

SPOG Review Procedure

The Trafficking Victims Protection Act of 2000, the National Security Presidential Directive on Combating Trafficking in Persons (NSPD-22), and the March 2012 Statement by the President on the Meeting of the Interagency Task Force to Monitor and Combat Trafficking in Persons call for strengthened and effective coordination of U.S. government anti-trafficking efforts. To improve U.S. government coordination, the Trafficking Victims Protection Reauthorization Act of 2003 established the Senior Policy Operating Group (SPOG) and requires each department or agency represented on the SPOG to “share all information with [the SPOG] regarding the department or agency’s plans, before and after final agency decisions are made, on all matters relating to grants, grant policies, and other significant actions regarding the international trafficking in persons.” 22 U.S.C. § 7103(g)(4). Regulations implementing the Trafficking Victims Protection Act call on the SPOG to “establish appropriate mechanisms to effect such information sharing.” 22 C.F.R. § 104.2.

Accordingly, departments and agencies represented on the SPOG (SPOG agencies) have amended and hereby adopt the following SPOG Review Procedure to formalize interagency coordination efforts on anti-trafficking programs and to ensure consistency with U.S. government policies on combating trafficking in persons.<sup>1</sup>

**A. Sharing information on grants, cooperative agreements, letters of contribution, or contracts containing a significant anti-trafficking component.** The information shared through the SPOG Review Procedure should be treated as Sensitive But Unclassified, should be marked in such a manner, and shall not be disclosed except pursuant to law. Furthermore, SPOG agencies will ensure adequate safeguarding, maintenance, use, retention, and disposal of information received pursuant to this procedure.

1. Sharing information before final agency decisions. SPOG agencies shall take one or more of the following steps to share information prior to final agency decisions.
  - a. Program Plans. Share program plans containing a significant anti-trafficking component (as determined by the agency) during the development process with the State Department’s SPOG staff (SPOG staff) at [TIPprograms@state.gov](mailto:TIPprograms@state.gov) and provide the proposed location(s) of the project and a one- or two-sentence description. The SPOG staff shall then promptly disseminate this information to the other SPOG agencies *for comment pursuant to Section B*.
  - b. Solicitations. Within a reasonable time after a SPOG agency issues a solicitation for project proposals with a significant anti-trafficking component (as determined by the agency), notify the SPOG staff at [TIPprograms@state.gov](mailto:TIPprograms@state.gov) and provide the SPOG staff a weblink to the solicitation, on [Grants.gov](http://Grants.gov) or otherwise, if available and applicable. The SPOG staff shall then promptly disseminate this information to the other SPOG agencies *for comment pursuant*

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<sup>1</sup> This procedure is not intended to affect operational or enforcement actions.

to Section B. Each SPOG agency may disclose, as appropriate, the terms of this SPOG Review Procedure in the solicitation.

c. Proposed Awards. Before SPOG agencies award a grant, enter into a cooperative agreement, issue a letter of contribution for anti-trafficking programs or activities, or award a contract containing a significant anti-trafficking component (as determined by the agency), share, to the extent permitted by law, the following information on its proposed action with the SPOG staff at [TIPprograms@state.gov](mailto:TIPprograms@state.gov), who shall then promptly disseminate the following information to the other SPOG agencies *for comment pursuant to section B*:

(i) Proposed grants and cooperative agreements:

- (a) The name of the funding recipient (including sub-grantees or sub-awardees);
- (b) The location of the proposed project (if applicable);
- (c) The proposed amount of the award; and
- (d) A one- or two-sentence description of the project.

(ii) Proposed contracts:

- (a) The name and contact information of the contracting officer, contracting officer's representative, or other agency representative, as appropriate; and
- (b) A one- or two-sentence description of the project.

The required information is deliberately limited to reduce the burden on both the funding agency and the reviewing SPOG agencies. However, each funding agency shall provide the information described above on all proposed anti-trafficking activities—including anti-trafficking research, domestic and international anti-trafficking projects, and other projects with significant anti-trafficking components—regardless of the funding amount.

2. Sharing information after final agency decisions. Within a reasonable time after a SPOG agency awards a grant, cooperative agreement, letter of contribution, or contract, the agency shall notify the SPOG staff at [TIPprograms@state.gov](mailto:TIPprograms@state.gov) and provide a notice of the award, including a weblink if available. The SPOG staff shall then promptly disseminate this information, and any other relevant publicly available documents submitted by the agency, to the other SPOG agencies *for informational purposes only and not for comment*.

## **B. Comment period.**

1. Once the SPOG agencies have received information under section A.1. from the SPOG staff, the agencies shall have five business days from receipt of the information to provide comment only (not clearance) on the following issues:

- a. Whether the proposed action will duplicate anti-trafficking activities of other SPOG agencies;
- b. Whether the proposed action presents opportunities for partnership with anti-trafficking activities of other SPOG agencies; or
- c. Whether the proposed action or funding recipient is consistent with U.S. government policies on combating trafficking in persons.

Comments from SPOG agencies will be directed to the points of contact identified by the funding agency *pursuant to section C*. The funding agency shall respond to comments or questions of the SPOG agencies, as appropriate.

2. In cases where disagreements arise, the SPOG staff shall inform the other SPOG agencies involved in this procedure of the nature of that disagreement and the resulting outcome.

C. **Points of contact.** Interested SPOG agencies shall each designate a point of contact (POC) for receiving information on proposed anti-trafficking activities. The POCs will be responsible for obtaining comments within their agency and responding to other agencies' comments, when appropriate. Designated POCs are required to notify the SPOG staff of a change in personnel or portfolio. Furthermore, the SPOG Grantmaking Committee co-chairs will reach out to SPOG agencies annually to verify POCs and to remind agencies of their obligations under this SPOG Review Procedure.

D. **Anti-trafficking program coordination.** On behalf of the SPOG, and in order to assist in planning and coordinating SPOG agencies' anti-trafficking program activities, the co-chairs of the SPOG Grantmaking Committee should convene, at a minimum, quarterly interagency coordination meetings with relevant SPOG agencies on domestic and international anti-trafficking programs.