**U.S. DEPARTMENT OF STATE**
**U.S. EMBASSY Banjul, POLITICAL/ECONOMIC SECTION**

**Application Instruction**

**Funding Opportunity Title:** 2023 Ambassador’s Special Self-Help Program

**Deadline for Applications**: June 20, 2023

**CFDA Number:** 19.345 – General Department of State Assistance

**Total Amount Available:** TBD

**Maximum for Each Award:**  $ 6,000

**Submission:** All applications must be submitted electronically via email to: PolEconBanjul@state.gov

**Awards are subject to the availability of funding and Congressional Notification.**

**Eligibility**

Eligibility is limited to cooperatives registered with the Gambian Cooperative Agency (GCA).  Direct funding for NGOs (international or local) is available under this announcement.

All projects must begin on or after September 30, 2023 and should be completed within one year of the award date.

U.S. Embassy Banjul reserves the right to award less or more than the funds described under circumstances deemed to be in the best interest of the U.S. Government (USG), pending the availability of funds and approval of the designated grants officer.

**Cost Sharing**

This program requires cost sharing.  The community contribution can include, but is not limited to cash, labor, or material, and are within the ability of the local community to operate and maintain.

For assistance with the requirements of this solicitation, contact the Programs Coordinator, at:  PolEconBanjul@state.gov

**I. BACKGROUND**

The Ambassador’s Special Self-Help Grants program (ASSH) provides one-time small grants to improve basic economic or social conditions at the local community by funding the expansion of an existing project or activity.  The ASSH Program is designed to support high-impact, quick-implementation activities which benefit a large number of people within one year without requiring further assistance.  **Projects that support livelihoods in Rural Provinces, value-added agricultural production, and projects that promote marketable skills are preferred.  Grants are intended for local cooperatives.**

**II. OBJECTIVES**

The purpose of ASSH is to provide small-scale assistance to Gambian cooperatives as part of an ongoing commitment by the U.S. Government to support development activities on a local level.  Projects selected for funding are those which:

* Improve basic economic or social conditions at the local community by funding the expansion of an existing project;
* Have the potential to produce employment and marketable skills;
* Assist vulnerable groups;
* Support high-impact, quick-implementation activities which benefit a large number of people within one year without requiring further assistance;
* Have the potential to generate additional income; and
* Involve a significant local contribution in cash, labor, or material, and are within the ability of the local community to operate and maintain.
* Improve educational facilities (Example: Classroom construction, Library construction,
* Improved health facilities (Example: Construction of community health centers, provision of medical equipment to community health centers)
* Improve access to clean water and sanitation facilities (Example: well or borehole construction, latrine construction)
* Social and economic empowerment of women and girls (Example: Provisions of grain mills in rural communities, provision of oil extraction machines, other income generating activities)
* More opportunities for people living with disabilities (Example: craftmanship skill, special education, creation of job opportunity)
* Reduction in environment degradation (Examples: Provision of environmentally friendly cooking stoves, land restoration, production of natural fertilizers, recycling)

**III. ELIGIBILITY REQUIREMENTS**

U.S. Embassy Banjul encourages applications from all provinces. All interested cooperatives **must have an active registration with the Gambian Cooperative Agency at the time of submitting your application** Organizations are encouraged to have a unique entity identifier (UEI), as well as a valid registration on www.SAM.gov. Please go to [SAM.gov](https://sam.gov/content/entity-registration)to register your organization.  SAM registration must be renewed annually.

**IV. APPLICATION AND SUBMISSION INFORMATION**

**Award Period:** 12 months

**Content of Application:**

* Completed SSH Proposal Template
* Completed Budget package
* Project Implementation plan (Please use additional pages if necessary)
* Budget spreadsheet: detailed line-item budget (in Excel)
* Budget Justification Narrative: use a separate sheet of paper (Word) to describe each of the budget expenses in detail.
* Mandatory application forms to be downloaded at [https://www.grants.gov/web/grants/forms/sf–424–html](https://www.grants.gov/web/grants/forms/sf-424-family.html)
* SF-424 (Application for Federal Assistance – organizations)
* SF-424A (Budget Information for Non-Construction programs) or SF-424C (Budget Information for Construction Programs)
* SF-424B (Assurances for Non-Construction programs) or SF-424D (Assurances – Construction Programs) (note: the SF-424B is only required for individuals and for organizations not registered in SAM.gov)

**Attachments:**

* 1-page CV or resume of key personnel who are proposed for the program
* Letters of support from program partners (if available) describing the roles and responsibilities of each partner
* Official permission letters (if required for program activities) A copy of the organization’s registration certificate.
* A letter of approval for proposed project from the local authority, and/or local town or district council.

**Note**: Applications that do not follow this format or are incomplete will not be considered.

* **Award Amount:** Multiple awards will be granted, with a maximum amount per award of $6,000. The Embassy reserves the right to award less or more than the funds described in the absence of worthy applications or under such other circumstances as it may deem to be in the best interest of the U.S. government.
* **Application Form:** All proposals must be made using the Ambassador’s Small Grants application form found [here](https://gm.usembassy.gov/now-accepting-self-help-grant-applications-2023/)
* **Application Submission Process:** Applicants must submit proposals by e-mail to PolEconBanjul@state.gov.For questions about this APS, contact Programs Coordinator, Political/Economic Section at PolEconBanjul@state.gov.  Tel. 220-438-1354.
* **Application Deadline:** All applications must be submitted in English on or before **June 20, 2023, 11:59 p.m**.  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.  **If you submitted a previous proposal for the Ambassador’s Special Self-Help fund, you are required to resubmit your application following the instructions of this APS.  Previous proposals submitted will not be considered unless submitted through this APS.**
* **Application Content:** Applicants must follow the APS instructions and conditions contained herein and supply all information required.  **Failure to furnish all information or comply with stated requirements will result in disqualification from the competition.** Applicants must set forth full, accurate, and complete information as required by this RFP.  The penalty for making false statements in proposals to the USG is prescribed on 18 U.S.C.1001.

**V. AWARD SELECTION CRITERIA**

Each application submitted under this announcement will be evaluated and rated on the basis of the following evaluation criteria. **Projects that support livelihoods in Rural Provinces, value-added agricultural production, and projects that promote marketable skills are preferred.** Projects should:

* Improve basic economic or social conditions at the local community or village level;
* Support high-impact, quick-implementation activities that benefit a large number of people, without requiring further assistance;
* Involve a significant local contribution in cash, labor, and/or materials, and be within the ability of the local community to operate and maintain on a sustainable basis;
* Not initiate, continue, or supplement technical assistance programs;
* Contribute, whenever possible, to income-generating or self-sustaining activities; and
* Not exceed twelve months.

**Limitations- The Self-Help Program cannot be used:**

* For religious activities (however, many religious organizations sponsor or supervise local community self-help activities that serve community needs rather than religious purposes and these activities may be eligible for assistance);
* Military, or law enforcement/police/prison-related activities;
* For administrative costs and salaries;
* Travel of any kind;
* Office supplies;
* Scholarships, donations, or honorariums;
* Projects in Refugee Camps;
* Projects involving pesticides, fungicides or herbicides;
* Individually owned businesses or enterprises;
* NGOs (local or international);
* Projects outside The Gambia;
* Vehicle or office equipment purchases; or
* Activities which benefit any employee of the U.S. Government.

**VI. AWARD ADMINISTRATION**

* **Award Notices:** The Embassy will notify applicants if their proposals are selected for funding no later than September 30, 2023. The ASSH team will visit the project side and meet with the members of the cooperative.
* **The Agreement:** If a project is selected to receive support, the project director designated on the application form will sign an agreement with the United States Government. This agreement explains the responsibilities of each party.  The community organization responsible for the project must have sufficient financial resources to cover any project costs that exceed the amount provided by the ASSH Program.
* **Reporting Requirements:** All awards issued under this APS will require mid-progress program and a financial report. A final grant report and budget/accounting in English is due 90 days after completion of the grant award end date.  The disbursement of funds may be tied to timely submission of these reports.  All other details related to award administration will be specified in the award agreement.
* **Mid-Progress Site Visit**: After a project is underway, the ASSH Program team will visit the project site.  The community should recognize that Embassy representatives may be interested in visiting the site of an ASSH Project even several years after the project has been completed.

**VII. DISCLAIMER**

If a proposal is selected for funding, the Department of State has no obligation to provide any additional future funding in connection with the award.