: <https://www.sam.gov>. SAM registration must be renewed annually.

#### 1. Submission Dates and Times

Applications are due no later than August 19, 2020 (reviewed on a rolling basis)

#### 2. Funding Restrictions

N/A

### 3. Other Submission Requirements

N/A

Proposals should be submitted via email to the U.S. Embassy at the following email address: [grants@state.gov](mailto:grants@state.gov) POC – Gregory Mabry, [mabryga@state.gov](mailto:mabryga@state.gov) Applications are accepted in English only, and final grant agreements will be concluded in English.

## E. APPLICATION REVIEW INFORMATION

### 1. Criteria

Each application will be evaluated and rated on the basis of the evaluation criteria outlined below.

**Quality and Feasibility of the Program Idea – 25 points:** The program idea is well developed, with detail about how program activities will be carried out. The proposal includes a reasonable implementation timeline.

**Organizational Capacity and Record on Previous Grants – 25 points:** The organization has expertise in its stated field and has the internal controls in place to manage federal funds. This includes a financial management system and a bank account.

**Program Planning/Ability to Achieve Objectives – 15 points:** Goals and objectives are clearly stated and program approach is likely to provide maximum impact in achieving the proposed results.

**Budget – 10 points:** The budget justification is detailed. Costs are reasonable in relation to the proposed activities and anticipated results. The budget is realistic, accounting for all necessary expenses to achieve proposed activities.

**Monitoring and evaluation plan – 15 points:** Applicant demonstrates it is able to measure program success against key indicators and provides milestones to indicate progress toward goals outlined in the proposal. The program includes output and outcome indicators, and shows how and when those will be measured.

**Sustainability – 10 points:** Program activities will continue to have positive impact after the end of the program.

### 2. Review and Selection Process

A Grants Review Committee will evaluate all eligible applications.

## F. FEDERAL AWARD ADMINISTRATION INFORMATION

### 1. Federal Award Notices

The grant award or cooperative agreement will be written, signed, awarded, and administered by the Grants Officer. The assistance award agreement is the authorizing document and it will be provided to the recipient for review and signature by email. The recipient may only start incurring program expenses beginning on the start date shown on the grant award document signed by the Grants Officer.

If a proposal is selected for funding, the Department of State has no obligation to provide any additional future funding. Renewal of an award to increase funding or extend the period of performance is at the discretion of the Department of State.

Issuance of this NOFO does not constitute an award commitment on the part of the U.S. government, nor does it commit the U.S. government to pay for costs incurred in the preparation and submission of proposals. Further, the U.S. government reserves the right to reject any or all proposals received.

**Payment Method:** Electronic Transfer

## 2. Administrative and National Policy Requirements

**Terms and Conditions:** Before submitting an application, applicants should review all the terms and conditions and required certifications which will apply to this award, to ensure that they will be able to comply. These include:

2 CFR 200, 2 CFR 600, and the Department of State Standard Terms and Conditions which are available at: <https://www.state.gov/about-us-office-of-the-procurement-executive/>.

Note the U.S Flag branding and marking requirements in the Standard Terms and Conditions.

## 3. Reporting

**Reporting Requirements:** Recipients will be required to submit financial reports and program reports. The award document will specify how often these reports must be submitted.

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

## G. FEDERAL AWARDING AGENCY CONTACTS

Proposals should be submitted via email to the U.S. Embassy at the following email address: contact: [grants@state.gov](mailto:grants@state.gov) Applications are accepted in English only, and final grant agreements will be concluded in English.

## H. OTHER INFORMATION

### Guidelines for Budget Justification

**Personnel and Fringe Benefits:** Describe the wages, salaries, and benefits of temporary or permanent staff who will be working directly for the applicant on the program, and the percentage of their time that will be spent on the program.



**Travel:** Estimate the costs of travel and per diem for this program, for program staff, consultants or speakers, and participants/beneficiaries. If the program involves international travel, include a brief statement of justification for that travel.

**Equipment:** Describe any machinery, furniture, or other personal property that is required for the program, which has a useful life of more than one year (or a life longer than the duration of the program), and costs at least \$5,000 per unit.

**Supplies:** List and describe all the items and materials, including any computer devices, that are needed for the program. If an item costs more than \$5,000 per unit, then put it in the budget under Equipment.

**Contractual:** Describe goods and services that the applicant plans to acquire through a contract with a vendor. Also describe any sub-awards to non-profit partners that will help carry out the program activities.

**Other Direct Costs:** Describe other costs directly associated with the program, which do not fit in the other categories. For example, shipping costs for materials and equipment or applicable taxes. All “Other” or “Miscellaneous” expenses must be itemized and explained.

**Indirect Costs:** These are costs that cannot be linked directly to the program activities, such as overhead costs needed to help keep the organization operating. If your organization has a Negotiated Indirect Cost Rate (NICRA) and includes NICRA charges in the budget, attach a copy of your latest NICRA. Organizations that have never had a NICRA may request indirect costs of 10% of the modified total direct costs as defined in 2 CFR 200.68.

“Cost Sharing” refers to contributions from the organization or other entities other than the U.S. Embassy. It also includes in-kind contributions such as volunteers’ time and donated venues.

**Alcoholic Beverages:** Please note that award funds cannot be used for alcoholic beverages.