

Request for Concept Notes RfCN No. DT009

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 participation 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 in-kind grants, Fixed Award Amount (FAA) grants, direct delivery of goods and services, technical assistance, and hybrid grants. Shejeh Salam also has a rapid response mechanism to respond quickly to immediate priorities.

Request for Concept Notes:

Under this Request for Concept Notes (RfCN) No. DT009, Shejeh Salam is requesting interested partners to submit their concept notes falling under the second objective **“Civil society actors advocate for peace, justice, reconciliation, and reform; and participate in civic processes”**, with a specific emphasis on **female civic engagement**.

Geographical Focus: the activity will be implemented in Juba and at the national level, but activity ideas with linkages to local level civil society from around the country are encouraged.

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 engaging women in civic education and similar activities, an understanding of the dynamics to be addressed, and sufficient capacity to implement the proposed activities. Activities that demonstrate strong theories of change as to how citizen views can help to shape governmental policy making are strongly encouraged.

Proposed activities may include either cash or “in-kind” support, wherein Shejeh Salam will provide materials or make payments on the grantee's behalf, rather than providing cash directly to the grantee.

Examples of in-kind support may include:

- Paying for venue, lunches, and refreshments for workshops or activities
- Hiring vehicles to support a grantee movement
- Providing limited equipment and supplies to support activities

Partners should be able to demonstrate experience needed to meet the proposed objectives, an understanding of the dynamics to be addressed under the proposed activities, and sufficient capacity to carry out the proposed activities.

Concept notes will be evaluated against the criteria listed below including experience and capacity, coherence of the proposed activities, timeline for implementation of activities, and a realistic “theory of change” behind the activity.

The RfCN note is issued on behalf of USAID, under the Shejeh Salam activity.

II. Eligibility Information

All grants awarded by Shejeh Salam, must tangibly contribute to Shejeh Salam’s objectives relevant to this RfCN, specifically **Women’s Civic Engagement**. Additionally, activities should take place in **Juba**, but may include components engaging with local level civil society around the country.

This opportunity is limited to South Sudanese Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs), women led organizations or groups. In-kind grant activities can be issued to unregistered organizations and informal organizations. The organization(s) must have a history of and/or recent experience in implementing similar programming within the specific county targeted (Juba).

- USAID and Shejeh Salam encourage applications from new partners.
- Cost sharing is not required.
- Organizations are limited to one (1) submission under this funding opportunity.

Further information can be found in section **V. Application Review Information**.

III. Federal Award Information

Estimated Total Budget under this Request for Concept Notes opportunity:	Approximately \$100,000
Estimated Number of Awards to Be Made:	2 - 3
Financial Range of Individual Awards (Provided In-Kind):	\$40,000 to \$100,000
Anticipated Start Dates:	October, 2023
Period of Performance:	6 Months
Award Mechanism:	Cash or In-kind Grants

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 can ask for a copy of the RfCN no.009 documentation at shejhsalam-administration@dt-global.com and is required to send the mandatory completed concept note documentation electronically by the deadline to the following email address: shejhsalam-administration@dt-global.com

In the subject line, the applicant must write **RfCN no. DT009**

Content and Format of Submission

Applicants are welcome to submit their concept in the Concept Note format. Following Submission of concept note, Selected Applicants will be invited to give presentations to the selection committee.

I. Concept Note Submission (Max three (3) pages) – See Attachment 2

- The concept note needs to be submitted using the provided template. All sections must be filled out, but the entire concept note is **not to exceed three (3) pages**. Exceeding page length limits will result in disqualification.
- Concept notes must be written in English

Unique Entity Identifier (UEI) Number and System for Award Management (SAM)

Applicants who are selected for further negotiation for an award must apply for Unique Entity Identifier (UEI) Number through SAM.gov 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 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 electronically by 17:00 Central African Time (CAT) on **September 27, 2023**. Shejeh Salam will check all applications against the time they were received in the above-mentioned email account, not by WhatsApp. WhatsApp will only be used to share the RfCN no. DT009 documentation and to share questions.

Potential applicants may submit any questions regarding the RfCN to shejhsalam-administration@dt-global.com or by sending a message on **WhatsApp +211924007606** by 17:00 Central African Time on **September 13, 2023**, at the latest. Shejeh Salam will share the questions and answers with all interested parties who sent an email to shejhsalam-administration@dt-global.com or by **WhatsApp +211924007606** by Close of Business **September 15, 2023**.

Funding Restrictions

- Construction or rehabilitation of infrastructure will not be approved under the RfCN process.
- 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 six (6) months and must be complete by September 15, 2024. The RfCN will be automatically disqualified if the proposed activity(ies) are longer than six (6) months.

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, geographic focus, or potential partners do not adequately share examples of previous experience in the county proposed for activities.

Selection Criteria

Presentations for selected applicants that submitted an Expression of Interest and 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 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 Shejeh Salam's objectives?	
Relevant Experience	Does the grantee have experience in the selected county running similar thematic projects with donor funding?	
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.
Very Good	The concept note indicates a thorough approach and understanding of the requirements. The proposal contains at least one strength.
Good	The concept note meets the requirements . The proposal may contain weaknesses and/or significant weaknesses that are correctable but does not contain deficiencies.
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 .
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.

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 and expressions of interest will be reviewed by a three-person committee from among DT Global staff, who will ensure all minimum requirements are met by the submission including the following:

- All sections of the document are properly filled out
- Concept notes do not exceed three pages

This committee will record each concept and expression of interest received and will document if they met the minimum requirements. Once applicants meeting the minimum requirements are identified, Shejeh Salam will schedule presentations for all those submitting expressions of interest. Presentations and concept notes will be reviewed by the three-person technical evaluation team. Each concept or presentation will be scored against the selection criteria listed above.

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 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. Only grants which have scored at least a “good” in every category will be eligible to reach this point.

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 co-design phase with that potential grantee.

VI. Award and Administration Information

Notice of Award

Upon USAID approval of any grant, the grantee will receive a grant agreement by email. Once the grantee signs this document and returns it to Shejeh Salam and Shejeh Salam returns the fully executed agreement, the activity is officially approved. No expenditure or activity implementation is authorized against the grant until the grant agreement is fully signed.

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 unsuccessful 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.