

Small and Medium Enterprise Assistance for Recovery and Transition (SMART) Activity

Policy Advocacy Initiatives Program (SMART-BEE 2)

Issuance Date: June 5th, 2024
Closing Date: December 31st, 2024
Closing Time: 16:30
Closing date of submitting questions: November 30th, 2024
Closing date of answering questions: December 10th, 2024

Subject: Request for Applications (RFA) Number SMART-RFA-009
“Policy Advocacy Initiatives Program (SMART-BEE 2)”

Reference: Issued Under SMART Project USAID Cooperative Agreement No. 72029421CA00001

The **Small and Medium Enterprise Assistance for Recovery and Transition (SMART) Project** is a four year, USAID funded program implemented by DAI. The SMART Project is committed to recovery, revitalization, and resilience of Palestinian micro, small, and medium enterprises (MSMEs), and this includes resolving policy and institutional constraints and leveraging evidence-based decision making. The Project aims to jumpstart the competitiveness of firms with potential to increase market share and employment opportunities. SMART will help the Palestinian private sector regain productivity and build a future of sustainable growth in the West Bank, Gaza, and East Jerusalem.

As a part of this effort, SMART will launch the **Policy Advocacy Initiatives Program (SMART-BEE 2)**. This program will build on the results of the completed SMART-BEE, which increased the capacity of organizations to address policy reform challenges facing SME growth and competitiveness. BEE 2 will do this by focusing directly on policy reform paper drafting and advocacy, as it will target past and prospective institutional partnerships.

Organizations are invited to apply online. The total value of individual grants will be determined based on application assessment.

Applications will be reviewed and evaluated on a first-come first-serve basis. SMART reserves the right to fund any or none of the applications submitted. Applications must be received by the closing date indicated at the top of this cover letter.

For the purposes of **Policy Advocacy Initiatives Program**, this RFA is being issued and consists of this cover letter and the following:

- Section A – Application Procedure
- Section B – Selection Process

- Section C – Special Award Requirements
- Section D – Annexes
- Section E – Program Announcement
- Section F: Program Application

Issuance of this RFA does not constitute an award commitment on the part of SMART, nor does it commit SMART to pay for costs incurred in the preparation and submission of an application. Further, SMART reserves the right to reject any or all applications received. Applications are submitted at the risk of the applicant. **All preparation and submission costs are at the applicant's expense.** Any questions concerning this RFA should be submitted in writing not later than the closing date shown above to ApplicationSMART@dai.com.

Thank you for your interest in SMART's **Policy Advocacy Initiatives Program (SMART-BEE 2)**.

Sincerely,

Said Abu Hijleh

Chief of Party

SMART-RFA-009

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SECTION A - APPLICATION PROCEDURE

To qualify for consideration, beneficiaries must meet the minimum eligibility requirements. Eligible beneficiaries will be evaluated and selected based on the extent to which they meet the selection criteria.

QUALIFICATION OF APPLICANTS

PROGRAM OBJECTIVE

Based on the output of SMART-BEE including enhanced policy reform agenda setting capacities within SMART IPs, SMART-BEE 2 will move forward to:

- Determine policy intervention priorities and draft policy reform papers that respond to the needs that **emerged out of the current situation.**
- Determine policy intervention priorities and draft policy reform papers that respond to **pre-existing policy challenges.**
- Develop policy advocacy strategies to allow for the adoption of the private sector's policy reform agenda.

TARGET BENEFICIARIES

The target beneficiaries are Palestinian Private Sector Organizations, which are registered non-U.S. non-governmental organizations and non-for-profit organizations. Private Sector institutions representing segment(s) of SMEs and/or Startups (individual companies are ineligible).

Eligible organizations could include, Private sector Institutions, Sector Associations, Research Centers, Cooperative, Universities etc. DAI encourages an approach that establishes partnerships with several partner organizations and builds them into legacy institutions capable of sustaining development projects in the future.

ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA

To be considered eligible for this program, interested applicants must meet the following criteria:

- Registered non-U.S., non-governmental, non-for-profit institution.
- Be legally recognized and registered. Registration documents and statutes must be submitted.
- Not be affiliated with a political party nor engaged in any political activities.
- Not be focused solely on religious activities.
- Representing the shared economic interests of multiple for-profit entities, including SMEs and/or Startups (individual companies are ineligible)

SELECTION CRITERIA

Eligible applicants will be evaluated based on the following selection criteria:

- Relevance of the proposed policy intervention to SMART-BEE 2 program goal of addressing policy challenges before SMEs to increase their competitiveness and growth potential.
- Soundness of technical approach to researching, drafting, and advocate for the recommendations of policy reform papers
- Proven history of project management and institutional capacity to implement the proposed project.

- Commitment to and ability to conduct policy advocacy for the achievement of policy reforms beyond the proposed project timeline and scope.
- Sustainability of the proposed concept sans SMART financial assistance

SOLICITATION METHOD

SMART will publicly announce a Request for Application (RFA).

PROGRAM DURATION

RFA will be announced with an 8-months application window. SMART will assess applications on a rolling basis (first-come, first-served). The application window may be extended or reopened following the RFA submission deadline. SMART will engage with selected PSOs over a period of up to nine months after grant signature.

ENGAGEMENT METHOD

SMART will engage with beneficiaries by Grant Agreements and/or Letter of Agreements (LoAs). Types of grant agreements will be determined according to the beneficiary's financial and management capabilities.

SMART COVERAGE AND BENEFICIARY CONTRIBUTION

No percentage of beneficiary contribution will be required; however, partners are encouraged to contribute resources from their own private or local sources for the implementation of their activity, where feasible.

ASSISTANCE DELIVERY AND TERMS

This assistance will be delivered through agreements with organizations as well as activities implemented by SMART. The agreements may include grants and/or letters of agreement (LOAs).

Agreements will include, but are not limited to the following:

- Engagement with individual consultants or consulting firms to develop policy reform papers.
- Training by SMART staff and STTAs on policy reform issue prioritization and advocacy.
- Supporting the recruitment of advocacy and policy in-house leads.
- Engagement with individual consultants or consulting firms to develop policy advocacy plans and strategies.
- Engagement with individual consultants or consulting firms to develop policy unit foundational documents.

PROGRAM BUDGET

The total Program Budget is \$400,000 (combined Grants and Program funding). The expected number of organizations is 5-8.

APPLICATION SUBMISSION

REQUIREMENTS

Organizations will be invited to apply online through SMART website www.smartproject.ps, by navigating to the page entitled: **Policy Advocacy Initiatives Program (SMART-BEE 2)**. For further inquiries, email ApplicationSMART@dai.com.

Upon receipt, SMART will review the firm's application to determine that:

- All information has been provided on the application form.
- All the documents requested in the application form and its RFA have been submitted.
- Requested assistance is consistent with the strategic objectives of the program.
- Statement of liability (part of application form) is included.

If the application does not meet the submission requirements outlined above, the Firm will be notified of SMART's decision to deny the requested assistance and the application will not be moved forward in the review process.

If the applicant meets the submission requirements, they will be contacted to arrange a site visit by the SMART team. The purpose of the visit is to discuss and clarify the proposed program description, verify, and complete all submitted documents. In addition, SMART will conduct an assessment during the site visit to build a business case for the proposed intervention and to ensure that the firm is ready to engage and is committed to combining their resources with SMART assistance to achieve sustainable results.

DEADLINES

Online applications must be submitted by the closing date and time indicated in the cover letter. The rolling application means that firms need not delay submission to the deadline—the review and selection process can begin as soon as applications are submitted.

LATE APPLICATIONS

All applications received by the deadline will be reviewed for responsiveness and programmatic merit according to the specifications outlined in the RFA. **Section B** addresses the selection process for the applications. Applications which are submitted late, or are incomplete, run the risk of not being considered in the review process.

MONITORING (RESULTS AND BENCHMARKS):

The applicant should define, to the maximum extent possible at the application stage, the expected results and benchmarks for monitoring the performance towards attainment of program objectives.

PREPARATION INSTRUCTIONS – FINANCIAL AND ADMINISTRATIVE DOCUMENTATION

Before signing the grant agreement, the following documents should be submitted:

- Copies of valid workmen compensation insurances
- Unique Entity ID (SAM) (described below)

UNIQUE ENTITY ID (SAM)

SMART needs to collect UEI (SAM) from grantees and subcontractors that meet the specified thresholds and update its records with these new UEI (SAM). SMART Purchase Order/Subcontractor/Grant (number) to your organization meets the specified threshold, and therefore you are requested to obtain and provide us with your organization's UEI (SAM). This is a mandatory requirement for any future payments or awards.

Getting a Unique Entity ID (SAM) is easy and FREE to all organizations. Review this video (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0uvIYNAslNk>) from the US Government for more information about how to get a UEI (SAM). Any future US Government procurements or grants that exceed the thresholds will require organizations to have a 12-digit UEI (SAM).

END OF SECTION A

SECTION B - SELECTION PROCESS

SMART will convene a review panel to review all applications that meet the submission requirements outlined above. The review panel will include technical and non-technical members of the SMART project. Throughout the evaluation process, SMART shall take steps to ensure that members of the review panel do not have any conflicts of interest or the appearance of such with regards to the organizations whose applicants are under review. Members of the panel shall neither solicit nor accept gratuities, favors, or anything of monetary value from parties to the awards.

The applications will be evaluated according to the evaluation criteria set forth below. To the extent necessary (if award is not made based on initial applications), negotiations may be conducted with each applicant whose application, after discussion and negotiation, has a reasonable chance of being selected for award.

Application review will be first-come first-served, and it will be based on the evaluation criteria and scoring system identified below. The passing score is 70. The funds available will determine the number of awards.

EVALUATION CRITERIA TABLE

Evaluation Criteria	Max Score	Score	Comments
Relevance to SMART-BEE 2	30		SMART-BEE 2 program goal is the addressing policy challenges before SMEs to increase competitiveness and growth potential.
Soundness of Technical Approach	25		Clear steps to researching, drafting, and advocate for the recommendations of policy reform papers
Proven Project Management & Institutional Capacity	15		Previous experiences in achieving objectives of cooperations with donors under strict budgetary and time constraints
Commitment to Policy Advocacy	20		Demonstrate the ability and the commitment to pursue a policy advocacy agenda beyond the timeline and scope of project.
Sustainability of the proposed concept sans SMART financial assistance	10		Demonstrate the ability and willingness to continue carrying out activities to achieve the objectives of the proposed project beyond immediate cooperation.
TOTAL SCORE	100		

SIGNING OF AWARD

Upon USAID concurrence of the applicant and the results of the environmental monitoring and mitigation plan (EMMP), a suitable Grant Agreement will be prepared. After SMART and the successful applicant have signed the Agreement, SMART will provide training on financial management and reporting, if necessary. SMART will follow up with the applicant to ensure that the

necessary environmental mitigation measures are considered so that the activities are carried out on an environmentally sound basis.

All reporting and contractual obligations will be explained to the successful applicant at a kick-off meeting.

SMART and USAID reserve the right to fund any or none of the applications received.

END OF SECTION B

SECTION C - SPECIAL AWARD REQUIREMENTS

The applicant shall bear in mind the following special requirements may be applicable to any award resulting from this RFA:

Reporting Procedures: A description of reporting requirements will be included in the Grant Agreements. The types of reporting required, along with the schedule of reporting, will depend on the grant type and project duration. Reporting forms will be provided to grant recipients. Types of reporting will include the following:

- **Periodic Report** (Quarterly and Yearly Reports) will describe the progress of the Firms achieved during a certain period. Information related to sales, exports, employment, market share, investments should be reported. The Firm can highlight any potential and existing problems in this report.
- **Final Program Report** (Close-out Report) will describe how the project objectives and goals were reached, results of the project, and problems and solutions during implementation. This information should be presented in a manner suitable for presentation to the public.
- **Financial Reports** will be submitted to DAI according to a schedule described in the grant agreements. Types of financial reports, as well as the schedule of reporting, will depend on the type of grant, length of project, and amount of grant funding. Financial reports will be required to receive grant installments. These reports will describe the amount of grant funds spent during the previous period, total amount spent to date, and amount remaining in each budget line item. In addition, all grant recipients are required to submit a detailed Final Financial Report.

Issuance of the final installment of grant funds is contingent upon DAI's receipt and acceptance of Final Financial and Final Program Reports.

Project Monitoring: DAI staff will monitor projects in terms of both programmatic and financial aspects. Grant recipients will be expected to facilitate monitoring by making relevant information available to DAI staff.

Restrictions: Funds provided under any resulting agreement shall **not** be used to finance any of the following:

Funds provided under any resulting agreement shall **not** be used to finance any of the following:

1. Construction¹ is not eligible for reimbursement under SMART,
2. Goods or services which are to be used primarily to meet military requirements or to support police or other law enforcement activities,
3. Surveillance equipment,
4. Equipment, research and/or services related to involuntary sterilization or the performance of abortion as a method of family planning,
5. Gambling equipment, supplies for gambling facilities or any firms, casinos, or accommodations in which gambling facilities are or are planned to be located,
6. Commodities and services for support of police or other law enforcement activities,
7. Activities which significantly degrade national parks or similar protected areas or introduce exotic plants or animals into such areas, or

¹ Construction means —construction, alteration, or repair (including dredging and excavation) of buildings, structures, or other real property and includes, without limitation, improvements, renovation, alteration and refurbishment. The term includes, without limitation, roads, power plants, buildings, bridges, water treatment facilities, and vertical structures.

8. Establishment or development of any export processing zone or designated area where the labor, environmental, tax, tariff, and/or safety laws of the country in which such activity takes place would not apply,
9. Weather modification equipment,
10. Pharmaceuticals,
11. Pesticides,
12. Logging equipment,
13. Luxury goods (including alcoholic beverages and jewelry),
14. Establishing or expanding any enterprise that will export raw materials that are likely to be in surplus in world markets at the time such production becomes effective and that are likely to cause substantial injury to U.S. producers,
15. Activities which would result in the loss of forest lands due to livestock rearing, road construction or maintenance, colonization of forest lands or construction of dams or other water control structures,
16. Activities which are likely to have a significant adverse effect on the environment, including any of the following (to the extent such activities are likely to have a significant adverse impact on the environment):
 - i. Activities which may lead to degrading the quality or renewability of natural resources.
 - ii. Activities which may lead to degrading the presence or health of threatened ecosystems or biodiversity.
 - iii. Activities which may lead to degrading long-term viability of agricultural or forestry production (including through use of pesticides).
 - iv. Activities which may lead to degrading community and social systems, including potable water supply, land administration, community health and well-being or social harmony.
17. Activities which are likely to involve the loss of jobs in the United States due to the relocation or expansion outside of the United States of an enterprise located in the United States, or
18. Activities which the awardee is aware are reasonably likely to contribute to the violation of internationally or locally recognized rights of workers,
19. Activities to support the production of agricultural commodities for export from when such commodities would directly compete with exports of similar United States agricultural commodities to third countries and have a significant impact on United States exporters,
20. Trading Companies who mainly specialized in covering all export and import operations and procedures,
21. Used equipment,
22. U.S. Government-owned excess property.

END OF SECTION C

SECTION D - ANNEXES

ANNEX 1: USAID STANDARD PROVISIONS

Pursuant to 2 CFR 700.13, it is USAID policy not to award profit under assistance instruments such as grant awards. However, all reasonable, allocable, and allowable expenses, both direct and indirect, which are related to the grant program and are in accordance with applicable cost standards (2 CFR 200 Subpart E for all US-based and for non-US based non-profit organizations, and the Federal Acquisition Regulation (FAR) Part 31 for for-profit organizations), may be paid under the grant.

For non-US organizations, the Standard Provisions for Non-US Nongovernmental Recipients will apply. <https://www.usaid.gov/sites/default/files/documents/303mab.pdf>

For US organizations, 2 CFR 200 and the Standard Provisions for U.S. Nongovernmental Recipients will apply. <https://www.usaid.gov/sites/default/files/documents/1868/303maa.pdf>

ANNEX 2: CERTIFICATIONS, ASSURANCES, OTHER STATEMENTS OF THE RECIPIENT

In accordance with ADS 303.3.8, DAI will require successful grant applicants to submit a signed copy of the following certifications and assurances, as applicable:

1. Assurance of Compliance with Laws and Regulations Governing Non-Discrimination in Federally Assisted Programs (Note: This certification applies to non-U.S. organizations if any part of the program will be undertaken in the United States.)

2. Certification Regarding Lobbying (This certification applies to grants greater than \$100,000.)

3. Prohibition on Assistance to Drug Traffickers for Covered Countries and Individuals (ADS 206)

4. Certification Regarding Terrorist Financing, Implementing Executive Order 13224

5. Certification Regarding Trafficking in Persons, Implementing Title XVII of the National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2013 (Note: *This certification applies if grant for services required to be performed outside of the United States is greater than \$500,000. This certification must be submitted annually to the USAID Agreement Officer during the term of the grant.*)

6. Certification of Recipient

In addition, the following certifications will be included **Part II – Key Individual Certification Narcotics Offenses and Drug Trafficking** (Note: Only as required per ADS 206 for Key Individuals or Covered Participants in covered countries.)

Part III – Participant Certification Narcotics Offenses and Drug Trafficking (Note: Only as required per ADS 206 for Key Individuals or Covered Participants in covered countries.)

Part IV – Representation by Organization Regarding a Delinquent Tax Liability or a Felony Criminal Conviction

Part V – Other Statements of Recipient

Part VI – Standard Provisions for Solicitations

(Note: Parts V & VI – Are included in the grant file as part of the grant application.)

END OF SECTION D

