

001 - SUPPORTING AFGHAN MEDIA NOFO

Questions and Answers

1. **Question:** It will be difficult for journalists inside Afghanistan to engage in advocacy work on crimes against journalists without putting them in considerable danger. Do you envisage that the project will support organizations outside of Afghanistan to conduct advocacy work on crimes against journalists?

Answer: We recognize that some advocacy work would be challenging or dangerous for journalists inside of Afghanistan and the safety of journalists is paramount. The NOFO is open to organizations outside of Afghanistan conducting advocacy work, but this should be done with input from journalists who remain inside of Afghanistan. The NOFO is purposefully non-prescriptive so that the planning and implementation of advocacy work can involve the Afghan journalists who would ultimately benefit in a way that works best for them.

2. **Question:** According to Afghan journalists we are in touch with, the main economic hardship that they face is that some media outlets are unable to continue to pay their salaries. There may be minor ways to assist journalists economically like top-up cards, but the main economic hardship issue is lack of salary. The proposal specifically states that funds cannot be used for salaries. Can you please elaborate further on what economic hardships you expect the project to address other than salaries?

Answer: The NOFO states that approaches **could** include addressing “underlying conditions that exacerbate economic challenges” and the goal of the project is not to directly alleviate economic hardship specifically. As outlined in the objectives, the journalists should have an opportunity to “plan and implement individual or collective efforts that (among other items could) alleviate difficulties that contribute to economic hardship for journalists in Afghanistan” so the proposal is not expected to predict exactly what these efforts will be, but should keep in mind that they cannot pay salaries or otherwise compensate journalists directly for work. There is some flexibility in how a grantee could address these challenges, so the proposal should focus on how the use of the funds would contribute to the project goal of preserving freedom of expression and the free media in Afghanistan in ways that have a longer-term impact and not a one-time impact.

3. **Question:** Journalists’ lack of access to information is largely due to the de facto authorities’ refusal to work with the media; they do not release information and do not provide interviews to the press. This is true at both the Kabul and provincial levels and across the ministries. Any attempt to advocate for increased access to information from the de facto authorities inside Afghanistan could put journalists at great risk. Do you envisage that the project will address the lack of access to information by supporting

advocacy organizations outside Afghanistan to continue to put pressure on the de facto authorities?

Answer: We recognize that some advocacy work would be challenging or dangerous for journalists inside of Afghanistan and the safety of journalists and implementing partners is paramount. The NOFO is open to organizations outside of Afghanistan conducting advocacy, but this should be done with input from journalists who remain inside of Afghanistan. The NOFO is purposefully non-prescriptive so that the planning and implementation of advocacy work can involve the Afghan journalists who would ultimately benefit in a way that works best for them.

4. **Question:** There is no mention of any content production in the proposal including related to capacity building on interviewing techniques and fact-checking. Our organization has found that the best way to train and mentor on these topics is to ensure skills are then implemented practically through mentored content production. Will DoS support content production (through stipends) linked to capacity building training and mentoring?

Answer: The goal of this project is to preserve freedom of expression and the free media in Afghanistan, so any content production efforts would need to be in line with that goal and the objectives outlined. The target audience of this grant is journalists with experience and the objectives note these journalists should be involved in developing and implementing efforts that address the challenges they face. If content production (related to capacity building or otherwise) addresses a challenge, it would be permitted, though it should not be used as a one-size-fits-all solution.

5. **Question:** The NOFO indicates that when vetting information is requested by the GO, information may be provided through the RAM portal. Can you please confirm if RAM vetting will be a condition of the award?

Answer: As stated in the NOFO, RAM vetting is a condition of the award.

6. **Question:** PDS vetting is required as condition of the award, can you please confirm if this would be in addition to the RAM vetting requirements, and confirm what the requirements are for PDS vetting?

Answer: Yes, in addition to RAM vetting, PDS vetting applies additional risk analysis related to applicant organizational risk, country risk, and programmatic risk.

7. **Question:** There is a 25-page limit for the proposal narrative. Please confirm if this includes the M&E plan and the required components of the PMP.

Answer: The 25-page limit does not include the M&E Plan (PMP) and the required components of the PMP, but please note as stated in the NOFO the M&E narrative is limited to 2 pages.

8. **Question:** As the security plan is listed as an attachment, please confirm that this does not contribute to the 25-page limit for the proposal narrative.

Answer: Correct, it does not contribute to the 25-page limit.