

community leaders, scholars and academics, public policy advocates, non-governmental organization professionals, etc. These exchanges address issues crucial to both the United States and the foreign countries involved; they promote focused, substantive, and cooperative interaction among counterparts; and they entail both theoretical and experiential learning for all participants.

The initiative *Cultural and Religious Pluralism in Uzbekistan and the United States* will support an outreach program in a number of Uzbek communities to encourage an exchange of ideas about religious tolerance and diversity and the role of religion in a democratic society. The U.S. Embassy in Tashkent will select approximately twelve communities within Uzbekistan where the program will be conducted. The program will expose participants to freedom of religion and church-state issues in the United States, including the study and practice of religion (including Islam) in the United States, interfaith issues and associations in the community, and the role of religion in a democratic political and social structure. ECA estimates that the project will run over a three-year period with the first part of the program commencing in the spring/summer of 2003. It is anticipated that one grant will be awarded under this competition. Requested ECA funding for the project should not exceed \$1,305,000. Bureau guidelines state that organizations with less than four years of international exchange experience are limited to no more than \$60,000 in ECA funding. Therefore, organizations that do not have more than four years of international exchange experience are not eligible under this competition. Project activities supported by the Department of State should be consistent with the principles of the non-establishment of religion and the separation of church and state. Activities that focus on theology or training in religious doctrine are not appropriate under this competition.

**Guidelines:** Strong proposals will have the following characteristics:

- A proven track record of working in Uzbekistan;
- Established offices in Uzbekistan and experienced staff with language facility and a commitment by the staff to monitor projects locally to ensure accountability;
- A clear, convincing plan showing how permanent results will be accomplished as a result of the activity funded by the grant.

**Public Affairs Section Involvement:** Though project administration and implementation are the responsibility of the grantee, the Public Affairs Section (PAS) of the U.S. Embassy in Tashkent will play a primary role in this project. The Public Affairs Section of the U.S. Embassy in Tashkent will evaluate project proposals, coordinate planning with the grantee organization, help coordinate in-country activities (including identification of participating communities), help nominate participants and review grantee nominations, observe in-country activities, debrief participants, work with grantee to solicit and approve follow-on projects, and evaluate project impact. The U.S. Embassy Public Affairs Section in Tashkent and the Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs must approve all participants.

**Bureau Acknowledgement:** Proposal narratives must confirm that all materials developed for the project with funds provided by the Bureau will acknowledge the Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs, U.S. Department of State funding for the program. Please note that this will be a formal requirement in all final grant awards.

**Project Components:** As envisioned by ECA and the Public Affairs Section of the U.S. Embassy in Tashkent, this project will be comprised of two program components that will run concurrently over the three years of the project. Proposals must address both components.

**Uzbekistan Community Leaders Component:** Proposals should describe a U.S. based program that involves substantive meetings with U.S. experts on the role of religion and religious and cultural pluralism in American life. Proposals should include activities that involve Islamic and other clerics and lay experts, faith-based organizations, and representatives of local government, and others involved in the interplay between church and state. The program should also include observation of classes on religion at religious and secular educational institutions. Groups from two Uzbek communities at a time should travel together to the U.S. for a two to three week program. The program should be based in one U.S. community (approximately two weeks) but include visits to other representative or relevant communities. There will be approximately five participants from each of the communities identified by the U.S. Embassy for a total of approximately 60 participants. Proposals should describe a transparent selection process that will be coordinated with the Public Affairs Section in Tashkent. Uzbek community

leaders in the selected regions should include imams, clerics from other religions, government officials responsible for monitoring and regulating religion, people involved in formal and informal religious education (including women), as well as others involved in community religious affairs from the selected communities. The Public Affairs Section of the U.S. Embassy in Tashkent must approve all Uzbek participants in this program. Proposals should identify possible appropriate U.S. hosting communities. Host communities should be chosen based on their ability to accommodate visitors' dietary and worship needs, expose participants to the variety of religious practice in the U.S., offer appropriate academic programs in the vicinity, and demonstrate active faith-based and interfaith community organizations. Proposals should include a plan to address all logistics for the Uzbek participants including international and domestic travel, ground transportation, and lodging arrangements. Also, applicants should include detailed orientation programs for Uzbek participants. Proposals must include a plan for interpretation while in the United States. Interpretation for the participants must be in Uzbek (not Russian).

**Follow On:** Proposals should describe how applicants would encourage and organize the participants to undertake follow-on activities individually or in groups upon their return to Uzbekistan. These activities might include projects to describe participants' experiences in the U.S. to Uzbek audiences or other community-based projects that would build on the themes of this exchange. These themes include government/religious community relations, interfaith relations, the role of religion in a democratic society, and cultural heritage and its preservation. Proposals should describe how applicants would, in coordination with the U.S. Embassy in Tashkent, assist participants to develop concrete plans for activities such as community presentations and discussions, articles in/interviews with local media outlets, projects to advance interfaith dialogue in their communities, and local community-based projects to explore the diversity of Uzbek religious and cultural heritage.

**U.S. Experts Component:** This program component should build on the themes of this exchange, including government/religious community relations, interfaith relations, the role of religion in a democratic society, and cultural heritage preservation. This component involves the recruitment, selection, and programming of