

Notice of Funding Opportunity (NOFO)

Program Office:	Office of the Public Affairs Advisor at the United States Mission to NATO
Funding Opportunity Title:	“Turning NATO’s Words into Action After the Brussels Meeting”
Announcement Type:	Fixed Amount Award
Funding Opportunity Number:	<u>DOS-USNATO-PAA-2017-001</u>
Deadline for Applications:	July 16, 2017, 11:59 p.m. Brussels time

I. BACKGROUND

The North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) is the most successful military alliance in history. It has been the bedrock of global security for over 65 years, united in its commitment to contributing to a Europe whole, free and at peace. Today, the Alliance is confronted with many real security threats from the East, the South, and those we cannot see. In order for NATO to continue playing its instrumental role to provide collective defense, the alliance and its members must adapt to the changing security and political landscape across the globe.

On May 25, allied Heads of State and Government will gather in Brussels. They will assess progress on the prior commitments and decisions made by leaders at the Wales and Warsaw summits, such as increasing defense spending, countering cyber warfare, cooperation with international institutions including the European Union (EU), and counterterrorism commitments.

Following the Brussels May Meeting, the United States and the alliance will continue to emphasize a message of a strong, ready, and capable NATO responding to its members’ governments and public and supporting its partner countries.

II. PROJECT DESCRIPTION

The Office of the Public Affairs Advisor (PAA) at the U.S. Department of State’s U.S. Mission to NATO (USNATO) invites not-for-profit, non-governmental organizations and think-tanks that focus on international affairs, defense and security issues, and U.S. and European relations to submit project proposals which encourage public discussions and creative public engagements in Europe on the major theme of “Turning NATO’s Words into Action After the Brussels Meeting.

USNATO seeks proposals that illustrate how to adapt NATO’s strategic focus on deterrence and defense, and projecting stability with specific emphasis on burden sharing, counterterrorism, cyber security, and other outcomes from the Brussels May Meeting. To successfully communicate these policies, the alliance and its stakeholders will need to explain and debate these issues with policymakers, media, and their public in the coming period.

USNATO is seeking proposals that will outline how the alliance can transform intent into actions and programs that NATO and its member states can implement. Specifically, we are referring to initiatives that relate to the strategic direction coming from the Brussels meeting; as well as how member states can honor their defense investment pledges, ways the alliance can support counterterrorism efforts, and novel methods to support cyber defense commitments including ways to blunt disinformation. We look forward to reviewing proposals from partner institutions that

discuss some or all of these important NATO-related topics. Additional topics that may be of interest include, but are not limited to:

- Pledges on defense investment;
 - National plans to reach the 2% and 20% thresholds;
- The NATO-Russia relationship;
- Methods to identify and combat disinformation as well as approaches to evaluating the efficacy of those methods
- Counterterrorism;
- NATO's efforts in the south and east;
- NATO partnerships and cooperative security
 - Collaboration with European Union and other international institutions
 - Looking South—Gulf Cooperation Council, African Union;
- Countering Hybrid Warfare;
- Strengthening cybersecurity;
- Women in peace and security.

Successful proposals will emphasize the ability to deliver clear messages to selected audiences through traditional forums and new technologies. These proposals should include a narrative about the importance of the NATO alliance and its mission to a broad non-U.S. audience including the general public, youth and future leaders, the security and defense community, policy makers and opinion shapers in European countries. We are hoping to stimulate new ideas and to encourage public dialogue on the priorities for NATO in the upcoming years. Finally, we encourage all institutions submitting proposals to consider how their proposal can be measured and evaluated to determine the effectiveness of the proposal's content.

The kinds of activities and work funded with this award may embrace (but should not be limited to):

- conferences,
- symposiums,
- public debates and moderated discussions,
- round-tables,
- studies,
- competitions.

Please note: all activities should be targeted at European and/or Canadian audience and should take place in either Europe or Canada.

We strongly encourage:

- New and creative approaches that utilize digital technology, social media and other innovative means;
- Programs that seek to reflect the diversity of thought and background as well as gender balance.
- Fortright analysis about the gaps in NATO strategies along with practical solutions to address deficiencies.
- Evaluation components that will help inform the measure of the proposal's effectiveness, rather than merely its output.

Grant funding **cannot be used** for salaries, rent, or other general support of an organization, unless these expenses are directly tied to the project.

III. ELIGIBILITY

Eligibility is limited to not-for-profit organizations, non-governmental organizations and think tanks that have demonstrated expertise in international affairs, defense and security issues, and U.S. and European relations.

U.S. or other national organizations are eligible to apply for grants; however submitted proposals should target audience outside of the United States. NATO allies and partners states are the primary target audiences.

The Department of State encourages organizations that have not previously received international program funding from the U.S. government to apply under this announcement.

Individuals are ineligible for the grant award.

Mandatory requirements - applicants must:

A. Be registered in the System for Award Management (SAM) located at www.sam.gov prior to submitting an application;

B. Maintain an active SAM registration with current information at all times during which it has an active U.S. Federal award or an application under consideration by an agency.

C. Acquire a Dun and Bradstreet (D&B) DUNS number which can be requested here: <http://fedgov.dnb.com/webform> .

D. Be legally recognized as a non-profit, non-governmental organizations (NGOs), think tanks that comply with U.S. and EU legal requirements;

E. Submit the “Application for Federal Assistance” (SF-424), “Budget Information for Non-Construction Programs” (SF-424A), and “Assurances for Non-Construction Programs” (SF-424B) forms which can be found on the Grants.gov website under the forms tab.

F. Submit a standardized project proposal. Application forms with instructions are located in the “Related Documents” tab of this opportunity announcement.

G. Submit electronically complete application documents to: USNATOPASProposals@state.gov . Submitted proposals should contain the following information in the subject line: NAME of the Applicant + Project Title

H. EU-based applicants should be listed in the EU Transparency Register at <http://ec.europa.eu/transparencyregister/public/homePage.do>.

IV. CONTACT INFORMATION

For questions and assistance with the requirements of this solicitation, contact Matthew Rafaniello, Grant Officer Representative, Office of the Public Affairs Advisor, U.S. Mission to NATO at: USNATOPASProposals@state.gov (preferred method of communication)

V. APPLICATION AND SUBMISSION INFORMATION

Award Period: up to 24 months

Number of awards anticipated: 1-2

Award Amount:

Minimum ("Floor") Award: \$15,000
Maximum ("Ceiling") Award: \$100,000.

Application Submission Process: Applicants must submit concept papers electronically using the following address: USNATOPASProposals@state.gov.

Application Deadline: Applications may be submitted at any time for consideration before Sunday, July 16, 2017, 11:59 p.m. Central European Summer Time (Brussels time, UTC +2). Applications received after 11:59 p.m. may be ineligible for consideration. **Applicants are encouraged to begin the application process early**, as this will allow time to address any technical difficulties that may arise in advance of the deadline.

Please note that review and decision process may take up to three months. Applications are accepted **in English only**, and final grant agreements will be concluded in English. Budgets shall be submitted in U.S. dollars and final grant agreements will be conducted in U.S. dollars.

Anticipated Time to Award: Applicants should expect to be notified of the committee decision by no later than September 30, 2017.

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.

Application Content: Applicants must follow the NOFO instructions and conditions contained herein and supply all information required. **Failure to furnish all information or comply with stated requirements may result in disqualification from the competition.** Applicants must set forth full, accurate, and complete information as required by this NOFO. The penalty for making false statements in proposals to the U.S. government is prescribed on [18 U.S.C.1001](#).

Organizations are permitted to submit multiple concept papers, but should be aware that USNATO seeks to provide opportunities to as many organizations as possible.

Cost Sharing or Matching

This program does not require cost sharing, however cost sharing is encouraged.

VI. AWARD SELECTION CRITERIA

Applicants will receive acknowledgement of receipt of their proposal. USNATO's PAA will review all proposals for eligibility. USNATO's PAA reserves the right to request any additional programmatic and/or financial information regarding the proposal. Proposals will be funded based on an evaluation of how the proposal meets the solicitation review criteria, U.S. foreign policy objectives, and the priorities outlined in this NOFO. All proposals submitted under this request will undergo a technical review by U.S. mission personnel; all proposals deemed technically eligible will be evaluated by a review committee with input from subject matter specialists, if necessary. Review panel members may make conditions and recommendations on any given proposal in order to enhance the proposed program.

Evaluation Criteria: The U.S. government will award grants to the applicants whose proposals represent the best value to USNATO on the basis of technical merit and cost. Each application will be evaluated by a review committee of USNATO staff. The evaluation criteria have been tailored to the policy priorities outlined in this NOFO.

Proposals should be drafted along the framework outlined below. Applicants should note that the sections listed below will (1) serve as a standard against which all proposals will be evaluated, and (2) serve to identify the significant matters that should be addressed in all proposals.

- **Justification/Problem Statement:** This section should identify the importance and relevance of the applicant's proposal to the stated USNATO goals and priorities.
- **Project Description/Performance Measures/Sustainability:** Applicants should describe what they propose to do and how they will do it. The project should have clear goals and objectives and metrics for determining whether the project goals were met. It should be clearly and accurately written, substantive and with sufficient detail. The review panel will be viewing the implementation plan in terms of how well it addresses the problem statement, relevance of the goals and objectives, feasibility and creativity of the proposed activities, their timeline for completion, how performance can be measured, and impact and sustainability.
- **Organizational Capability:** Proposals should demonstrate the ability to develop and implement suggested program(s). Applicants must demonstrate how their resources, capabilities, and experience will enable them to achieve the stated goals and objectives. In addition, applicants should describe how and with whom they will collaborate to meet project goals. Applicant organizations past experience in successful programming will be also taken into consideration.
- **Budget:** Costs shall be evaluated for practicality, accountability, and efficiency. The Department of State must determine that the costs paid for this award are reasonable, allowable, and allocable to the proposed project activities. This will consist of a review of the budget to determine if the overall costs are realistic for the work to be performed, and if the costs are consistent with the program narrative.
- **Resumes:** The review panel will consider the appropriateness of the selected project director or manager in view of the role and responsibility that person will play in guiding the project through implementation to completion. Position descriptions submitted in lieu of the resume will be reviewed for the appropriateness of the qualifications and skills identified.
- For organizations with past or current awards from USNATO, positive performance and timely reporting on previous awards will be taken into account in the review.

VII. AWARD ADMINISTRATION INFORMATION

Award Notices: The grant award or co-operative agreement shall be written, signed, awarded, and administered by the Grants Officer. The Grants Officer is the U.S. government official delegated the authority by the U.S. Department of State's Procurement Executive to write, award, and administer grants and cooperative agreements. The assistance award agreement is the authorizing document and it will be provided to the Recipient through either mail or facsimile transmission. Organizations whose applications will not be funded will also be notified in writing.

Reporting Requirements: Grantees are required to submit quarterly program progress and financial reports throughout the project period. Final programmatic and financial reports are due 90 days after the close of the project period. Progress reports at a minimum should be submitted via electronic mail to an address to be provided in the award.

VIII. DISCLAIMER

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

IX. AVAILABILITY OF FUNDS

This NOFO is subject to funds availability. Awards will be granted only if appropriated funds are allocated to the United States Mission to NATO by the Department of State's central budget authorities.