

Questions and Answers for
Strengthening Independent Media in Central America to Uncover Crime and Corruption
NOFO#: OFOP0001331
Date: May 1, 2024

Question 1:

On page 5, the NOFO states, "Proposals should not primarily focus on transnational or regional approaches to investigative journalism." Can you elaborate on this point? Does it mean that the proposal should be largely focused on targeted activities in specific countries? Can any regional approaches be included (for instance 20% of activities can be regional but 80% need to be country-specific?

INL Response:

Yes, the proposal should be largely focused on targeted activities in specific countries that meet the needs of independent media from that country, vs a transnational or cross-border approach, which would be duplicative of existing USG programming. If regional approaches are included in a proposal, it is incumbent upon the applicant to demonstrate its knowledge of existing USG programs and how its approach under this project would be different and fill a unique gap.

Question 2:

A Scope of Work template is included as an attachment on grants.gov but it is not listed as a requirement in the NOFO. Are applicants meant to use this template for the timeline which is a requirement? Or is the Scope of Work optional?

INL Response:

The Scope of Work template was inadvertently included in the documents package so please disregard the scope of template. This is not a required document for submission.

Question 3:

If an applicant does not have a NICRA but regularly charges an indirect rate that is higher than the 10% de minimis rate, can it use that indirect rate in the budget? We are a 501c3 and we regularly use a higher indirect rate than 10% in our proposals, but we don't have a NICRA.

INL Response:

Indirect costs, often called overhead, or facilities and administrative costs, may only be charged to a Federal award that is subject to 2 CFR §200, Subpart E when:

- The applicant has a current Negotiated Indirect Cost Rate Agreement (NICRA) from a Federal agency (described below in greater detail); or
- The applicant elects to charge a de minimis rate of 10% of modified total direct costs (MTDC), which is allowable if the organization does not have a current agreement.

INL will only accept a NICRA or the 10% de minimis rate.

Question 4:

On page 12, it says that applicants must include a document of the "History of US government federal assistance awards." If an applicant doesn't have a history of managing federal assistance awards, how should they address this requirement?

INL Response:

Per the NOFO: If the applicant has never received a U.S. federal assistance award, please list other projects the organization has implemented, including the information requested in the bullet above.

Question 5:

Do subgrantees need to be registered in SAM.gov? If yes, at what stage do they need to register? Would it be fine for them to not be registered at the time of submission?

INL Response:

Per the NOFO: All proposed sub-recipients are required to have a Unique Entity Number (UEI), regardless of the proposed budget amount, prior to receiving funding. An active SAM.gov registration is not required for sub-recipients.

Question 6:

On page 5, the NOFO states, "Proposals should outline approaches to deconflict activities with specific media outlets." Can you elaborate on this requirement? Given the large number of media outlets what "specific media outlets" is INL referring to here?

INL Response:

Applicants should demonstrate awareness of existing USG programming supporting independent media and how it will mitigate duplication of efforts, if, for example, an outlet is already receiving or has received USG assistance. It is incumbent upon the applicant to detail its plans for ensuring independent media outlets that are already receiving assistance from other agencies do not receive the same kind of assistance through this project. The goal is for this project to fill a gap

and it is incumbent upon the applicant to demonstrate how it would fill a gap and not duplicate efforts, including by not providing the same or substantially similar support to the same outlets. Proposals should be designed to assist media outlets that either are currently not receiving US funded assistance or are receiving US funded assistance that is substantially different from the type offered by this project. Therefore, the approaches outlined in the proposals should lay out how applicants would determine the suitability of a media outlet and the criteria used to deconflict programming with other US agencies.

Question 7:

Can Nicaragua be a country of focus here? If it cannot be, can an applicant include supporting exiled Nicaraguan journalists/media outlets?

INL Response:

This project can benefit Nicaraguan journalists/media outlets. It cannot in any way benefit the government of Nicaragua.

Question 8:

Are there any restrictions on sub-granting that prime applicants should be aware of during the proposal stage?

INL Response:

Please refer to the 2 CFR 200, Subpart D –Subrecipient Monitoring and Management for additional information pertaining to subrecipients.

Question 9:

Is the "Scope of Work" template given on Grants.gov a required document? If so, which document on the NOFO does it correspond to? As it is not listed there.

INL Response:

The Scope of Work template was inadvertently included in the documents package so please disregard the scope of template. This is not a required document for submission.

Question 10:

Same goes for the Change Map and Performance Indicator Reference Sheet. Are the templates given on Grants.gov a required document? If so, which document on the NOFO does it correspond to? As it is not listed there.

INL Response:

Per the NOFO: Performance Monitoring Plan

See Appendix A for more details and instructions. Applicants **MUST** submit the following:

- Change Map (see template) or equivalent
- Illustrative Performance Indicator Reference Sheet (see template)

Question 11:

Is there a rough estimate of when the grant will be awarded – i.e. when funds will be available. Just want to confirm that it's a payment distribution grant and not reimbursement distribution grant.

INL Response:

Per the NOFO, the estimated project timeframe for the award is October 2024. The distribution of payments is not set as payments are contingent upon the needs of the project.

Question 12:

The Performance Monitoring plan and Project Risk Analysis and Timeline are included in the Proposal Narrative attachment, which has a 20-page limit. Is this correct? What if an applicant uses an Excel sheet for one of these—how can this be taken into account given the 20-page limit?

INL Response:

Per the NOFO, the performance monitoring plan, project risk analysis, and timeline are not within the 20-page limit. There are additional attachments.

Question 13:

On Page 25 it says "Audit costs can be included if they are not covered by indirect costs. Only the portion of an organizational audit cost associated with this project should be charged to this project." Can you provide applicants with an explanation for how they should portion out the audit cost in the budget?

INL Response:

If audit costs are not covered by indirect costs, then audit costs can be listed as a direct cost in the detailed budget. Audit costs can be considered a direct cost or an allocated indirect cost.

Question 14:

What are the requirements for an entity that will play the role of a vendor or contractor who provides professional services? For instance, if an applicant hired a company to perform monitoring and evaluation functions.

INL Response:

Please refer to the 2 CFR 200, Subpart D –Subrecipient Monitoring and Management and Procurement Standards for additional information pertaining to contractors.

Question 15:

Does this NOFO permit an applicant to provide a stipend to participants of a training course? For example, providing daily stipends for the staff of a media outlet being trained on security and safety. Would they need to be a subgrantee to receive stipends if that is permitted?

INL Response:

Yes, that would be allowable under the scope of this NOFO.

Question 16:

Can applicants provide subgrants to support staffing needs for independent journalism outlets as part of this NOFO? Would the supported outlets be considered subgrantees?

INL Response:

Please refer to the 2 CFR 200, Subpart D –Subrecipient Monitoring and Management for additional information pertaining to subgrants.