



Request for Proposals

Smart Cities Business Innovation Fund 2.0

Net-Zero Urban Innovation Projects

APPLICATION DUE: January 15, 2025

Notice: Issuance of this solicitation does not constitute an award commitment on behalf the U.S. Department of State. A final award cannot be made until the proposal has been reviewed and approved, and an award agreement is drawn up and signed by Stockholm Environment Institute (SEI). SEI reserves the right to decide not to issue an award after receipt of the proposal. SEI also reserves the right to reduce, revise, and/or increase proposal budget in accordance with the needs of the program and availability of funds.

1. PROGRAM OBJECTIVES

The U.S.-ASEAN Smart Cities Partnership (“USASCP”), in collaboration with Stockholm Environment Institute (SEI) has launched a US \$3 million request for proposals (RFP) for small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) in ASEAN pioneering sustainable, net-zero/low carbon solutions to address urban challenges under the Smart Cities Business Innovation Fund 2.0 (BIF 2.0). This RFP builds upon the 2022 Smart Cities Business Innovation Fund (BIF), a pilot program launched as a sub-national climate finance mechanism funding innovative, net-zero/low-carbon products and services. More information about the BIF and the previous cohort of grantees can be found [here](#). The aim was, and remains, to address urban needs in the ASEAN region and provide stakeholders at the city level with the resources to accelerate climate action in support of urban sustainability and reinforce countries’ Nationally Determined Contributions.

This solicitation is for small (10-49 employees) and medium (50-249 employees) sized enterprises in the ASEAN region. We also welcome applications from non-profit organizations including NGOs and universities, so long as applications demonstrate how they plan to scale. It is open to innovative proposals that help advance climate action by reducing greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions and strengthening the adaptive capacity of cities while advancing urban equity and social inclusion. While proposals *must demonstrate clear relevance and applicability to urban areas*, proposals could also consider rural-urban linkages and integrated development solutions. Examples of topics include, but are not limited to:

- Nature-based solutions, (e.g., life sciences, biotech, ecosystem-based adaptation, green infrastructure, etc.)

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- Smart sustainable cities development, AI, and digital tools
- Sustainable urban solutions (e.g., waste management, waste valorization/upcycling, housing, health, transportation, and mobility)
- Renewable energy
- Negative emissions technologies
- Decentralized solutions
- Disaster risk reduction and resilience
- Social business

The fund will finance approximately 10-15 projects in amounts of US\$200,000.00-\$400,000.00.

2. AWARD INFORMATION FOR ASEAN ENTITIES

Length of performance period: 24 to 36 months

Anticipated award amount: US \$200,000.00-\$400,000.00

Type of funding: U.S. Economic Support Funds under the Foreign Assistance Act

Anticipated project funding start date: Second Quarter 2025 (April to June)

Funding instrument type: Grant

This notice is subject to availability of funding.

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The awardee will consult Stockholm Environment Institute (SEI) to monitor grant implementation and progress, advise on technical matters, and facilitate business market connections.

3. ELIGIBILITY REQUIREMENTS

SEI will carry out an independent application review and screening process to confirm project eligibility for financial support in accordance with U.S. national laws and regulations.

3a. Eligibility

Eligible applicants for the application are ASEAN entities, a legally registered ASEAN company, NGO, and/or university in an ASEAN Member State (Brunei, Cambodia, Indonesia, Lao PDR, Malaysia, Myanmar, Philippines, Singapore, Thailand, and Viet Nam) with at least 51% ASEAN ownership.

- City governments are eligible to join the project application and provide problem statements or in-kind support but will not be funded by SEI. The target audience for project implementation will be ASEAN grant recipients.

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- Applicants can apply individually or with additional ASEAN partners to form a consortium.
- U.S. companies and U.S. entities operating in ASEAN and/or with interests in the region are eligible to join the project application and provide problem statements or in-kind support but will not be funded by SEI.

3b. Additional Eligibility Requirements

In order to be eligible to receive an award, all ASEAN organizations receiving U.S. Government funding must have a Unique Entity Identifier (UEI) number issued via www.SAM.gov. Please see 6b for more information. Individuals are not required to have a UEI or be registered in SAM.gov.

Note: Applicants are only allowed to submit one proposal.

NOTE: Funding restrictions for ASEAN entities

In accordance with the U.S. National Defense Authorization Act (NDAA), Section 703(c)(3), no funds under this award may be used for any project or activity that directly supports or promotes:

- the Belt and Road Initiative or any dual-use infrastructure projects of the People’s Republic of China; or
- the use of technology, including biotechnology, digital, telecommunications, and cyber, developed by the People’s Republic of China, unless the Secretary of State, in consultation with the USAID Administrator and the heads of other Federal agencies as appropriate, determines that such use does not adversely impact the national security of the United States.

4. PROJECT REQUIREMENTS

Project proposals must comply with the following requirements:

- The project should focus on the development of new or scaling of existing products or services offering low-carbon or net-zero solution to urban challenges. “Innovation” can also refer to new ways to scale or apply existing products or services, i.e. process innovation.
- If applicable, the project partners should agree in advance on the IP rights and on the commercialization strategy of the product and process.
- The period of performance of the project should be no less than 24 months and no more than 36 months.

5. APPLICATION

5a. Formatting guidelines

Please ensure:

- The proposal clearly addresses the goals and objectives of this funding opportunity,

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- All documents are in English,
- All budgets are in U.S. dollars (\$),
- All pages are numbered,
- All pages state the project title in the header,
- The project proposal narrative (Section 4) (excluding cover sheet, table of contents, organization details, budget and other attachments) is a **maximum of 3,000 words**, and
- All Microsoft Word documents are 12-point Calibri font.

5b. Application Components

Please ensure your application includes the following items, with each document labeled in the format as the items are listed (example: Part 1 – Project Cover Sheet).

Application Checklist:

- 1 – Project Cover Sheet
- 2 – Table of Contents
- 3 – Organization Details Chart
- 4 – Project Narrative (3,000 words maximum)
- 5 – Detailed Budget (using provided Excel template)
- 6 – Budget Narrative
- 7 – 1-page CV or resume of key program personnel who are proposed for the program
- 8 – Minimum of two (2) past performance evaluations (using provided Microsoft Word template)
- 9 – If your organization has a NICRA, the NICRA charges must be included in the budget and, your latest NICRA should be included as a PDF file
- 10 – Official permission letters, if required for program activities

* * *

Please ensure your application includes the following elements:

1. Project Cover Sheet

One-page cover sheet stating the applicant's name(s) and organization(s), proposal date, project title, project period of performance, funding request, and brief purpose of the project.

2. Table of Contents

Not to exceed one page

3. Organization details

Please replicate the chart below for each ASEAN entity if applying as a consortium.

Legal Entity
Full name
Street

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Province/Region		Country	
Postal Code		City	
Website		Email	WhatsApp #

Background	
Year(s) established	
No. of employees	
Parent organization (if any)	
Type of organization	SME/Large company/Other:
Brief description of expertise/business sector, relevant past and present operations, and market description & strategy (max. 300 words)	

4. Project Narrative

Not to exceed 3,000 words

The proposal should contain sufficient information that anyone not familiar with the solicitation would understand exactly what the applicant wants to do. You may use your own proposal format, but it must include all the items below.

1. **Proposal summary:** Short narrative that outlines the proposed project, including title, objectives, anticipated impact, and scope, including main research and development (R&D) activities. For consortium applications, please outline the rationale for the partnership and the division of labor among all partners.
2. **Description of the innovation and rationale:** What novel product, service, process is being proposed? How is it distinct from other products, services and processes that are available? Include a clear rationale for why the innovation is needed and how it responds to important urban challenge(s), with reference to literature. How is this project aligned with local/ national/regional policy and priorities? What is the target market and market demand in terms of size, customers, market niche, and geographical coverage?
3. **Project goals and objectives:** The “goals” describe what the project is intended to achieve, both quantitatively and qualitatively (please describe). The “objectives” refer to the intermediate accomplishments on the path to the goals. These should be achievable and measurable.
4. **Project activities, methods, and outputs:** Describe the project activities, methods and outputs, and how they will help achieve the objectives.

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- a. **Intellectual property:** What IP, research articles, etc. are you planning to produce? How will you treat IP entering the project, developed within the project, and after the project? Please indicate any early agreement with your partner on splitting export markets, sales, revenue, licensing, etc.
 - b. **Scaling and technological roadmap:** Describe some of your future plans in terms of product development/scaling, enhancing capabilities through R&D and/or other means:
 - i. How does this project contribute to these longer-term goals?
 - ii. What plans does the company have in terms of a three-to-five-year technological roadmap?
5. **Key personnel and staffing plan:** Provide 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? Organizational chart suggested.
 6. **Monitoring and evaluation plan:** Indicate the key metrics of success you will consider and how you plan to measure them (e.g., GHG emissions avoided, number of people receiving improved services, etc.).

5. Detailed Budget

Please populate the provided Budget Summary Template excel sheet (usascp.org/apply/).

6. Budget Narrative

Not to exceed 1,000 words

After completing the Budget Template, describe each of the budget expenses in detail in a cohesive narrative. See the following guidelines for budget justification for more information:

1. **Staff salary:** 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.
2. **Other manpower-related costs:** Estimate the Cost of Living Allowance (COLA), costs for travel/airfare, and any training costs. If the project involves international travel, include a brief statement of justification for that travel.
3. **Hardware/equipment and software; materials & consumables:** Describe any machinery, furniture, computer devices, or other personal property that is required for the project, including but not limited to hardware/equipment, software, and other materials & consumables. Alcoholic beverages are not permitted.
4. **Professional services (sub-contractor services/consultancy fees):** Describe goods and services that the applicant plans to acquire through a contract with a vendor or sub-contractor. Describe any sub-awards or consultancy fees to non-profit partners or ASEAN consortium partners that will help carry out the project activities.
5. **Intellectual property:** Describe any costs or fees associated with intellectual property agreements or rights.

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6. **Testing & certifications:** Describe any fees or costs associated with testing and/or certifications required to carry out the project.
7. **Other costs:** Describe other costs directly associated with the project that do not fit in the other categories. For example, this includes shipping costs for materials and equipment or applicable taxes. All “Other” or “Miscellaneous” expenses must be itemized and explained.
8. **Approach to cost sharing:** Describe contributions from the organization or other entities other than the U.S. Embassy. Cost-sharing can be financial or in-kind such as volunteers’ time and donated venues. **A 15-30% cost share required from the applicant.**
9. **Limitations to use of US funding:** Please elaborate on any possible limitations to the use of US funding.

7. Key Program Personnel

Provide a one (1)-page CV or resume of key program personnel who are proposed for the program.

8. Past Performance Evaluations

Provide a minimum of two (2) past performance evaluations (using the provided Microsoft Word template at usascp.org/apply/)

9. Project Workplan

Provide a project workplan which shows timeline and phasing of activities.

10. NICRA

If your organization has a Negotiated Indirect Cost Rate (NICRA) and includes NICRA charges in your budget, your latest NICRA should be included in a PDF file. A NICRA is an indirect cost rate negotiated between the grant administrator and grantee organization which reflects the indirect costs (facilities and administrative costs), and fringe benefit expenses incurred by the organization.

11. Permission Letters (if required)

If required for program activities, provide official permission letters.

5c. Application process

Applications should be submitted to the [Track 1 Application Portal](#).

Applications are due no later than January 15, 2025.

Please compress application documents into a **ZIP** file and **label** the documents according to the following application checklist (example: Part 1 – Program Cover Sheet):

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Application Checklist:

- 1 – Program Cover Sheet
- 2 – Table of Contents
- 3 – Organization Details Chart
- 4 – Project Proposal (3,000 words maximum)
- 5 – Detailed Budget (using provided Excel template)
- 6 – Budget Narrative
- 7 – 1-page CV or resume of key program personnel who are proposed for the program
- 8 – Minimum of two (2) past performance evaluations (using provided Microsoft Word template)
- 9 – If your organization has a NICRA and includes NICRA charges in the budget, your latest NICRA should be included as a PDF file
- 10 – Official permission letters, if required for program activities

A [virtual information session](#) for interested applicants will be hosted on **Tuesday, November 19 at 9 a.m. (ICT)**. Interested applicants can register at the hyperlinks or from the application page at usascp.org/apply.

Please submit all questions to the [message board](#). All questions should be submitted by **6 p.m. on Tuesday, November 26 (ICT)**. Responses will be addressed on a rolling basis during the information session and compiled into a Q&A document which will be shared at usascp.org/apply. For additional clarification, please reach out to Chloe Pottinger-Glass (chloe.pottingerglass@sei.org).

5d. Scoring criteria

Applications will be scored out of 100 according to the following criteria.

Criteria	Proposal sections we will use to evaluate	Points available
1. Organizational capacity To what extent does the proposal provide clear evidence of the applicant’s capacity to execute the project?	3. -- Organization Details 4.5. – Personnel and Staffing Plan 7. – Key Program Personnel 8. – Performance Evaluations	30
2. Innovation and relevance To what extent does the proposal offer a novel product, service or approach that can address the urban challenge identified? To what extent could the project catalyze future action in the region?	4.2 – Description of Innovation and Rationale 4.3. – Project Goals and Objectives	30

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<p>3. Feasibility How feasible is the proposed project within the timeframe and budget? How robust is the methodology? Have clear metrics of success been identified?</p>	<p>4.4. – Activities, Methods and Outputs 4.6 – Monitoring and Evaluation Plan 5. – Detailed Budget 6. – Budget Narrative 9 – Workplan & Timeline</p>	<p>30</p>
<p>4. Value for money Does the proposal provide good value for money in terms of funding requested compared to anticipated impacts? Have cost-sharing arrangements been identified?</p>	<p>6.8 – Approach to Cost-sharing</p>	<p>10</p>

6. AWARD ADMINISTRATION INFORMATION

6a. Award notice and national policy requirements

The grant will be written, signed, awarded, and administered by SEI. 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 SEI.

Since the award will be issued with USG funding, SEI must adhere to U.S. rules and regulations in regard to the issuance and monitoring of the award. Issuance of this solicitation letter 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 proposal received.

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, and the Department of State Standard Terms and Conditions which are available at: <https://www.state.gov/about-us-office-of-the-procurement-executive/>. Note the U.S Flag branding and marking requirements in the Standard Terms and Conditions.

By submitting an application, applicants acknowledge that certain non-confidential data gathered in the project, such as grantee’s progress against indicators and impact stories may be used externally.

6b. Unique Entity Identifier (UEI) and System for Award Management (SAM.gov)

Required Registrations:

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All organizations (except individuals) must obtain a registration from SAM.gov. All are free of charge at www.SAM.gov registration, which will generate a Unique Entity Identifier (UEI).

Any applicant with an exclusion 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."

The Unique Entity Identifier (UEI) is one of the data elements mandated by Public Law 109-282, the Federal Funding Accountability and Transparency Act (FFATA), for all Federal awards. SAM.gov is the Federal government's primary database for complying with FFATA reporting requirements. OMB designated SAM.gov as the central repository to facilitate applicant and recipient use of a single public website that consolidates data on all federal financial assistance. Under the law, it is mandatory to register in SAM.gov.

Starting April 2022, the UEI will be assigned when an organization registers or renews its registration in SAM.gov at www.SAM.gov. To access SAM.gov an organization is required to have a Login.gov account. Organization can create an account at <https://login.gov/>.

SAM.gov requires all entities to renew their registration once a year in order to maintain an active registration status in SAM.gov. It is the responsibility of the applicant to ensure it has an active registration in SAM.gov.

Note: The process of obtaining or renewing a SAM.gov registration may take anywhere from 4-8 weeks. Please begin your registration as early as possible.

- Organizations **based in the United States** or that pay employees within the United States will need an Employer Identification Number (EIN) from the Internal Revenue Service (IRS) and a UEI number prior to registering in SAM.gov.
- Organizations **based outside of the United States** and that do not pay employees within the United States do not need an EIN from the IRS.

If an organization plans to issue a sub-award, those sub-awardees must also have a unique entity identifier (UEI number). Those entities can register for a UEI only at SAM.gov.

All organizations (except individuals) must obtain these registrations, which are free of charge.

Note: *As of April 2022, a DUNS number is no longer required.*

Exemptions

An exemption from the UEI and SAM.gov registration requirements may be permitted on a case-by-case basis if:

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- An applicant’s identity must be protected due to potential endangerment of their mission, their organization’s status, their employees, or individuals being served by the applicant.
- For an applicant, if the Federal awarding agency makes a determination that there are exigent circumstances that prohibit the applicant from receiving a unique entity identifier and completing SAM registration prior to receiving a Federal award. In these instances, Federal awarding agencies must require the recipient to obtain a unique entity identifier and complete SAM registration within 30 days of the Federal award date.

Organizations requesting exemption from UEI or SAM.gov requirements must email the point of contact listed in the NOFO at least two weeks prior to the deadline in the NOFO providing a justification of their request. Approval for a SAM.gov exemption must come from the warranted Grants Officer before the application can be deemed eligible for review.

6c. Project funding terms

For ASEAN entities

- For selected proposals, ASEAN companies and/or consortia will receive USG funding via SEI.
- The exact funding amount provided will depend upon the needs as per the proposal, budget request, and cost-share arrangements.
- The disbursement of funding will be discussed with the winning teams.
- ASEAN awardees will be required to submit quarterly reports to the SEI and be available for periodic site visits and communication.

For U.S. entities

- U.S. entities involved in a project application will **not** directly receive funding from SEI for their involvement in the project.
- U.S. entities should discuss the terms of their project involvement with their ASEAN partners directly.
- U.S. entities may participate as service and product providers and benefit indirectly from a winning proposal.

6d. Reporting requirements

Recipients will be required to submit quarterly financial reports, quarterly narrative reports, and an Environmental, Social, and Governance (ESG) or company Quarterly Reports with an ESG section included to SEI. SEI will review narrative, financial, and ESG reports on a quarterly basis. Recipients should incorporate the indicators identified in the performance management plan (PMP) template in their quarterly reports. The PMP will be provided upon award.

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