

Northeast Connection (Northeast Connection)

Subject: APS-Northeast Connection-1108
Title of Opportunity: Building Community Resilience to Violent Extremism and Conflict in Northeast Nigeria
Issue Date: June 6, 2022
Deadline for Submitting Concepts: December 31, 2022

The Northeast Connection (Northeast Connection) is seeking concepts from eligible applicants to fund a program entitled *Building Community Resilience to Violent Extremism and Conflict in Northeast Nigeria*. See Section C of Attachment 1 for eligibility requirements. To be eligible for award, the applicant must meet these requirements and provide all information as required in this APS. An award/Awards will be made to the eligible and responsible applicant(s) whose concept(s) and subsequent full application(s) best meet(s) the program objectives and selection criteria contained in Sections A and E of Attachment 1 respectively.

An eligible organization interested in submitting a concept under this opportunity is encouraged to read this APS thoroughly to understand the type of program sought, concept submission requirements, and evaluation process. It is the responsibility of the applicant to ensure that it has received the APS from the internet in its entirety. Northeast Connection bears no responsibility for data errors resulting from the transmission or conversion process.

A concept must be submitted directly to Northeast Connection using one of the following methods: a) electronically via the online grant's management or b) electronically via email at grants@connection-nigeria.com, to the attention of "Grants Department." Applications must be received no later than the APS closing date stated above.

Any questions concerning this APS must be submitted in writing using one of the above communication methods. Responses to questions received will be provided to all potential applicants periodically through amendments to this notice.

Issuance of this APS does not constitute an award commitment on the part of Northeast Connection, nor does it commit Northeast Connection to pay for any costs incurred by a potential applicant while preparing/submitting questions or a concept. All preparation/submission costs are at the applicant's expense.

Thank you for your interest in this opportunity.

Sincerely,

[Electronic Signature of Authorized Project Signatory]

Albert Pam
Chief of Party
Northeast Connection

Attachments

Attachment 1: Annual Program Statement

Attachment 2: Concept Application Template

Attachment 3: Provisions

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Attachment 1: Annual Program Statement (APS)

A. PROGRAM DESCRIPTION

1. Purpose

Northeast Connection program, implemented by Creative Associates International on behalf of the U.S Agency for International Development, announces its desire to support applications from Nigerian Civil Society Organizations, Community-based Organizations, Faith-based Organizations, and Women/Youth Associations to implement local level initiatives that promote peacebuilding and community resilience in communities that are not yet under the influence of Violent Extremism. By targeting localities that are vulnerable to violent extremist infiltration and conflict, but not yet under their influence, the Northeast Connection will strengthen community resilience by improving their ability to respond to emerging threats. This program aims to mitigate the grievances that may erode social cohesion within and across communities in Adamawa, Borno and Yobe states, to ultimately build a stronger foundation against violent extremist threats and other conflicts.

Northeast Connection program will consider activities implemented in the following LGAs:

1. Borno State: Kwaya Kusar, Hawul, Shani
2. Yobe State: Fune, Damaturu and Potiskum
3. Adamawa State: Guyuk, Numan, Lamurde.

Applicants should explain in detail where they intend to intervene, and how these states and local government areas (LGAs) are at great risk of violence and conflict. Applicants should provide information on their current presence and experience working in the areas they want to target for intervention.

Applications are accepted on a rolling basis until December 31, 2022. Organizations that are either based or have operations in Northeast Nigeria will be prioritized.

2. Background

The purpose of Northeast Connection project is to strengthen the resilience of communities vulnerable to violent extremist infiltration and conflict. By targeting communities in Adamawa, Yobe, and Borno states not yet under the control of violent extremist organizations (VEOs), this project will seize the opportunity to mitigate the grievances that make communities vulnerable to violent extremism, while building social cohesion within and across communities in northeast Nigeria. In addition to helping northeastern Nigerians create a stronger foundation against the violent extremist and conflict threats, the activity is designed to develop local capacity to respond to emerging threats. Northeast Connection includes a rigorous analytical component to develop a better, shared understanding of local and sub-regional VEO and conflict risks, dynamics, and windows of opportunity. Leading the coordination of implementing partners on such CVE initiatives will also be a key feature of the project.

3. Objectives

Objective 1: Provide support to address the underlying grievances that make communities vulnerable to VEO influence and conflict risks, creating linkages across and within communities, civil society, and government entities to promote social cohesion and empower respond to emergent VEO threats and conflict risks.

Objective 2: Through various activities, enhance partnerships with government, local civil society organizations, including youth and women-led organizations.

4. Illustrative Activities

- Target male and female youth in inter-community exchanges, leadership, project oversight, and advocacy efforts to address their sense of marginalization and promote positive roles for them in the community.

- Empower women with skills and leadership roles for supporting survivors of violence, conflict mitigation and management, identifying potential VEO recruits, and engaging in civic activities.
- Conduct intra- and inter-community dialogues with religious and ethnic groups, host communities/internally displaced peoples (IDPs) (if present) to create channels for ongoing communication, promote collective action around common needs and develop trust.
- Support formal and informal conflict resolution mechanisms across communities and identify key state and national government figures to link into cohesion efforts.
- Foster creativity and talent by engaging young artists, theater groups and other performers to produce short videos, conduct social media campaigns and public engagement on the realities they experience in their communities.
- Protect, preserve, and promote the cultural heritage of minority groups that are the victims of or under threat of violence and violent extremism.
- Modelling coordination and collaboration efforts among USAID implementing partners in program locations in the Northeast.
- Promoting community CVE initiatives and 2023 Election preparedness in focal communities of interest in the Northeast

B. AWARD INFORMATION

1. Estimate of Funds Available and Number of Awards Contemplated

Subject to the availability of funds, Northeast Connection plans to issue up to 15 awards under this APS. The total estimated amount of funding available is 45,000,000 NGN. The total value of each award is estimated to range from 3,000,000 to 6,000,000 NGN. As the amount of an award is subject to negotiation, a final negotiated award amount may or may not fall within this range. Furthermore, Northeast Connection is not obligated to issue awards up to the amount of funds available.

Northeast Connection reserves the right to fund any or none of the applications submitted against approved concepts.

2. Period of Performance

The period of performance of an award typically averages 4 - 6 month(s); however, the actual duration is based on the program requirements and is subject to negotiation. The start date of any award resulting from this APS will be upon signature of the award.

3. Award Mechanisms

Northeast Connection's final determination on award mechanism will be based on its assessment of an applicant's capacity and risk prior to award. If this assessment identifies weaknesses or deficiencies that call into question the applicant's ability to manage an award, Northeast Connection may elect to remove the applicant from consideration under this funding opportunity or select a mechanism more appropriate for the applicant's current capacity.

The most common award mechanisms issued by Northeast Connection are fixed amount awards (FAAs) and in-kind awards. Under FAAs, payments are performance based and issued to an awardee after its successful completion of pre-defined programmatic milestones. Under in-kind awards, Northeast Connection: a) makes payments on behalf of the awardee and/or b) procures/delivers goods and services on behalf of the awardee.

Northeast Connection also may elect to issue a cost-reimbursable award to an awardee in instances when: a) an applicant demonstrates sufficient financial management capacity to implement this mechanism and b) the mechanism is determined to be appropriate for implementing the program description.

C. ELIGIBILITY INFORMATION

1. Eligible Applicants

To be eligible for award under this opportunity, an applicant must demonstrate that it falls into one of the grantee categories below:

Non-U.S. NGOs

Additionally, an applicant must be officially registered and working in compliance with all applicable civil and fiscal regulations, including but not limited to pertinent local laws and status. In lieu of official registration, an applicant may still be eligible for award if it shows proof of effort to secure registration, exemption from registration, or cause for why registration is not optional or practicable.

2. Cost Sharing or Matching

Cost sharing is not required under this funding opportunity.

3. Limit on Number of Concept Submissions

An eligible organization may submit only one concept. Please note that issuance of this APS does not in any way obligate Northeast Connection to pay for costs incurred by a prospective applicant to prepare and submit a concept or subsequent application.

D. APPLICATION & SUBMISSION INFORMATION

1. Submission of Initial Concept

As a first step, interested applicants are requested to submit an activity concept using the template provided. Each concept will be evaluated in accordance with Section E below. An applicant whose concept is accepted will be required to submit a full application for funding.

2. Submission of Full Application in Response to RFA

The full application must be submitted in two separate parts: a) Technical Application and b) Cost Application. To prepare both parts, an applicant must use the templates provided by Northeast Connection, which provide instructions on the required content and format. An applicant not adhering to these instructions risks being considered nonresponsive to the requirements of the APS and eliminated from further consideration.

All information must be submitted in English. If an application is in any other language, it will be considered nonresponsive and eliminated from further consideration.

3. Submission Guidance and Assistance

After an applicant's concept is accepted, Northeast Connection may provide guidance to the applicant while it prepares a full application. When such guidance is offered, Northeast Connection's role is limited to facilitating the application process, ensuring that proposed activities contribute to the program objectives stated in Section A, and co-designing activities with the applicant. Actual preparation of the technical and cost applications is the strict responsibility of the applicant.

4. Method for Submission

Northeast Connection prefers to receive concepts electronically via the online grants management portal, which can be accessed at the following link: <https://smart.fluxx.io>. If an applicant has not previously registered in the portal, it must complete an initial registration form, which can be found at the following link:

<https://smart.fluxx.io/apply/connection>

Upon review and validation of the form by Northeast Connection, the applicant will receive an email with its user name and password.

Northeast Connection recognizes that limited internet connectivity and/or access to information and communications technology may prevent an applicant from registering/submitting concepts through the grants

portal. In such scenarios, the applicant may submit a concept via email to grants@connection-nigeria.com to the attention of the “Grants Department.” Regardless of the submission method chosen, an applicant should retain for its records one (1) copy of its concept and all enclosures that accompany it.

Should an applicant experience any difficulties in submitting a concept or a full application, it should contact the Grants Department via email at grants@connection-nigeria.com.

5. Registration Requirements for U.S. Government Funding

To be eligible for award under this solicitation, a non-U.S. NGO applicant may be required to obtain a valid Duns & Bradstreet number (DUNS). Information regarding DUNS registration can be found at <http://www.dnb.com/get-a-duns-number.html>. The program will notify non-U.S. NGO applicants of DUNS requirements where applicable.

If DUNS is required, Northeast Connection will not issue an award to an applicant until it has complied with this requirement. As the registration process may take several weeks to complete, applicants are encouraged to register early. Please note that completion of an early registration does not constitute any commitment on the part of Northeast Connection to make an award.

6. Submission Deadline

Applicants must submit their concepts prior to the closing date listed on the cover page. Applications that are submitted late are at risk of not being considered for review. Late submissions are marked as “late”. Northeast Connection reserves the right to accept and include late submissions in the review and award process only when Northeast Connection considers it to be in its best interest.

7. Funding Restrictions

An applicant that receives an award under this APS is responsible for ensuring that it only incurs post-award costs that were approved and determined to be allowable, allocable, and reasonable by Northeast Connection during pre-award negotiations. Furthermore, Northeast Connection will not reimburse a successful applicant for any costs it incurs prior to the date it signs a grant agreement with Northeast Connection.

8. Questions & Answers

Any questions concerning this APS must be submitted in writing using one of the communication methods described in the cover letter of this APS and Section D.4 above. All questions must be received no later than the Deadline for Questions/Clarifications stated in the cover letter. Responses to questions received prior to this deadline will be furnished to all potential applicants through periodic amendments to the APS.

Any information related to this APS that is provided to a prospective applicant will be furnished to all other prospective applicants as an amendment to the APS on condition that: a) it is required to submit a concept and/or b) its exclusion would be prejudicial to any other prospective applicant.

E. CONCEPT REVIEW INFORMATION

1. Evaluation Process

An applicant’s concept/full application will be reviewed by Northeast Connection’s program staff to ensure that the activities proposed contribute to the program objectives in Section A above. During these reviews, the applicant may be requested to submit a revised concept/full application and/or respond to clarifying questions. However, Northeast Connection reserves the right to accept a concept/full application without requesting clarifications or additional detail in a submitted concept/full application.

Cost sharing is not required under this funding opportunity.

The Chief of Party or authorized delegate makes the final decision on all awards made under this APS.

2. Conflict of Interest

Throughout the evaluation process, Northeast Connection will take every step to ensure that Northeast Connection staff do not have any conflicts of interest or the appearance of such with any organization/individual submitting a concept/application in response to this APS. An individual shall be considered to have the appearance of a conflict of interest if that individual or that individual's spouse, partner, child, close friend, or relative works for, is negotiating to work for, and/or has a financial interest (including being an unpaid member of a Board of Directors) in any organization that has submitted a concept/application for review by Northeast Connection. Northeast Connection staff shall neither solicit nor accept gratuities, favors, or anything of monetary value from any applicant.

F. AWARD ADMINISTRATION INFORMATION

1. Award Notices

For an applicant progressing beyond the concept stage, a Notice of Intent to Award will be provided to the point of contact listed in the full application submitted by the apparently successful applicant. **Please note that such notification does not constitute or guarantee an award.** An apparently successful applicant must first demonstrate that it possesses or has the ability to obtain the necessary management competence to practice mutually agreed upon methods of accountability for funds and other assets provided. To this end, the applicant may be required to submit additional information about its organization (e.g., Articles of Incorporation or other documentation substantiating the legal character of the applicant or key individuals within its organization) for vetting purposes. Final issuance of an award will be contingent upon the timely receipt of the information requested and the successful completion of the Program's vetting process and pre-award capacity and risk assessment.

Northeast Connection will complete the pre-award capacity and risk assessment while the applicant's full application is being reviewed. The results will be used by Northeast Connection to make a responsibility determination and, if a decision is made to proceed with award, select the appropriate award mechanism.

2. Reporting

Reporting requirements (including a reporting schedule) will be provided in the award document for any award resulting from this APS. The specific reports required will depend on the award type and project duration; however, examples may include the following:

- Monthly Report(s) with updates on progress made during the reporting period, photos of program activities, challenges encountered during implementation, activities planned for the next reporting period, etc.
- Final Program Report including lessons learned, success stories, any impacts achieved vis-à-vis the funded project's goal and objectives, etc.
- Financial Reports including planned obligations, actual expenditures, funds remaining, etc. as well as a detailed Final Financial Report.
- Reporting on program income (if required).

Please note that issuance of final payment will be contingent upon Northeast Connection's receipt and acceptance of the Final Financial Report and/or Final Program Report. For Fixed Amount Awards (FAAs), final payment is also contingent on the completion of the final milestone and acceptance of its deliverables/means of verification.

<p>Northeast Connection reserves the right to fund any or none of the applications submitted.</p>
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Attachment 2: Concept Application Template

To submit your concept, please complete the Concept Request form that will appear when you log in to the program's SMART grants portal. If you are unable to use this online portal to submit your application, please use the Concept Application template included as a separate attachment to this APS.

Attachment 3: Provisions

Refer to ADS 303.3.24, Simplified Grants, paragraphs “a” through “h”
<https://www.usaid.gov/sites/default/files/documents/303.pdf>

Standard Provisions for Non-U.S. Nongovernmental Organizations
<https://www.usaid.gov/sites/default/files/documents/303mab.pdf>

Standard Provisions for Fixed Amount Awards to Nongovernmental Organizations
<https://www.usaid.gov/sites/default/files/documents/303mat.pdf>

Attachment 4: Certifications**A. CONFLICT OF INTEREST AVOIDANCE CERTIFICATION**

When signing a grant agreement with Northeast Connection, a successful applicant's authorized representative will also be required to sign a certification affirming that the entity she/he represents (the Grantee) does not have any conflicts of interest pertinent to the award. Such conflicts would include, for instance:

- Personal or professional relationships with entities that could directly benefit from the award;
- Personal or professional relationships with other staff persons involved in administering the award;
- Personal or professional relationships with government officials that may have influence or oversight of matters directly pertaining to the award;
- Holding formal or informal positions in organizations that would be relevant to the award;
- Holding any financial interest in any entity that would be impacted by the award.

By virtue of the Grantee's actions in carrying out the award, the authorized representative's certification will affirm that she/he would endeavor to ensure that conflicts of interest or their appearance do not arise, understanding that such conflicts of interest would arise when there are situations in which the Grantee is involved in multiple interests (financial, personal, or otherwise) that could be conceived of as corrupting the motivation of herself/himself or the Grantee in the discharge of duties pertinent to the award.

Should such real or perceived conflicts arise, the authorized representative's certification will affirm that the Grantee will immediately inform the Chief of Party of the project with which the award is associated to discuss the matter.

B. OTHER CERTIFICATIONS

When signing a grant agreement with Northeast Connection, a successful applicant will be required to sign the *Certifications, Assurances, Representations, and Other Statements of the Recipient* referenced here: <https://www.usaid.gov/sites/default/files/documents/1868/303mav.pdf>.

Attachment 5: Budget Template

To submit your cost application, please prepare a budget for your proposed project using the budget template included as a separate attachment to this RFA and then upload it to the Cost Application Documents section of the Full Application form in the SMART grants portal. If you are unable to use the online portal, include your proposed budget with your offline submission to the program's grants department.