A. PROGRAM DESCRIPTION
The U.S. Embassy in Kigali and the U.S. Department of State’s Bureau of Economic and Business Affairs (EB) announce an open competition for organizations to submit applications to strengthen the capacity of civil society organizations (CSOs) and Rwandan citizens to actively engage in the government budget process and advocate for improved fiscal transparency. Please carefully follow all instructions below.

Background:
Under this Notice of Funding Opportunity (NOFO) assistance award solicitation, the Embassy is to provide a one-time grant to a local or international nongovernmental organization to assist CSOs and Rwandan citizens actively engage in the government budget process and advocate for improved fiscal transparency.

The 2017 Fiscal Transparency Report found that Rwanda did not make a detailed Executive Budget proposal widely and easily accessible to the general public prior to enactment. In addition, the report found that the Government of Rwanda (GOR) did not make detailed information regarding allocations and earnings from state-owned enterprises publicly available.
Per the Open Budget Index (OBI), which focuses on whether governments provide the public with timely access to comprehensive information contained in key budget documents, Rwanda has made some progress on fiscal transparency, increasing its OBI score from 8% in 2012 to 36% in 2015.

**Project Objectives:**
The main objectives of the program are:

1. Build the capacity of CSOs (including youth and women-focused CSOs) to understand and engage in the government budget process, in particular regarding the reliability, completeness, public availability, and transparent timelines of the Executive Budget proposal.
2. Engage citizens to participate in the government budget process.
3. Raise public awareness.

This program is part of the Fiscal Transparency Innovation Fund (FTIF) intended to provide assistance to improve fiscal transparency to countries identified in the 2017 Fiscal Transparency Report. The FTIF was created in FY 2012 to support government and civil society organization efforts to enhance budget transparency, advance best practices in public financial management, and improve the transparency of natural resource management. Since its inception, the FTIF has provided nearly $28 million to 59 projects in 43 countries to drive improvement in these areas. FTIF oversight is conducted by EB’s Office of Monetary Affairs and USAID’s Bureau for Economic Growth, Education, and Environment.

**Participants and Audiences:**
Direct funding for NGOs is available under this announcement. GOR law requires prior registration of a local or international organization in order to implement programs or conduct any business in Rwanda. All applicants must provide a copy of the certificate of registration and license from the Rwanda Governance Board with the submission package. Direct funding for individuals, public international organizations, foreign governments, parastatal organizations, educational institutions, or U.S. Government departments and agencies is not available under this announcement.

**B. FEDERAL AWARD INFORMATION**

Length of performance period: 18 to 24 months
Number of awards anticipated: One award. The USG reserves the right to award more than one project under this announcement.
Total available funding: Award may range from a minimum of $200,000 to a maximum of $250,000.
Type of Funding: FY 2017 Economic Support Funds under the Foreign Assistance Act.
Anticipated project start date: September 1, 2018
Funding Instrument Type: Grant
Project Performance Period: Proposed project should be completed in 24 months or less.

This notice is subject to availability of funding.

C. ELIGIBILITY INFORMATION

1. Eligible Applicants

The following organizations are eligible to apply: Not-for-profit organizations, including think tanks and civil society/non-governmental organizations (international or local).

2. Cost Sharing or Matching

This program does not require cost sharing.

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. Please see Section D for information on how to obtain these registrations. Click here to request your DUNS Number and here to initiate your SAM registration.

Applicants are only allowed to submit one proposal per organization. If more than one proposal is submitted from an organization, all proposals from that institution will be considered ineligible for funding.

D. APPLICATION AND SUBMISSION INFORMATION

1. Content and Form of Application Submission:
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.

**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; and
- All pages are numbered.

The following documents are **required**:

1. **Mandatory application forms**
   - SF-424 (Application for Federal Assistance – organizations)
   - SF424A (Budget Information for Non-Construction programs)
   - SF424B (Assurances for Non-Construction programs)

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

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 project, including project objectives and anticipated impact.
   - **Introduction to the Organization:** A description of past and present operations, showing ability to carry out the project, 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 project is needed.
   - **Project Goals and Objectives:** The “goals” describe what the project is intended to achieve. The “objectives” refer to the intermediate accomplishments on the way to the goals. These should be achievable and measurable.
   - **Project Activities:** Describe the project activities and how they will help achieve the objectives.
• **Program Methods and Design:** A description of how the project is expected to work to solve the stated problem and achieve the goal. Include a logic model as appropriate.

• **Proposed Project Schedule and Timeline:** The proposed timeline for the project 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 project. What proportion of their time will be used in support of this project?

• **Project Partners:** List the names and type of involvement of key partner organizations and sub-awardees.

• **Project 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.

4. **Budget Justification Narrative:** After filling out the SF-424A Budget (above), use a separate sheet of paper to describe each of the budget expenses in detail. See section H. Other Information: Guidelines for Budget Submissions below for further information.

5. **Attachments:**
   - One-page CV or resume of key personnel who are proposed for the project
   - Letters of support from project partners describing the roles and responsibilities of each partner
   - If your organization has a NICRA and includes NICRA charges in the budget, your latest NICRA should be included as a PDF file.
   - Official permission letters, if required for project activities
   - Unique Entity Identifier and System for Award Management ([www.SAM.gov](http://www.SAM.gov))

2. **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 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 here.

NCAGE application: Application page and instructions here.

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@dlis.dla.mil for any problems in getting an NCAGE code.

**Step 2:** After receiving the NCAGE Code, proceed to register in www.SAM.gov. SAM registration must be renewed annually.

3. Submission Dates and Times

Applications are due no later than **May 28, 2018 11:59 p.m. U.S. Eastern Time.** Applications submitted after 11:59 p.m. will be ineligible for consideration. Begin the application process early, as this will allow time to address any technical difficulties that may arise in advance of the deadline. There will be no exceptions to this application deadline.

4. Funding Restrictions
The use of ESF funds is prohibited for all military and paramilitary purposes, and generally prohibited for support of police and other law enforcement forces, even if the proposed activity is consistent with programs as described above.

2. Other Submission Requirements

Applicants must submit proposals by e-mail to iszlerud@state.gov. Please include on the subject line of your email the funding opportunity title and number. Please restrain from submitting multiple emails. For questions about this NOFO, contact Ursula Iszler, Grants Officer in the Political/Economic section, at iszlerud@state.gov. Tel +250-252-596-400 Ext. 2673.

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 project activities will be carried out and how activities will be coordinated with and receive buy-in from the GOR. The proposal includes a reasonable implementation timeline.

**Organizational Capacity and Record on Previous Grants – 20 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.

**Project Planning/Ability to Achieve Objectives – 10 points:** Goals and objectives are clearly stated and project 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. This program does not require cost sharing, but a cost may be favorably considered.

**Monitoring and evaluation plan – 10 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 project includes output and outcome indicators, and shows how and when those will be measured.

**Sustainability – 25 points:** The proposal describes how the project activities will continue to have positive impact after the end of the performance period.

2. Review and Selection Process

A Grants Review Committee will evaluate all eligible applications.

3. Federal Awardee Performance & Integrity Information System (FAPIIS)

The Department of State, prior to making a Federal award with a total amount of Federal share greater than the simplified acquisition threshold ($150,000) is required to review and consider any information about the applicant that is in the designated integrity and performance system accessible through SAM (currently FAPIIS) (see 41 U.S.C. 2313).

An applicant, at its option, may review information in the designated integrity and performance systems accessible through SAM and comment on any information about itself that a Federal awarding agency previously entered and is currently in the designated integrity and performance system accessible through SAM.

The Department of State will consider any comments by the applicant, in addition to the other information in the designated integrity and performance system, in making a judgment about the applicant's integrity, business ethics, and record of performance under Federal awards when completing the review of risk posed by applicants as described in §200.205 Federal awarding agency review of risk posed by applicants.

4. Anticipated Announcement and Federal Award Dates

The Embassy will notify applicants if their proposal is selected for funding within a month after the submission deadline.

**F. FEDERAL AWARD ADMINISTRATION INFORMATION**

1. Federal Award Notices
The grant award 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 project 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:** All payments will be done via Electronic Funds Transfer (EFT) and a payment schedule will be determined in the grant agreement.

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, Certifications and Assurances, and the Department of State Standard Terms and Conditions, all of which are available at: [https://www.statebuy.state.gov/fa/pages/home.aspx](https://www.statebuy.state.gov/fa/pages/home.aspx). 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 quarterly financial reports and program reports. The award document will specify how often these reports must be submitted.

G. FEDERAL AWARDING AGENCY CONTACTS

If you have any questions about the grant application process, please contact Ursula Iszler, Grants Officer in the Political/Economic section at +250-252-596-400 Ext. 2673 or e-mail: iszlerud@state.gov.

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 project, and the percentage of their time that will be spent on the project.

Travel: Estimate the costs of travel and per diem for this project, for program staff, consultants or speakers, and participants/beneficiaries. If the project 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 project, which has a useful life of more than one year (or a life longer than the duration of the project), 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 project. 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 project activities.

Other Direct Costs: Describe other costs directly associated with the project, 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 project 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.