**Northeast Connection RFA – Target youth in inter-community exchanges, leadership roles, and advocacy efforts to address their sense of marginalization and promote positive roles**

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| **Subject:** | Northeast Connection Request for Application **(RFA)#** 1575 |
| **Title of Opportunity:** | Target youth in inter-community exchanges, leadership roles, and advocacy efforts to address their sense of marginalization and promote positive roles for them in Hawul, Kwaya Kusar and Shani LGAs of Borno State |
| **Issue Date:** | **February 28, 2022** |
| **Deadline for Questions/Clarifications:****Closing Date:** | **March 18, 2022, 5:00 PM Local Time****March 27, 2022, 5:00 PM Local Time** |

Through this RFA, the Northeast Connection (NE Connection) seeks your assistance to implement activities in support of the program description provided in Section A of Attachment 1. The program description in this RFA may be updated periodically to account for any adjustments in program strategy.

NE Connection will host three Pre-Application Conferences throughout the BAY States for this RFA. The dates and times for the conferences are below and more information can be found in Section D of Attachment 1. For planning purposes, interested applicants are requested to provide the name(s) of their representative(s) ***(no more than 2)*** to the “Grants Department” via email at [grants@connection-nigeria.com](file:///C%3A/Users/JessicaKa/AppData/Local/Microsoft/Windows/INetCache/Content.Outlook/UTMFW280/grants%40connection-nigeria.com) prior to the date of the conference.

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| **Location** | **Venue**  | **Date and Times** |
| Maiduguri | Grand Pinnacle Hotel, Jimna Road Pompomari Byepass Maiduguri | **03/15/2022****9.am – 4.00pm** |

Applicants will be asked to submit an Activity Concept directly to Northeast Connection using one of the following methods: a) electronically via the online grants’ management portal (<https://smart.fluxx.io>), or b) electronically via email at [grants@connection-nigeria.com](file:///C%3A/Users/JessicaKa/AppData/Local/Microsoft/Windows/INetCache/Content.Outlook/UTMFW280/grants%40connection-nigeria.com), to the attention of "Grants Department." Applications must be received no later than the deadline stated above. Eligible and responsive applicant(s) will be invited to proceed to the next stage, which applicants will co-design/create with NE Connection to complete full technical and cost applications. Awards will be made to eligible and responsible applicants whose proposed activities best meet the program objectives.

To be eligible for award, an applicant must meet the eligibility requirements described in Section C and submit complete applications in accordance with the submission instructions described in Section D.

Issuance of this RFA does not constitute an award commitment on the part of NE Connection nor does it commit NE Connection to pay for any costs incurred by a potential applicant while preparing/submitting an application. All preparation/submission costs are at the applicant's expense. All applications submitted are at the risk of the applicant.

*Note: AIDAR clause incorporating 22CFR Part 228 prohibits NE connection from procuring any good/services that support police and other law enforcement activities. Therefore, acceptance of grant applications that support or work with security agencies is contingent on 1) USAID approval, and 2) the applicant providing all documentation and information requested by NE Connection for the Leahy vetting process.*

Thank you for your interest in this opportunity.

Sincerely,

Albert Pam

Chief of Party

Northeast Connection

**Attachments**

**Attachment 1:** Request for Application

**Attachment 2:** Activity Concept Template

**Attachment 3:** Provisions

**Attachment 4:** Certifications

**Attachment 1: Request for Applications (RFA)**

1. **Program Description**
2. **Background**

Northeast Connection (NE Connection), implemented by Creative Associates International on behalf of USAID, aims to strengthen the resilience of communities vulnerable to violent extremist infiltration and conflict. The activity targets communities in Borno, Adamawa, and Yobe (BAY) states 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 and become more resilient to violent extremist organization (VEO) infiltration and conflict, the NE Connection will help develop local capacity to respond to emerging threats and vulnerabilities.

Borno State is highly impacted by conflict and violence and has experienced significant structural and socio‐economic damages as a result of the violence. In addition, the near absence of civil authorities in communities negatively impacts services and has led to critical development gaps, therefore resulting in community tensions. Southern Borno has become an active recruiting ground for VEOs, and their insurgency continues to distort the social fabric and weaken efforts to establish public infrastructure. Clashes between youth and supporters of opposing political parties in Hawul, Shani and Kwaya Kusar LGAs resulted in violence during the 2019 general elections. As Nigeria prepares for the 2023 elections, the possibility of political-related tensions will increase. In addition to the possibility of clashes, many youths feel a sense of marginalization and feel powerless in the decisions affecting their lives, leading to a sense of hopelessness about their futures.

USAID’s Youth in Development Policy recognizes youth participation as vital to development efforts and highlights that youth can contribute to more sustainable investments to build resilient and democratic societies. Thus, under this RFA, NE Connection will aim to build the capacity of vulnerable youth to lead activities that promote peace, civic participation, social cohesion and mitigate conflict by engaging and working with LGA electoral bodies, LGA officials, traditional and religious leaders, youth, and women’s groups.

1. **Purpose**

The purpose of this activity is to build the capacity of youth and youth groups to lead and participate in peacebuilding initiatives and leadership and advocacy efforts. In addition, the activity should promote positive roles for youth in the community to empower youth and mitigate their feelings of marginalization.

The selected grantee will design and implement activities that support this goal and the key objectives outlined in Section 3 below. Through a competitive grant process, NE Connection will award a grant to one competent local organization to implement the activities in Hawul, Kwaya Kusar, and Shani LGAs of Borno state. The geographic scope for this RFA includes three LGAs, three wards and nine communities as indicated below:

* Hawul LGA – Kwaya Bura ward – Ngilvi, Durkwa and Kwaya Bura communities
* Kwaya Kusar LGA - Kwaya Kusar ward – Gashina, Sabongari, Maiba communities
* Shani LGA – Shani ward – Shani, Lamor and Anguwan Hausawa I communities

Grantees should propose for activities that 1) build the capacity of youth to be leaders in their communities and increase their CVE/conflict prevention skills and 2) have youth effectively engage with government officials, and 3) organize peacebuilding activities and social cohesion activities for other youth. These activities could include capacity building for influential youth leaders, advocacy and lobbying initiatives, dialogues, and sporting competitions to raise awareness on the risks of violence and threats of VEO infiltration across target communities, etc.

1. **RFA Theory of Change**

***If*** vulnerable youths are engaged in peacebuilding and civic activities that promote positive roles for youth, **t*hen*** their feelings of marginalization and susceptibility to conflict and VEO risks will be reduced.

1. **Objectives**

**Objective 1:** To enhance the capacity of youths and youth groups in conflict prevention, advocacy and accountability in target wards and communities.

* **Expected Result 1.1:** Increased understanding among vulnerable youth in conflict preventionand CVE
* **Expected Result 1.2:** Improved capacity of vulnerable youths to undertake advocacy, lobbying and accountability of local stakeholders in target communities.

**Objective 2:** To increase youth participation in civic and violence prevention initiatives in target communities of southern Borno.

* **Expected Result 2.1:** Increased youth participation in civic engagement and peacebuilding activities in target wards and communities.
* **Expected Result 2.2:** Reduced feeling of neglect and marginalization among vulnerable youth and youth groups in focal communities.
1. **Illustrative Activities**

The proposed activities for this RFA should be guided by the Theory of Change (ToC) and RFA objectives. Grantees are encouraged to propose activities that are applicable to their proposed geographic locations and previous experience. NE Connection has prepared the following illustrative examples of the types of activities that grantees could propose to implement under this grant, they include but are not limited to:

* Training of youth in conflict prevention, advocacy, lobbying and accountability
* Facilitation of civic activities by youths to promote community peacebuilding (advocacies, lobbying, dialogues, cash for work etc.)
* Implementation of activities that mitigate community youth’s participation in thuggery and gang related violence
* Recreational activities for social cohesion among vulnerable youths (sports, music, art, talent showcase etc.)

All activities implemented under this RFA will follow COVID-19 protocols, including but not limited to, the mandatory use of non-medical face masks and limiting sessions to a maximum of 20 people.

1. **Gender and Youth Approach**

NE Connection will favor technical applications that demonstrate adequate gender representation in all activities to ensure opinions and input from women and youth are reflected in decision-making and outcomes of program interventions. Activities should incorporate separate experiences of men, women, and youth, as it relates to conflict, violence, and violent extremism, and build upon findings that women — mothers in particular — are recognized as important actors in achieving peace and countering VEO narratives. Technical applications should not only explain how they will ensure the inclusion of women and youth in program activities, but also provide women and youth with the skills and knowledge to meaningfully participate so that their voices are heard and respected.

1. **Draft Output and Outcome Indicators for this RFA**
	* # of trainings conducted on conflict prevention, advocacy, lobbying and accountability
	* # of youth trained in conflict prevention, advocacy, lobbying and accountability
	* % Change in knowledge gained of youth in conflict prevention
	* # of civic activities by youths: advocacies, lobbying, dialogues, sports, cash for work etc.
	* # of youths engaged in advocacies, dialogues, sports, cash for work etc.
	* # of youth groups engaged in civic activities to promote peace
	* % of youths attesting to reduced feeling of marginalization and exclusion in civic activities
	* # of young men and women who perceive themselves as positive role models as a result of their participation in project activities.
	* # of conflicts peacefully resolved through inclusive decision-making processes by young people.
2. **Award Information**
3. **Estimate of Funds Available and Number of Awards Contemplated**

Subject to the availability of funds, Northeast Connection plans to issue one award under this RFA. The total estimated amount of funding available is **32,880,000.00NGN ($80,000).** As the amount of an award is subject to negotiation, a negotiated award amount may or may not fall within this range. Furthermore, Northeast Connection is not obligated to issue awards/an award up to the amount of funds available.

**Northeast Connection reserves the right to fund any or none of the applications submitted.**

1. **Period of Performance**

The estimated start date will be upon signature of award, on or about **June 1, 2022.** The anticipated duration of Northeast Connection’s support is 4 month(s).

1. **Award Mechanisms**

Northeast Connection’s final determination on award mechanism will be based on its assessment of the 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 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) the applicant demonstrates sufficient financial management capacity to implement this mechanism and b) the mechanism is determined to be appropriate for implementing the program description.

1. **Eligibility Information**
2. **Eligible Applicants**

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

1. Must fall into one of the following categories:
	1. Non-U.S. Nongovernmental Organizations
	2. Community Based Organizations (CBOs)
	3. Civil Society Organizations (CSOs)
	4. Coalition
	5. Faith Based Organization
	6. University
	7. Media Organization
2. Be registered and working in compliance with all applicable civil and fiscal regulations, including, but not limited to, pertinent local laws and status (for example evidence of registration with the National Planning Commission, Corporate Affairs Commission, State Emergency Management Agency (Yobe & Adamawa), or Agency for the Coordination of Sustainable Development and Humanitarian Activities (Borno). In lieu of official registration, a grantee may show proof of effort to secure registration, exemption from registration, or show cause why such registration is either not optional or practicable.
3. Proof that the entity or organization is not a debarred organization.
4. Individuals and governments are not eligible to apply.
5. **Cost Sharing or Matching**

Cost sharing is not required under this funding opportunity.

1. **Limit on Number of Applications**

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

1. **Application & Submission Information**
2. **Content and Form of Activity Concept Submission**

As a first step, interested applicants are requested to submit an activity concept. Each concept will be evaluated in accordance with Section E below. An applicant whose concept is accepted will be required to submit technical and cost applications for funding. The concept must be submitted using the template provided in Attachment 2, which provides instructions on the required content and format. An applicant not adhering to these instructions, risks being considered nonresponsive to the requirements of the RFA 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.Finally, ***plagiarism is grounds for disqualification.***

1. **Submission Guidance and Assistance**

Northeast Connection may provide guidance to an applicant while it prepares an application. However, 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/creating activities with the applicant**. Actual preparation of the technical and cost applications is the strict responsibility of the applicant.

1. **Method for Submission**

Northeast Connection will accept Activity Concepts via the following methods:

1. Email to grants@connection-nigeria.com
2. Electronically via its online grant’s management portal, which can be accessed at the following link: <https://smart.fluxx.io/>.

Applicants are encouraged to use the online portal as it significantly reduces administrative burden for both the applicant and Northeast Connection. If the applicant would like to submit its application via the online grant’s management portal, but 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>. After Northeast Connection reviews and validates the form, the applicant will receive an email with its username and password.

Regardless of the submission method chosen, an applicant should retain for its records one (1) copy of its application and all enclosures that accompany it.

1. **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. A U.S. NGO applicant must provide a valid DUNS number, be registered in the System for Award Management (SAM) before submitting its application and continue to always maintain an active SAM registration with current information during which it has: a) an active award with the U.S. Government or b) an application or plan under consideration by the U.S. Government or a U.S. Government implementing partner. Information regarding SAM registration can be found at: http://www.sam.gov.

Northeast Connection will not issue an award to an applicant until it has complied with the applicable requirements. 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.

1. **Funding Restrictions**

An applicant that receives an award under this RFA 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.

1. **Questions & Answers**

Any questions concerning this RFA should first be directed to the Northeast Connection representative assigned to the applicant. Alternatively, please direct questions to the “Grants Department” via email at grants@connection-nigeria.com.

1. **Application Review Information**
2. **Application Review Process**

An applicant’s Activity Concept application will be reviewed by Northeast Connection’s senior 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 application and/or respond to clarifying questions. However, Northeast Connection reserves the right to award without requesting clarifications or additional detail in an application.

The Chief of Party or authorized delegee makes the final decision on all awards made under the RFA.

1. **Pre-Award Assessment**

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 technical and cost applications are in review. 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.

1. **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 an application in response to this RFA. 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 an application for review by Northeast Connection. Northeast Connection staff shall neither solicit nor accept gratuities, favors, or anything of monetary value from any applicant.

1. **Award Administration Information**
2. **Reporting**

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

* Monthly Report(s) with activity updates for the reporting period, photos of project 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.

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.

1. **Program Income**

Any income generated under a grant awarded through this solicitation must be reported immediately to the program's Grants Department and will be evaluated and negotiated on a case-by-case basis.

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| **Northeast Connection reserves the right to fund any or none of the applications submitted.** |

**Attachment 2: Activity Concept Template**

Interested applicants may obtain a full copy of the RFA and Activity Concept template, which includes detailed instructions by (a) Google Drive - <https://mega.nz/folder/kIgQURJS#Hraf01ZDZfTvNAA2XoItLg> (b) making a written request to Grants Team at grants@connection-nigeria.com, or (c) when you log in to the program’s SMART grants portal (<https://smart.fluxx.io/>).

**Attachment 3: Provisions**

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**

1. **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.

1. **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>.