**Northeast Connection RFA - Develop cultural and recreational opportunities for inter-community exchanges**

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| **Subject:** | **Northeast ConnectionRequest for Application** |
| **Title of Opportunity:** | **Develop cultural and recreational opportunities for inter-community exchanges in Kwayar-Kusar, Hawul, Shani, Guyuk, Numan, Lamurde, and Fune LGAs of Borno, Adamawa and, Yobe States respectively.** |
| **Issue Date:** | **February 07, 2022** |
| **Deadline for Questions/Clarifications:**  **Closing Date:** | **February 16, 2022, 5:00 PM Local Time**  **March 07, 2022, 5:00 PM Local Time** |

The United States Agency for International Development (USAID) Building Community Resilience to Violent Extremism and Conflict in Northeast Nigeria Activity (Northeast Connection) is seeking concepts from eligible applicants to implement a program titled *Develop cultural and recreational opportunities for inter-community exchanges in Borno, Adamawa & Yobe States*.

NE Connection will host aPre-Application Conference in Yola, Adamawa Statefor this RFA. The date and time for the conferences is 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:/Users/JessicaKa/AppData/Local/Microsoft/Windows/INetCache/Content.Outlook/UTMFW280/grants@connection-nigeria.com) prior to the date of the conference.

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| **Location** | **Venue** | **Date and Times** |
| Yola | Duragi Hotel5/7 Gibson Jalo Way,  Along Army Barracks Road, Jimeta Yola, Adamawa State | 02/14/2022 9AM – 4PM |

Interested organizations are encouraged and responsible for reading the full Request forApplication (RFA) to understand program objectives, eligibility and submission requirements, and the evaluation process. Northeast Connection bears no responsibility for data errors resulting from the transmission or conversion process. An award/awards will be made to the eligible and responsive applicant(s) whose concepts(s) and subsequent full application(s) best meet the program objectives and selection criteria contained in Sections A and E of Attachment 1 respectively.

A concept must be submitted directly to Northeast Connection using one of the following methods: a) electronically via the online grants management portal ([https://smart.fluxx.io](https://smart.fluxx.io/)), or b) electronically via email atgrants@connection-nigeria.com, to the attention of "Grants Department." Applications must be received no later than the deadline stated above.

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

Issuance of this RFA 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. All concepts 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**

The Northeast Connection program, implemented by Creative Associates International on behalf of USAID, aims to strengthen the resilience of communities vulnerable to violent extremist infiltration and conflict. By targeting communities in Adamawa, Yobe, and Borno States that are not yet under the control of violent extremist organizations (VEOs), the Activity will 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 VEO infiltration and conflict, the Activity will develop local capacity to respond to emerging threats and vulnerabilities. Northeast Connection also includes a rigorous analytical component to develop a more informed, shared understanding of local and sub-regional VEO and conflict risks, dynamics, and windows of opportunities.

Residents in Nigeria’s northeastern states face a plethora of challenges – from poverty to VEO, like Boko Haram and ISIS-West Africa (ISWAP) – that continuously threaten their overwhelming desire for peace, inclusion, and economic prosperity. Northeast Nigerian states suffer from socio‐economic grievances, political marginalization, poverty, unemployment, and a lack of basic services and functioning governance, compounded by environmental shocks, high population growth, and displacement. Violent extremist organizations exploit vulnerabilities and infiltrate communities through evolving recruitment tactics, including spreading misinformation and promising tangible benefits for joining. Over the past two years, the COVID‐19 pandemic has aggravated the already dire situation facing communities and has increased community tensions. A key building block for the success of Northeast Connection is understanding and addressinglocal conflicts, critical development gaps, and community grievances in Adamawa, Borno, and Yobe states.

1. **Purpose**

The purpose of this activity is to strengthen inter-community linkages, engagement, and positive cooperation to ultimately increase the resilience of communities vulnerable to violent extremist infiltration and conflict. The program seeks grantees to design and implement activities that support this goal and the key objectives outlined in Section 4 below. Through a competitive grant process, NE Connection will award grants to two (2) local organizations: one to implement activities in Borno and Adamawastates and a second grant to one organization to implement in Yobestate.

The anticipated geographic scope for each state includes 1 ward and 3 communities each across the following LGAs in the BAY states:

**Grant 1**

* **Borno State**
* KwayaKusar LGA – KwayaKusar ward - Gashina, Sabongari and Maiba communities
* Hawul LGA - Vinadam ward, Kumba, Tashangawta and Vinadam communities.
* Shani LGA - Kubo ward, Kubo, Jeki and Kubo DunguPrimaricommunities

**Adamawa State**

* **Guyuk–Dummna Ward, Zakowan, Bushikiri, and Tsistikira Communities**
* **Numan – Kadomati ward – Byemti, kikun and shafaroon communities**
* **Lamurde LGAs – Wadaku ward - Tigno Gari, Tito and Sabon Layi communities**

**Grant 2**

**Yobe State**

* **Fune LGANgelzarma A Ward - 1. Fune Village, 2. Angwan Kuka, and 3. Sabon Garin**

Grantees are expected to foster mutual understanding, trust, and relationships across communities, ethnicities, and religion to reduce anti-social behavior that can lead to violent extremism. To do so, grantees should 1) map existing, effective government and religious leaders’ peacebuilding efforts, as well as other efforts that prevent inter-ethnic violence, reduce discrimination against at-risk youth, and foster a sense of belonging, 2) develop effective messaging against VEO influence where it does not exist, and 3) design and implement cultural, religious, and recreational events/exchanges that bring together different communities and give people a sense of normalcy and healing. The activities could include rallies, roadshows, and townhall summits, which incorporate cultural dances and theatre and have government stakeholders and religious leaders promote social cohesion messages. Messages in each of these activities should build youth and community resilience against VEO influence through educating young men and women about government and religious leaders’ efforts in peacebuilding, preventing inter-ethnic violence, reducing discrimination against at-risk youth, and fostering a sense of belong. The grantee should identify key state and national government figures to link into activitiesto deliver keynote speeches that promote social cohesion and educate against VEO influence, as well as other important messages and efforts identified in activities 1 and 2.

Under this intervention, the awardee(s) are expected to organize 3 exchanges/events in each Ward (one per community).

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

1. **RFA Theory of Change**

***If*** *community resilience is built and inter-community linkages are strengthened,****then****violent extremist infiltration and conflict in the focal communities will be reduced* ***because****communities will withstand and counter VEO influence and positively cooperate for socioeconomic development.*

1. **Objectives**

*Objective 1*: To build community resilience using cultural and recreational activities for mutual coexistence.

Objective 2: To strengthen inter-community linkages, engagements, and positive cooperation in target wards and 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:

1. Map existing, effective government and religious leaders’ peacebuilding efforts, as well as other efforts that prevent inter-ethnic violence, reduce discrimination against at-risk youth, and foster a sense of belonging.
2. Conduct community-based cultural and recreational activities with events that could include:

* Local creativity, photography, and food exhibitions.
* Community level music and drama events.
* Community symbolic folklore commemorations.
* Facilitated debates on topical community issues and events.
* Sporting tournaments to promote social cohesion and inclusion.
* Participatory community theater
* Peace rallies and road shows

1. **Draft Output and Outcome Indicators for this RFA** 
   * # of citizens (young men and women) participating in cultural and recreational activities to promote social cohesion.
   * # of cultural and recreational performances (drama, rallies, roadshows) for community exchange against VEO influence conducted.
   * # ofLGA stakeholders and religious leaders reached through inter-community events.
   * % of target stakeholders reporting an increase in inter-community linkages and positive collaboration.
   * % of citizens expressing favorable views towards other communities.
2. **Award Information**
3. **Estimate of Funds Available and Number of Awards Contemplated**

Subject to the availability of funds, Northeast Connection plans to issue 2 awards under this RFA. The total estimated amount of funding available is sixty-onemillion **NGN61,650,000.00 ($150,000.00 USD).**The value of the award for Borno and Adamawa activities should not exceed 50,000,000 NGN ($120,000.00 USD). The value of the award for Yobe activities should not exceed 12,330,000NGN ($30,000.00 USD).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 awardaround May 2022. The anticipated duration of Northeast Connection’s support is 3-4 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)
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 submit an application.

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 submittechnical 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’srole 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](mailto: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](mailto: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 applying 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 applied 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 instructionsby (a) Google Drive-<https://mega.nz/folder/1AoEFSBa#1mhVJCuYk3dy2pYWWkIr-w> (b) making a written request to Grants Team at [grants@connection-nigeria.com](mailto:grants@connection-nigeria.com), or when you log in to the program’s SMART grants portal (<https://smart.fluxx.io/>).

**Attachment 3: Provisions**

Standard Provisions for U.S. Nongovernmental Organizations

<https://www.usaid.gov/sites/default/files/documents/1868/303maa.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**

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>.