Applicant Questions & INL Answers

INL20CA0038-CostaRica-TravelLogistics

CARSI San Jose Travel & Logistics

Application deadline: July 17, 2020

**INL responses are in blue text.*

Q: Is there an established number of people within the Colombian commissions?

A: No, the commissions that arrive in Costa Rica can range from individual people to groups of 20. In general, these Colombian commissions are instructors who come to give training in Costa Rica.

Q: Should the payment of housing/rent costs be included for the Colombian commissions that will be in Costa Rica for the period of 1 year? Are there other expenses to be considered for these fees?

A: Some commissions are in the country for a period of 1 year, but not all are that long. For all commissions, the grantee will coordinate housing. For long-term commissions, the grantee should coordinate with different hotels or apartment-hotels to compare offerings that include basic services (kitchen facilities, laundry services, etc.) or special rates that cater to long-term guests.

Q: What guidelines should be consulted for the per diem and lodging of the Colombian commissions?

A: Per diem expenses (lodging, M&IE, etc.) cannot exceed the limits established by the State Department without prior approval from the Grants Officer. The NOFO contains the link to the guidelines (https://aoprals.state.gov/Web920/per_diem.asp).

Q: Page 7 – Activity 7. Is the recipient responsible for negotiating and determining the daily rate provided to speakers or subject matter experts contracted under the cooperative agreement, not to exceed maximum rates of reimbursement?

A: INL program managers that request support for speakers or subject matter experts are in charge of negotiating rates and agreements. It is INL's policy to follow USAID's daily maximum rates for consultants. Daily rates shall not exceed $698.08, which is the rate established for 2020.

Q: Page 8 – Activity 13. Regarding the nature of employee oversight under acquisition and assistance instruments, could INL confirm whether the intention is to supply personnel services to the Embassy? Within the framework of the cooperative agreement, will the recipient's employees be supervised independently by the recipient or will they be seconded to the Embassy?

A: The grantee staff and INL project staff are completely separate structures, with no supervisory relationship between INL and grantee staff. However, given the close working relationship necessary for smooth project implementation, it is important that the INL program managers and grantee staff maintain a good rapport. This project is **not** staff augmentation or personnel services for the Embassy, but rather a cooperative agreement between INL and the grantee to benefit the host government's training, travel, and logistics needs.

Q: Page 8 – Activity 13. Is the intention for the recipient to maintain accounts and disburse funds from the Embassy or Annex? Are the recipient's funds to be managed independently or is the intention to provide personnel services to manage finances and disburse the funds?

A: Applicants should plan to operate this project out of its own office(s). There *may* be opportunities for physical placement of grantee staff within INL facilities, but no matter where the grantee's staff are located, the responsibility of managing the project (activities, deliverables, finances, reporting, etc.) remains with the grantee.

Q: Page 9 – Desired Results and illustrative indicators. Are the monthly reports listed under this section an award-level reporting requirement or are they a reporting activity/function separate from agreement-level award requirements?

A: These monthly reports are not considered an award-level reporting requirement; a low-risk grantee can expect a requirement for quarterly financial and programmatic reporting. These additional monthly reports should include program-specific financial information that allows INL to track the funds spent and remaining for each program within the cooperative agreement. The specific requirements of the monthly financial reports can be discussed during award negotiations.

Q: Page 17 – Program Risk Analysis. Should risks and remedies in response to COVID19 be addressed only in the Program Risk Analysis or be incorporated as options throughout the proposal and activity timeline?

A: The risk analysis should outline the commonplace risks associated with travel and logistics (flights, hotel reservations, local transportation, venues, participants, etc.), as well as special circumstances related to COVID-19. The grantee will need to contend with COVID-related restrictions from multiple countries and should demonstrate how they will ensure they are adhering to guidelines from WHO, State Department, and host governments. Given the uncertainty of COVID-19, applicants should demonstrate flexibility throughout the entire proposal (e.g. alternatives to in-person trainings, contingencies for travelers, realistic timelines, etc.), as it will undoubtedly affect all aspects of the project.