Question & Answer Document
Notice of Funding Opportunity (NOFO)
No. 72052318RFA00001
Investigative Journalism

1. The NOFO appears unrestricted, does this mean a new U.S. based company could be created to apply for this? My interest is in forming a qualified team and creating a company to accept this grant.

Response: All organizations that meet the criteria specified in Section C.1 of the NOFO are invited to apply. That said, as mentioned in the solicitation, USAID/Mexico is most interested in partnering with organizations that can demonstrate that they have a long term commitment to the development of investigative journalism in Mexico and Latin America. As stated in Section D.3(e) of the NOFO, prospective applicants must submit a Statement of Intent that shows past commitment of resources to this area, previous efforts to support local actors in this area, and capacity for continued commitment beyond USAID’s funding of the project.

2. How would USAID protect a company's leaders from the cartel if they knew what company was working with USAID?

Response: It is important to understand that this is an Assistance opportunity. USAID/Mexico is not purchasing goods or services, but rather we are providing funding for organizations to further the work that they are doing in Mexico. In that light, USAID would not require the implementing partner to do anything that they would not normally do as part of achieving their goals and therefore they would have to take into consideration security procedures which are consistent with their policies and procedures. Consistent with Federal Regulations and USAID’s commitment to transparency and open government, the award information, including the name of the successful applicant will be publically available. USAID places the utmost concern on the health and safety of our partners. The successful applicant will work closely with USAID in making program management decisions that safeguard program personnel and are consistent with US Embassy Mexico security policies.

3. Although you can't release who has applied for this grant, do you have a list of companies that provide services similar to what you are looking for? I ask because I see this primarily as a technology and marketing problem that needs to be solved.

Response: USAID is seeking creative and innovative solutions to the objectives outlined in this NOFO. We do not maintain a list of companies providing such services as it is up to the offeror to propose how they will achieve success with their project.

4. Can USAID please clarify if applicants are required to include all of the outcome indicators and targets on pages 8-9 of the NOFO in the draft Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning Plan?

Response: Prospective applicants are required to report on the two outcomes indicators listed on page 8 of the NOFO. Those are:

- Number of data-driven, evidence-based analyses and reporting which expose corrupt acts or systemic vulnerabilities in key border states
- Number of corrective actions (legal/regulatory changes, policy adjustments, administrative sanctions, judicial actions, etc.) taken by government in response to investigative reporting

Additional outcome and output indicators included in the NOFO may be used, however USAID encourages applicants to develop and propose appropriate indicators that are directly connected with their technical approach.

5. Do the USAID-suggested indicators (that do not have DR labels) have standard definitions that applicants are required to use?

Response: No, there is not a required standard definition for these indicators. With the exception of the two indicators listed on page 8 of the NOFO, and also noted in the response to question 4 above, these indicators were provided for illustrative purposes only. Performance Indicator Reference Sheets (PIRS) for the two required indicators will be finalized in coordination with USAID following award.

6. The NOFO states: "USAID/Mexico envisions awarding a mission-wide monitoring and evaluation mechanism." For budgeting purposes, can USAID state if they anticipate supporting a midterm or final evaluation of the Investigative Journalism project through this mechanism?

Response: USAID will consider supporting a midterm or final evaluation through the mission-wide monitoring and evaluation mechanism. As such, prospective applicants do not need to budget for these activities. However, a robust monitoring, evaluation, and learning approach remains an important evaluation criteria and applicants should consider how learning will be incorporated into proposed activities.

7. Concerning measures 3.1 and 3.2 under objective 3, could USAID please offer further clarification on the definitions of and differences between "innovative funding models" and "diversified business models"?

Response: Measure 3.1 focuses on support for, and incentivization of, specific investigations and inquiries on corruption and transparency-related topics. Measure 3.2 focuses on support to media institutions to increase editorial independence and financial viability.

8. Concerning "Measure 5.1: Partnerships and networks developed between subnational and national-level journalists to exchange information and expertise," can USAID further explain the distinction between "subnational and "national-level"? In particular, does "national-level" refer to

engaging with journalists in states outside of the targeted states, and/or does it refer to developing partnerships with Mexico City-based media?

Response: In this context, "sub-national" refers to journalists who cover issues at the state or municipal level, while "national-level" refers to journalists covering issues across the country. These national-level journalists are primarily, though not exclusively, based in Mexico City. With regard to partnership and networks, prospective applicants have wide latitude to propose innovative solutions. As stated in the NOFO, the key objective is to foster information exchange and engagement between journalists working in diverse contexts.

9. Is the Institutional Capacity Section included in the 20-page limit of the Technical Application?

Response: Yes. Section I: Technical Approach and Section II: Institutional Capability are included in the 20 page limit. The required Annexes listed in Section III do not count against the page limit.

10. The NOFO states "the technical approach being approximately ¾ of the overall evaluation and approximately ¼ being Institutional Capacity. The sub-criteria under each are of equal weight." Could USAID offer a more specific point or percentage breakdown? As the technical approach includes not only activities and project strategy but also the implementation plan, draft MEL Plan and draft branding and marking plan, it will be critical to understand, for example, if the "extent to which applicant's proposed geographic focus demonstrates sound rationale and clear criteria for engagement based on analysis of local context" has the same level of importance within the technical approach as the "Clarity, appropriateness, consistency and soundness of an illustrative (draft) Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning (MEL) Plan."

Response: As clearly stated in Section E.1 sub-criteria are of equal weight.

11. The NOFO refers to "Component 4: Digital Security of Journalists Improved." Is there a distinction between a "component" and an "objective" for this project?

Response: There is no distinction between Component and Objective. The NOFO language has been updated to read: "Objective 4: Digital Security of Journalists Improved."

12. Under D.3 Content and Form of Applications - Technical Application (c), it says, "Applicants must use 12 point Times New Roman font with margins no less than one inch on each border." Is 10pt Times New Roman font permissible in the footers, charts and tables?

Response: Yes.

13. Regarding the MEL plan, the NOFO notes that applicants must use the standard USAID Template for a draft MEL plan in Attachment A. The Attachment includes a link to a Google doc with the Template, which we have not been able to access. We have requested and received permission to access, but are still not able to reach the document. Is it possible to receive the document in another format or as a separate Attachment?

Response: We have included the document as an attachment to this Q&A document.

14. Section F.3a. notes that a "draft Implementation Plan should be submitted with the application," however the Implementation Plan is not listed under the Technical Application requirements in Section D.3. Are we required to submit this as an additional Annex to the Technical Application?

Response: Section D.3(e) includes "d. Draft Annual Work Plan (including a mobilization timeline)" as a required Annex to the technical application. This document is considered to be the implementation plan.

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Indicator Summary Table for AMELP

Indicator Type / Reference to logic framework	Indicator	Type	Indicator Status	Std indicator Number	BASELINE [1]		TARGETS [2]						NOTES	Location	Frequency	Source
					Baseline Date [3]	Baseline Value [4]	FY 1 Target (FY 18)	FY 2 Target (FY 19)	FY 3 Target (FY 20)	FY 4 Target (FY 21)	FY 5 Target (FY 22)	LOA Target [5]				
CONTEXT [6]	DO1															
Ref. to RF [	Indicator Number Indicator Name [8]	Context	New											State [9]	Annual	
Ref. to RF	Indicator Number Indicator Name	Context	Active											City	Bi-annual	
Ref. to RF	Indicator Number Indicator Name	Context	Under review											City	Semester	
OUTCOMES [10]																
Ref. to RF	Indicator Number Indicator Name	Outcome	New	[11]										State	Annual	
Ref. to RF	Indicator Number Indicator Name	Outcome	Active											City	Bi-annual	
Ref. to RF	Indicator Number Indicator Name	Outcome	Under review											City	Semester	
OUTPUTS [12]																
Ref. to RF	Indicator Number Indicator Name	Output	Active											State	Quarter	
Ref. to RF	Indicator Number Indicator Name	Output	Active											City	Quarter	
Ref. to RF	Indicator Number Indicator Name	Output	Active											City	Semester	

Additional Guidance

- Adding rows. This template allows rows to be added or removed. Please avoid removing the Outcome and Output section

- Disaggregation. As this template allows adding rows, information about disaggregation (gender, location, etc.) can be included. The level of detail on this table will be as agreed between the Implementing Partner and the COR/AOR.-

- Life of Activity. Please keep as many years as the length of the Activity.

Template updated 3/14/2018

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Indicator Summary Table for Quarterly or Annual Report

Indicator Type / Reference to results framework	Indicator	Type	Indicator Status	Std indicator Number	BASELINE [13]		FY 2018 (Current Year)					Life of Activity (LOA) [14]			NOTES Deviation Narrative [15]	Location [16]	Frequency	Source
					Baseline Date [17]	Baseline Value [18]	FY 18 first half Target [19]	FY 18 first half Actual	FY 18 Target [20]	FY 18 Actual [21]	% of FY 18 Achieved	LOA Target	LOA Progress	% of LOA Achieved				
CONTEXT [22]																		
Ref. to RF	Indicator Number Indicator Name [24]	Context	New													National	Annual	
Ref. to RF	Indicator Number Indicator Name	Context	Active													State	Bi-annual	
Ref. to RF	Indicator Number Indicator Name	Context	Under review													City	Semester	
OUTCOMES [25]																		
Ref. to RF	Indicator Number Indicator Name	Outcome	New	[26]												National	Annual	
Ref. to RF	Indicator Number Indicator Name	Outcome	Active													State	Bi-annual	
Ref. to RF	Indicator Number Indicator Name	Outcome	Under review													City	Semester	
Ref. to RF	Indicator Number Indicator Name	Outcome	OLD													National	Annual	
OUTPUTS [27]																		
Ref. to RF	Indicator Number Indicator Name	Output	Active													State	Quarter	
Ref. to RF	Indicator Number Indicator Name	Output	Active													City	Quarter	
Ref. to RF	Indicator Number Indicator Name	Output	Active													National	Semester	
Ref. to RF	Indicator Number Indicator Name	Output	Active													National	Annual	

Additional Guidance

- Adding rows. This template allows rows to be added or removed. Please avoid removing the Outcome and Output section
- Disaggregation. As this template allows adding rows, information about disaggregation (gender, location, etc.) can be included. The level of detail on this table will be as agreed between the Implementing Partner and the COR/AOR.-
- Adding columns. This template allows columns to be added. Please avoid removing columns. Adjust the current year information according to the period of reporting

Template updated 3/14/2018

USAID Performance Indicator Reference Sheet	
Name of Indicator:	
Name of Result Measured (DO, IR, sub-IR, Project Purpose, Project Outcome, Project Output, etc.):	
Is This a Performance Plan and Report Indicator?	NO ______ YES ______ For years: If yes, link to foreign assistance framework:
DESCRIPTION	
Precise Definition(s):	
Unit of Measure:	
Data Type:	
Disaggregated by:	
Rationale for Indicator (optional):	
PLAN FOR DATA COLLECTION	
Data Source:	
Method of Data Collection and Construction:	
Reporting Frequency:	
Individual(s) Responsible at USAID:	
TARGETS AND BASELINE	
Baseline Timeframe:	
Rationale for Targets(optional):	
DATA QUALITY ISSUES	
Dates of Previous Data Quality Assessments and Name of Reviewer(s):	
Date of Future Data Quality Assessments(optional):	
Known Data Limitations:	
CHANGES TO INDICATOR	
Changes to Indicator:	
Other Notes(optional):	
THIS SHEET LAST UPDATED ON: 00/00/0000	

Template updated 3/14/2018

USAID Performance Indicator Reference Sheet	Definition / Guidance
Name of Indicator:	The full and complete name of the indicator must be specified. If the indicator is a foreign assistance standard indicator, also include the indicator number.
Name of Result Measured (DO, IR, sub-IR, Project Purpose, Project Outcome, Project Output, etc.):	The name of result(s) being measured must be designated. If the result has a number that corresponds to a Results Framework or Logic Model, this number should be included as well (e.g., Intermediate Result 2.1: Business Enabling Environment Improved).
Is This a Performance Plan and Report Indicator?	Whether the indicator will be reported in the Performance Plan and Report (PPR) must be specified. If the indicator has been specified as a PPR indicator, then note which years it is expected to be reported to the PPR and the relevant program objective, area, element, and sub-element of the foreign assistance standardized program structure.
DESCRIPTION	
Precise Definition(s):	Indicator definitions must clearly explain all terms and elements of the indicator to ensure consistent interpretation and that intended measurements are reliably collected. Vague terms (e.g. “effective,” “quality,” “youth,” “vulnerable”) must be defined. Indicators that pertain to populations, geographic areas, or scores should include specified parameters or range. An equation or description of any calculations required to derive the data must be included. If the indicator is a percentage or ratio, there must be a description of the numerator and denominator.
Unit of Measure:	Unit of measure (e.g., number of hours, percent of households) must be indicated. Minimum or maximum values should be included, if applicable. Indicate if the number is cumulative or specific to the reporting frequency.
Data Type:	Data types should be indicated. Data types include, but are not limited to the following: Integer: A whole number having no decimal places (e.g., number of people trained). Decimal: Define if the number is expected to have a decimal and how many decimal places must be tracked (e.g., average time to export goods along trade corridor). Percentage: Both numerator and denominator must be defined (e.g., percent of learners who demonstrate reading fluency and comprehension. Numerator: Number of learners who demonstrate reading fluency and comprehension. Denominator: Total number of learners.). Proportion/Ratio: Both numerator and denominator must be defined (e.g., Infant mortality rate. Numerator: number of deaths of children less than 1 year old. Denominator: 1,000 live births.). Currency: Must include a conversion to USD rate, rate source, and date (e.g., price of wheat).
Disaggregated by:	List any planned ways of disaggregating the data and note why this disaggregation is necessary and useful. Sex: Performance indicators must be disaggregated by sex when measuring person- level data. Geography: It is recommended that indicator data be disaggregated by a geographic level that is feasible and useful for management purposes.
Rationale for Indicator(optional):	Briefly describe why this particular indicator was selected to measure the intended result and how it will be useful for managing performance. It is recommended that both a use and user for the indicator data are identified here.
PLAN FOR DATA COLLECTION	
Data Source:	Specific sources of data must be identified. If data are from third-party sources such as a government ministry or international organization, include the location/link to the source. If data are collected by implementing partners, specify where the partner is getting the data. It is critical that sources be specific and detailed to ensure that data collection is consistent and verification is possible
Method of Data Collection and Construction:	Tools, methods, and procedures for collecting raw data must be described. Examples include document review, structured interviews, focus group interviews, written survey, ledger of patients, etc. If the indicator is an index or composite indicator, describe the procedure or formula for construction or calculation. Include information about who collects the raw data and where it is stored before it gets to USAID.
Reporting Frequency:	How often and when data will be reported to USAID must be specified. Most common reporting frequencies are quarterly, semiannual, and annual. The reporting frequency must be the same for every instance of the indicator (i.e., individual indicators being reported by multiple sources must not have different reporting frequencies). It is recommended that reporting frequency remain constant throughout the life of the indicator.
Individual(s) Responsible at USAID:	Specific staff member(s) directly responsible for the data must be identified. It is recommended that the specific position title be used rather than the employee’s name (e.g., COR of X contract, or Environment Project team lead).
TARGETS AND BASELINE	
Baseline Timeframe:	The timeframe (month/year) that will serve as the baseline value for the indicator must be stated. If baselines have not been set, identify when and how this will be done. If it is expected that this indicator will have a rolling baseline, the dates when the baselines are expected to take place should be noted.

Rationale for Targets(optional):	Explain the general basis on which targets are set for the indicator (e.g., identify specific trends to make reasonable projections based on anticipated level of effort and resources).
DATA QUALITY ISSUES	
Dates of Previous Data Quality Assessments and Name of Reviewer (s):	Dates of each DQA must be indicated as well as the name of the corresponding USAID staff member responsible for the review.
Date of Future Data Quality Assessments(optional):	Date of future planned DQAs should be indicated.
Known Data Limitations:	Any major data limitations must be indicated. Plans on how to address these limitations should be stated. Data limitations can be derived from the DQA summary and include the following indicator quality issues: Validity, Reliability, Timeliness, Precision, and Integrity. Any additional limitations should also be listed.
CHANGES TO INDICATOR	
Changes to Indicator:	Changes to an indicator that substantively affect indicator reference information must be documented and justified. This includes, but is not limited to: changes to the definition, reporting frequency, data collection methodology, data construction, and indicator name. Documentation must include detailed information on the changes made, the date the change was made, and justification. This space is not the place to note changes in the indicator actual data.
Other Notes(optional):	Use this space as needed.
THIS SHEET LAST UPDATED ON: 00/00/0000	MM/DD/YY To avoid version control problems, type the date of the most recent revision or update to this reference sheet.