

Request for Concept Notes RfCN No. DT002

I. Program Description

The USAID-funded Shejeh Salam Activity – implemented by DT Global – supports peacebuilding, trauma awareness, civil society, and media, while systematically integrating gender, youth, and marginalized communities. Through issuing small grants to a wide range of local actors, the activity's four objectives will be achieved:

1. Local actors build crossline interdependence and intra-community cohesion to promote peace processes and peaceful co-existence.
2. Civil society actors advocate for peace and reconciliation and participate in civic processes.
3. Key partners provide trauma awareness services to communities.
4. Print, radio, and other media provide accurate, fair, and thorough information to mitigate the destructive impact of rumor and misinformation.

Shejeh Salam utilizes different interventions, including direct delivery of goods and services, technical assistance, in-kind grants, Fixed Award Amount (FAA) grants, and hybrid grants. It includes a rapid response mechanism to respond quickly to immediate priorities

Geographic focus: Taking USAID's lead, Shejeh Salam is focusing in the following 13 target counties:

Western Bahr el Ghazal: Jur River and Wau

Unity State: Panyijiar, Leer, and Mayendit

Greater Jonglei: Duk, Uror, Akobo and the Pibor Administrative Area

Upper Nile State: Ulang and Baliet

Eastern Equatoria: Kapoeta North and Budi

In addition, any grants addressing issues that would be impossible to address without including communities in bordering counties will also be considered for funding.

Request for Concept Notes:

Under this Request for Concept Notes (RfCN)s, Shejeh Salam is requesting concept notes for activities which match the USAID Women, Peace and Security strategy; and that also fall within one or more of Shejeh Salam's four objectives; and which are targeting one or more of the 13 priority counties.

Specifically, proposed activities should link to the USAID Women, Peace and Security Strategy's first Line of Effort: **Seek and support the preparation and meaningful participation of women around the world in decision-making processes related to conflict and crises.** Types of activities that would fall within this line of effort include:

- a) Encourage the inclusion of women in peace and political processes and decision-making.
- b) Capacity building and technical training that encourages women's participation.
- c) Address barriers that prevent women's participation in peace and political processes.

Partners should be able to demonstrate experience in the targeted locations, and in similar types of programming, an understanding of the dynamics to be addressed, and sufficient capacity to implement the proposed activities.

Concept notes will be judged based on the criteria listed below including experience and capacity of potential partners, coherence of the proposed activities, and a realistic “theory of change” behind the activity.

This request for concept notes is issued on behalf of USAID, under the Shejeh Salam Activity

The U.S. Government’s Women, Peace and Security Strategy

On June 11, 2019, President Trump signed the first-ever United States Strategy on Women, Peace, and Security (WPS Strategy). The WPS Strategy responds to the ground-breaking Women, Peace, and Security Act of 2017, which established the United States as the first country in the world with a comprehensive law on WPS.

The U.S. Government (USG) developed the WPS Strategy as a whole-of-government approach to advance women’s meaningful participation in preventing and resolving conflict, countering violent extremism (CVE) and terrorism, and building post-conflict peace and stability. Building on the President’s National Security Strategy (NSS) and its powerful recognition that “societies that empower women to participate fully in civic and economic life are more prosperous and peaceful,” the WPS Strategy emphasizes the critical linkages between women’s empowerment and global peace and security. The WPS Strategy establishes a clear roadmap to support women’s participation and leadership in preventing conflict and promoting stable, lasting peace around the world, including commitments to address the distinct challenges women and girls face in conflict- and disaster-affected areas. Under the WPS Strategy, the United States is working to advance three, mutually reinforcing objectives by 2023:

- Women are more prepared and increasingly able to participate in efforts that promote stable and lasting peace.
- Women and girls are safer, better protected, and have equal access to government and private-assistance programs, including from the United States, international partners, and host nations.
- The United States and partner governments have improved institutionalization and capacity to ensure WPS efforts are sustainable and long-lasting.

Shejeh Salam is tracking four indicators for its WPS program as follows

1. Number of women’s rights civil society organizations (CSOs) receiving USG assistance engaged in advocacy interventions
2. Number of USG-supported activities designed to promote or strengthen the civic participation of women
3. DR.3.1-2a Number of women’s rights groups trained in conflict mediation/resolution skills or consensus building techniques with USG assistance
4. Number of trainings that integrate WPS objectives

Additional Program Information:

I. Gender, Youth, and Social Inclusion

The Shejeh Salam activity is dedicated to principles of gender equity and social inclusion. Towards this end, Shejeh Salam expects partners to be aware of dynamics such as gender, age, and marginalized groups within proposed areas of work; and for activities to intentionally engage relevant groups in ways that go

beyond “participation” and move towards “meaningful participation” and increased social inclusion for groups who are traditionally marginalized, underserved, and underrepresented.

2. Capacity Building and Sustainability

To foster sustainability, Shejeh Salam seeks to support community-driven activities, to work with grantees who are already active and engaged in their communities, and to invest in grantee capacity and staff skills. At the community level, proposed activities should involve representative stakeholders in identifying primary grievances, needs, and opportunities. Together, Shejeh Salam staff, grantees and communities will design, implement, evaluate community-driven interventions that address conflict drivers and build resilience on a sustainable basis.

Shejeh Salam has a deliberate commitment to strengthen the institutional and technical capacity of grantees and local partners. Where an organization is identified for further support, Shejeh Salam will work with the partner to identify capacity building needs and will aim to support these needs in the course of the activity. These needs could include staff capacity, institutional policies, or similar across a range of programmatic and operational areas.

3. Collaboration: Layering, Sequencing, and Integration

Shejeh Salam views collaboration as critical to achieving improved outcomes in our work. Layering, sequencing, and integration are different strategies for collaboration in programming. For instance, trauma awareness can be “integrated” into other programs such as peace dialogues. “Layering” is used where grants/activities are implemented in the same area/time because they have synergies among them. “Sequencing” implies ensuring activities follow a logical timeline with appropriate pre- and post-activities linking together to ensure the best outcomes. Collaboration may be internal within different Shejeh Salam’s grants or objectives, or it can be external with other USAID-funded Activities, or with other partners not funded by USAID.

II. Eligibility Information

All RfCNs, and subsequently grants awarded by Shejeh Salam, must tangibly contribute to one or more of the Shejeh Salam Activity’s four objectives and related outcomes stated under each objective (see attachment 1). Additionally, they should fall in the areas of geographic focus mentioned in the above Program Description.

This opportunity is limited to South Sudanese Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs), Civil-Society Organizations (CSOs), Community-based Organizations (CBOs). In-kind grant activities can be issued to unregistered organizations, however, only NGOs, CSOs, and SBOs who are legally registered entities in South Sudan can receive an FAA award (cash grants).

- USAID and Shejeh Salam encourage applications from new potential partners.
- Cost sharing is not required.
- Organizations are limited to two distinct (2) submissions under this funding opportunity.

III. Federal Award Information

Estimated Total Budget under this Request for Concept Notes opportunity:	\$150,000
Estimated Number of Awards to Be Made:	2 to 5
Financial Range of Individual Awards:	Estimated from \$20,000 to \$100,000

Anticipated Start Dates:	Within the next 3 months
Period of Performance:	All grants must conclude by September 30, 2022
Award Mechanism:	Grant – Fixed Award Amounts (Cash) or In-kind

Shejeh Salam reserves the right to choose award mechanism for a potential grantee (cash, in-kind, hybrid), or outright reject the concept note.

IV. Application and Submission Information

The applicant is required to send the required completed Concept Note documentation electronically to the following email address: shejehsalam-administration@dt-global.com

In the subject line, the applicant must write **RfCN no. DT002**, the State name (or names) where the activities will take place, and which objective the RfCN is trying to address. For instance: “RfCN no. DT002, Jonglei, objective 1”

Content and Format of Concept Note Submission

All applicants must submit two documents as part of their application:

- The concept note using the provided template. All sections must be filled out, but the entire concept note is **not to exceed four pages**. Exceeding page length limits will result in disqualification.
- The list of resources required to implement the activity using the provided template (defining what inputs are needed to implement the program).
- Documents must be written in English

If submitting a concept note for an FAA (cash grant), then the applicant must also submit:

- A copy of the up-to-date legal registration of the organization

Dun and Bradstreet Universal Number System (DUNS) Number and System for Award Management (SAM)

Applicants who are selected for further negotiation for an award must apply for a Dun and Bradstreet Universal Number System (DUNS) Number (<https://www.dnb.com/duns-number/get-a-duns.html>) and must register with SAM to receive funding >\$25,000, prior to the issuance of any award. If the applicant has not fully complied with DUNS and SAM requirements by the time USAID and Shejeh Salam are ready to make an award, the applicant may be determined as not qualified to receive an award, and the funds may go to another applicant instead.

Submission Dates and Times

Concept Notes are to be submitted by 17:00 Central African Time on 22 October 2021. Shejeh Salam will check all applications against the time they were received in the above-mentioned email account.

Potential applicants may submit any questions regarding the RfCN to shejehsalam-administration@dt-global.com by 17:00 Central African Time on 8 October 2021 at the latest. Shejeh Salam will share the questions and answers with all interested parties by 12 October 2021. Questions and Answers will be uploaded alongside the request for concept notes on the South Sudan NGO Forum website, as well as shared with any partners who have asked questions or expressed interest.

Funding Restrictions

- Construction or rehabilitation of infrastructure will not be approved under the RfCN process unless the RfCN is specifically for construction.
- Any firms or individuals that do not comply with the requirements in Standard Provision, “Debarment, Suspension and Other Responsibility Matters” and Standard Provision, “Preventing Transactions with, or the Provision of Resources or Support to, Sanctioned Groups and Individuals” must not be used to provide any commodities or services funded under this opportunity
- Ineligible Commodities and Services: The following types of activities or budget lines will not be funded under this opportunity: (i) Military equipment, (ii) Surveillance equipment, (iii) Commodities and services for support of police or other law enforcement activities, (iv) Abortion equipment and services, (v) Luxury goods and gambling equipment, or (vi) Weather modification equipment; (v) Direct funding support to the Government of South Sudan.
- All organization, whether religious or secular, that participate in USAID programs are prohibited from the use of direct financial assistance from USAID to engage in explicitly religious activities, including activities that involve over religious content such as worship, religious instruction, prayer, or proselytization.

Duration of Activity(ies): The duration of activities must not exceed one-year and must be complete by September 30, 2022. The RfCN will be automatically disqualified if the proposed activity(ies) are longer than one year or go beyond September of 2022.

Certifications, assurances, representations, and other statements

Any successful applicants who are selected in the initial review of concept notes will be required to:

- Sign and submit the certifications found in ADS 303mav (<https://www.usaid.gov/ads/policy/300/303mav>) prior to a final award being granted.
- Adhere to the Pre-Award terms found in ADS303mba (<https://www.usaid.gov/ads/policy/300/303mba>) including developing branding and marking plans in the negotiation phase of the award.

V. Application Review Information

Eligibility and Selection Criteria

Eligibility

Shejeh Salam reserves the right to disqualify any Concept Notes that do not follow the RfCN requirements including but not exclusively if the Concept Note does not fall into one of the four objectives, the program outcomes, or geographic focus.

Selection Criteria

These concept notes will be scored against the following criteria:

Criteria	Guidance	Rating
Technical Design	Does the proposed concept demonstrate a sensible theory of change, with reasonable and achievable output and outcome objectives?	
Understanding of Context	Does the concept demonstrate a sufficient understanding of the context or issues which it seeks to address?	
Objective	Does the concept clearly align with one or more of Shejeh Salam’s objectives, as well as the WPS Line of Effort I?	
Clarity	Does the concept clearly define the who, what, where, when, why and how of the activity?	

Relevant Experience	Does the grantee have experience running similar thematic projects with donor funding?	
Geographic Experience	Does the grantee have experience working in the County (preferred) or State proposed/called for? Similar work areas?	
Cross-cutting Themes	Does the concept address gender, youth and other elements addressing social inclusion issues?	

Adjectival Rating	Definition
Outstanding	The proposal exceeds the fullest expectations of DT Global South Sudan and indicates an exceptional approach and understanding of the requirements. The concept note contains multiple strengths, and the offeror has demonstrated the ability to carry out outstanding, effective, efficient, and economical performance under the contract. An assigned rating within "outstanding" indicates that, in terms of the specific factor (or subfactor), the proposal demonstrates an understanding of the factor that exceeds expectations and contains essentially no weaknesses.
Very Good	The concept note indicates a thorough approach and understanding of the requirements. The proposal contains at least one strength and demonstrates a level of effort that has produced, or could produce, results which should prove to be substantially beneficial to the project. The concept note may or may not have any weaknesses. Fulfilling the definition of "very good" indicates that, in terms of the specific factor (or subfactor), the proposal demonstrates a level of effort that fully meets the requirements and expectations of DT Global South Sudan.
Good	The concept note meets the requirements. The proposal may contain weaknesses and/or significant weaknesses that are correctable but does not contain deficiencies. An assigned rating of "good" indicates an adequate approach and understanding of the requirements. If any weaknesses and/or significant weaknesses are noted, they should not seriously affect the offeror's performance.
Marginal	The concept note has not demonstrated an adequate approach and exhibits a shallow understanding of the requirements. The approach partially meets the minimum evaluation standard. The concept note contains weaknesses and/or significant weaknesses and may contain deficiencies. If deficiencies exist, they may be correctable. A rating of "marginal" indicates that, in terms of the specific factor (or subfactor), the concept note partially meets the standard for minimal but acceptable performance. The offeror may complete the assigned tasks; however, there is at least a moderate risk that the offeror will not be successful.
Unacceptable	The concept note fails to meet a minimum requirement or contains one or more major deficiencies. The proposal is incomplete, vague, incompatible, incomprehensible, or incorrect as to be unacceptable. The evaluator feels that the deficiency or deficiencies is/are uncorrectable without a major revision of the proposal. The assignment of a rating within the bounds of "unacceptable" indicates that in terms of the specific factor (or subfactor) the proposal fails to meet performance or capability standards and is not awardable.

All technical evaluation factors must be ranked at least “Good” in order to be considered for phase II (co-design).

Review and Selection Process

Once submitted, concept notes will be reviewed by a two-person committee from among DT Global staff, who will ensure all minimum requirements are met by the submission including the following:

- Submission of a concept note in the provided format **not exceeding four (4) pages**
- Submission of a list of required goods and services in the provided format
- Submission of legal registration (if pursuing a cash grant)

This committee will record each proposal received and will document if they met the minimum requirements of the call for concept notes. Once applicants meeting the minimum requirements are identified – those concept notes will move to a three-person technical evaluation team made up of DT Global staff. The committee will score each concept note against the selection criteria listed above.

At this point, concept notes that are rated “good” and above in each category are eligible to move on to the next phase. The highest scoring (outstanding) concept will be selected for negotiation (or phase II), followed by the second highest scoring (very good), and so forth, until the budget attached to the call for concepts is expended. At this time, those concept notes which have been selected for phase II will enter into a co-design phase, wherein the potential grantee works closely with DT Global to further develop the concept note and the budget up until such a time as it can be submitted to USAID for final approval.

If for any reason, the potential grantee and DT Global are unable to come to an agreement on the final grant or budget, DT Global has the right to end further discussion. Likewise, if for any reason, USAID declines to approve the grant, DT Global will end further discussion and return to the next highest scoring concept note and enter a codesign phase with that potential grantee.

After a grantee has been selected for negotiation, they must complete their registration in the System for Award Management (if a Fixed Amount Award grant will be given). Failure to register by the time the design of the grant and budget is complete is grounds for terminating the process, and for returning to the next highest scoring concept note.

VI. Award and Administration Information

Notice of Award

Upon USAID approval of any grant, the grantee will receive by email a grant agreement signed by the Chief of Party of Shejeh Salam (DT Global). Until the grantee signs this document and returns it to Shejeh Salam the activity is not approved, and no expenditure is authorized against the grant.

For potential grantees who were selected for negotiation, but who are not awarded a grant for any reason, DT Global will notify the organization with an official email explaining why the grant will go forward.

For failed applicants, DT Global will not reply to them.

Standard Provisions

Any awards issued under this request for concept notes will be governed by ADS 303mat, Standard Provisions for Fixed Amount Awards to Nongovernmental Organizations, found here: <https://www.usaid.gov/ads/policy/300/303mat>.

Reporting

Reporting requirements for any awards under this request for concept notes will be determined at the co-design stage of the process.

Environmental Determination

Any proposed activities that do not fall within a Categorical Exclusion in line with the Shejeh Salam Environmental Manual must then complete an Environmental Screening Form and Environmental Review Report. These forms must be approved by the USAID environmental officer for the grant to be approved.

VII. Contacts

If you have any questions about the grant application process, please contact shejehsalam-administration@dt-global.com

VIII. Other Information

USAID Shejeh Salam and DT Global reserves the right to fund any or none of the applications submitted.

Attachment I: Shejeh Salam's Objectives, Intermediate Results and Outcomes

Objective 1: Local are building crossline interdependence and intra-community cohesion to promote peace processes and peaceful co-existence

Intermediate Result 1.1: Improved capacity of a wide range of local actors to promote peace and peaceful co-existence

Outcome 1.1.1: Increased community consensus for peaceful coexistence within and / across communities in conflict (*infrastructure and livelihood related results are to be included under IR1.2*)

Outcome 1.1.2: Increased ability of peace actors to mitigate local conflicts

Outcome 1.1.3: Increased capacity and sustainability of peace actors to mitigate local conflicts

Outcome 1.1.4: Increased community knowledge on peace and/or community issues, processes, and decisions

Intermediate Result 1.2: Increased mutual interdependence resulting from infrastructure and livelihoods projects

Outcome 1.2.1: Increased mutually beneficial interactions within and/or across feuding communities as a result of infrastructure and/or livelihood interventions

Outcome 1.2.2: Improved/diversified livelihood for promoting peace and/or social inclusion

Objective 2: Civil society actors are advocating for peace, justice, reconciliation, and reform; and participating in political and civil processes

Intermediate Result 2.1: Civil society and faith-based organizations, individuals, and groups work together for effective peacebuilding, civic education and reconciliation activities that resonate socially and culturally

Outcome 2.1.1: Increased participation of actors and citizens in political and/or civic processes for peace, reconciliation, ceasefire mechanisms, and reform (*other than community level in IR 1.1.1*)

Outcome 2.1.2 Improved linkages between national level and local level civil society

Outcome 2.1.3: Increased the ability of CBOs, CSOs, Associations, Faith Based Organizations (FBOs) to carry out their mandate

Outcome 2.1.4: Increased capacity and sustainability of CSOs, CBOs, FBO to advocate in political and civic processes

Outcome 2.1.5: Increased development and/or dissemination, and use of information for advocacy

Objective 3: Key partners are providing trauma awareness services to communities

Intermediate Result 3.1: Stakeholders recognize signs of trauma and distress and are able to approach intra and inter-community engagement and dialogue with increased sensitivity

Outcome 3.1.1: Increased awareness of trauma and its relation to effective community engagement (including conflict management), for targeted groups

Outcome 3.1.2: Improved community-based trauma support systems, including referral systems, and/or networking/linkages with other trauma support service providers

Outcome 3.1.3: Improved and increased integration of trauma awareness into the other three objectives

Outcome 3.1.4: Increased capacity of local organizations to carry out trauma-related interventions

Objective 4: Print, radio, and other media are providing accurate, fair and thorough information to mitigate the destructive impact of rumor and misinformation

Intermediate results 4.1: Community members access independent media outlets and participate in peaceful and purposeful debate, and are able to resist misinformation, disinformation and hate speech

Outcome 4.1.1: Increased availability of diverse quality information

Outcome 4.1.2: Increased community access to information

Outcome 4.1.3: Increased community debate and interaction through media

Outcome 4.1.4: Strengthened protections of journalists and media houses through local partners

Cross-cutting Results

Intermediate Result Gender (IR G): Increased participation and/or empowerment, of gender and other minorities in peace processes

Outcome G.1: Changed behavior vis-à-vis gender and other minorities norms and practices (gender transformation)

Outcome G.2: Increased awareness on Gender-Based Violence (including early child marriages), participation of women and minorities in community affairs and decision-making, access to services and rights

Outcome G.3: Increased and diversified livelihood opportunities for women and minorities leading to increased empowerment

Intermediate Result Youth (IR Y): Increased youth empowerment and livelihoods

Outcome Y.1: Increased and diversified livelihood opportunities for youth to divert them from being used in conflicts or crimes

Outcome Y.2: Increased youth participation in peace and civic processes