

Questions and Answers for Securing Convictions from Vetted and Special Unit Operations - OFOP0002421

Updated: March 5, 2026

1. Section A indicates that proposals may address one or both goals. Section C.3 states that applicants may submit multiple proposals, but that each proposal may only address one goal (pp. 4 and 6). Could INL please confirm whether an organization may submit two separate proposals (one per goal), and whether an organization submitting only one proposal may address both goals within that single proposal?

Answer: Yes, an organization may submit multiple proposals, with each proposal addressing a single goal, clearly stating which goal is covered. In addition, an organization that submits only one proposal may address both goals within that single proposal, as permitted in Section A.

2. May applicants propose different and/or additional Sub-Objectives, provided they align with the Goals and Objectives outlined in Section A (p. 4)?

Answer: Any additional sub-objectives must directly relate to the goals and objectives outlined in the grant's request for proposals.

3. Does INL have a preference for proposals that focus exclusively on federal-level counterparts, or is INL also open to programs that engage select state-level prosecutors or law enforcement units, as referenced under Participants and Audiences (p. 5)?

Answer: States and institutions should be identified in the applicant's proposal; however, they may also be determined in coordination with INL upon award, if applicable.

4. If proposals include state-level engagement, does INL anticipate any geographic prioritization, or should applicants justify state selection based on programmatic rationale?

Answer: INL expects proposals to include justifications for proposed state selections. Also, please refer to answer on question #3.

5. With respect to the "List of Key Personnel" (p. 9), may applicants include brief biographical summaries of additional technical experts, provided the section remains within the stated three-page limit?

Answer: Yes, as mentioned as long as it is within the page limit.

6. Are applicants permitted to conduct non-binding consultations with existing Government of Mexico counterparts during proposal development, with the understanding that such discussions do not imply endorsement or commitment (see Section D: Application and Submission Information)?

Answer: While conversations with potential partners are allowed, they do not imply endorsement, approval, or commitment of funding by the U.S. Government. Only authorized grants officers can make binding commitments.

7. Regarding the History of U.S. Government Federal Assistance Awards, is it acceptable to include the most recent 3 years rather than the bidder's lengthy history?

Answer: Yes, there is no required timeframe or minimum number of awards, but applicants should provide as comprehensive a list as possible of current and past U.S. Government Federal Assistance Awards demonstrating their experience.

8. May exhibits and sidebars in the text be distinguished, such as by using a sans-serif font and 10 pt size?

Answer: Please refer to Section D, Point 3 – Document Formatting, all Word documents must adhere to the NOFO formatting requirements. This includes text within tables, text boxes, and graphics.

9. Scope of vetted and special units: Has INL identified an estimated number of vetted and/or special units expected to benefit from this award, or should applicants propose a scalable model that can be adjusted to the final set of units prioritized by INL during implementation?

Answer: This should be determined by the proposal as part of how the applicant envisions achieving the project goals.

10. Have INL and/or Mexican counterparts already conducted assessments identifying priority performance gaps (e.g., evidence handling, report writing, chain of custody) for the targeted units, and will any baseline findings be shared with awardees to avoid duplicating diagnostics?

Answer: No.

11. Which Vetted and Special Unit Operations and/or priority states are currently of interest under this initiative?

Answer: Please refer to answer on question #3.

12. For planning purposes, should applicants consider that vetting of participants may be required during the program? How long is required as advance notice for individual vetting?

Answer: Yes. Refer to Section F, Point 3 – Program-Specific Requirements of the NOFO for details. In line with U.S. Department of State Leahy Amendment vetting rules, all participant information must be submitted at least 60 days before the training or program activity. Applicants should plan their timelines accordingly.

13. Could INL confirm if it is acceptable to work with both local and federal institutions under this program?

Answer: Yes, for further information please refer to answer on question #3.

14. Could INL confirm if a proposed program may focus on a single thematic area, or should address organized crime broadly?

Answer: Please refer to answer on question #9.

15. Could INL confirm if an applicant is eligible to submit a proposal under the NOFO while its SAM.gov registration is still pending validation, or must the registration be fully active at the time of submission?

Answer: Applicant's SAM.gov registration must be fully active at the time of proposal submission.

16. Could INL confirm if international (non-U.S.) NGOs or inter-governmental organizations may participate as subgrantees, subcontractors, or service providers?

Answer: Yes, please consult 2 CFR 200.331 - Subrecipient and Contractor Determination for additional guidance.

17. Could INL confirm if US businesses may participate as subgrantees, subcontractors, or service providers?

Answer: Please refer to answer on question #16.

18. Page 4 of the NOFO states, "Applicants may choose to address one or both goals. Proposals should clearly indicate which goal(s) are being addressed and describe how proposed activities will achieve the intended outcomes. Applications that address more than one goal will not be given preference over ones that address only one – instead applications will be evaluated on their merit and anticipated impact." If an applicant submits a single integrated proposal addressing both goals, does the Government reserve the right to make an award for only one goal if it determines that portion of the proposal is technically strong and fundable, while the other goal is not selected for award?

Answer: Please refer to Section E, Point 3 – Review and Selection Process, INL reserves the right to fund any number of applications or none of the applications submitted and reserves the right to make an award for only the portion of the proposal that it determines is technically strong and fundable.

19. If an applicant submits a proposal addressing both goals, will the technical evaluation assess the strength and merit of each goal independently? If not, will the proposal receive a single composite technical score?

Answer: Each goal will be evaluated on its own merit and anticipated impact.

20. Page 12 of the NOFO, states that "All Word documents are single-spaced, 12-point Times New Roman font, with a minimum of 1-inch margins". May applicants use font size smaller than 12pt for text boxes, tables, and graphics?

Answer: Please refer to answers on question #8.

21. For planning purposes, can INL clarify whether they anticipate providing classroom space/training facilities for program activities? If not, should applicants budget for venue rental and associated logistical costs?

Answer: Please refer to answer on question #9.

22. For budgeting purposes, can INL clarify whether applicants are expected to cover travel, lodging, per diem, or other logistical costs for host country personnel participating in program activities?

Answer: Please refer to answer on question #9.

23. For budgeting purposes, can INL clarify whether designated vetted or special units will already possess the necessary equipment to support training and practical exercises (e.g., audiovisual equipment, case file materials, investigative tools)? If not, should applicants plan to procure or provide supplemental materials?

Answer: Please refer to answer on question #9.

24. Could you please confirm whether the Cover Page and Table of Contents are included within the 20-page limit for the Proposal Narrative, or whether they may be submitted in addition to the 20-page narrative content?

Answer: The cover page and table of contents are excluded from the page limit for the Proposal Narrative.

25. If an applicant proposes to address both goals, does INL expect activities to fully encompass all listed sub-objectives under each goal, or may applicants define a focused approach that addresses selected sub-objectives with clear justification?

Answer: Applicants may propose a focused approach targeting selected sub-objectives, with clear justification and alignment to the overall goals.

26. The NOFO specifies that for-profit organizations are excluded from applying. Could INL please clarify whether this eligibility restriction applies only to the prime applicant, or whether it also applies to subrecipients or consortium members under the award?

Answer: The eligibility criteria apply to the prime or lead applicant. Please refer to answer on question #16.

27. Does INL anticipate training of officers taking place within the focus area of the project, e.g., Northern Border States, or at a central location such as CDMX?

Answer: Please refer to answer on question #3.

28. Does INL expect project activities to be implemented nationwide, in a limited number of states, or in specific jurisdictions (e.g., Mexico City and/or priority states)? In the absence of explicit guidance, what criteria will INL prioritize for the selection of implementation locations?

Answer: Please refer to answer on question #3.

29. Is this project intended to develop a model and approach that will be scaled nationally? If so, should a handover plan be developed (for whoever would be doing the training following this project period)? Or, would this be something that the selected awardee might be tasked to continue as an extension or phase 2 of this award

Answer: Please refer to and Section D, Point 2 – Project Proposal, which requires a Future Funding Plan/Sustainability to be included in the proposal narrative.

30. Does INL have minimum or maximum expectations regarding the number of law enforcement officers and/or prosecutors to be trained over the project implementation period?

Answer: The number of participants should be determined by the applicant's proposal.

31. Will applicants be expected to independently identify and engage the relevant law enforcement and prosecutorial units and participants for project activities, or should applicants anticipate that INL will facilitate introductions and coordination with appropriate agencies and leadership at the federal and/or state level?

Answer: INL Mexico may assist, however, ideally the potential awardee should have the ability to reach out to authorities on its own.

32. Given that the target beneficiaries include personnel from vetted and special units, should applicants assume that identified participants have already met INL vetting requirements, or should proposed timelines and workplans anticipate the need for additional vetting of trainees prior to participation in project activities?

Answer: Please refer to answers on question #9 and #12.

33. Does INL have any preference or restrictions regarding training modality (in-person, hybrid, or virtual)?

Answer: No, this should be determined by each proposal and be based on the developed project context section.

34. Does INL intend to have any of its expert personnel involved in the training?

Answer: Please refer to answers on question #33.

35. Does INL assume that training activities will require covering participant travel, lodging, and per diem, or does INL expect proposals to be designed primarily for locally based participants who do not require accommodation?

Answer: Please refer to answers on question #33.

36. May applicants use a smaller font size (e.g., 10-point Times New Roman) within tables, figures, charts, or captions, provided that the main narrative text adheres to the 12-point requirement?

Answer: Please refer to answers on question #8.

37. Please confirm if INL requires a Table of Acronyms as part of the Proposal Narrative document

Answer: No. As per NOFO, INL does not require a separate “Acronyms” section, though including one may be helpful.

38. Please confirm if the Cover Page, Table of Contents (and potentially the Table of Acronyms) should be counted towards the 20-page limit.

Answer: The cover page and table of contents are excluded from the page limit for the Proposal Narrative.

39. Please confirm that INL is not expecting a separate section on “evidence”. That is, we understand that proponents should make sure that the proposal complies with the content of the “Evidence” subsection of the NOFO without preparing a dedicated “Evidence” section in the proposal

Answer: INL does not require a separate “Evidence” section. Applicants should integrate the content from the NOFO’s Evidence subsection into the narrative section.

40. Will INL facilitate the connection to personnel already vetted and assigned to specialized units that work with US law enforcement, or are applicants expected to be able to identify these personnel or suggest personnel?

Answer: Please refer to answer on question #31.

41. To what extent, if at all, should applicants include coordination with US law enforcement working with vetted units?

Answer: Please refer to answer on question #3.

42. Does INL have priority states or regions where strengthened investigative and evidentiary capacity is most urgently needed, or should applicants propose target locations based on indicators such as cartel activity?

Answer: Please refer to answer on question #3 and #9.

43. Will INL facilitate high-level engagement with Fiscalía leadership to support institutionalization of training outputs, or should applicants assume responsibility for securing such commitments?

Answer: Please refer to answer on question #31.

44. Are there other simultaneous INL initiatives that would coincide with any training provided through this NOFO?

Answer: Not at the moment.

45. Can a bidder submit multiple proposals to cover different service or pillar areas?

Answer: Please refer to answers on question #1.

46. Furthermore, if a bidder has the capacity for multiple areas, should they submit individual proposals for each or a single comprehensive proposal—even if the total budget exceeds the \$1.5 million limit?

Answer: A proposal must not exceed the \$1.5 million ceiling. Organizations may submit proposals addressing one or multiple goals, but each proposal cannot exceed the ceiling. Whether to submit separate or a single proposal is at the discretion of the organization.

47. The call for proposals locates the implementation of the project in Mexico. The aim is to work in all states in parallel, or priority states and regions are being considered? In the last scenario, is there a minimum number of states?

Answer: Please refer to answer on question #3.

48. With which law enforcement agencies is the project expected to be carried out?

Answer: Please refer to answer on question #3.

49. Is there a formal coordination framework envisioned with Mexican authorities for the implementation of the project, or is the implementer expected to independently establish the necessary institutional agreements?

Answer: Please refer to answer on question #31.

50. Is it anticipated that the project will involve handling sensitive or classified information? If so, what additional institutional requirements would apply to the management and safeguarding of such information?

Answer: Please consult 2 CFR 200.303 – Internal controls, section (e) for additional guidance.

51. In terms of sustainability, does INL foresee any form of institutional or budgetary continuity beyond the period of performance, or is the project design expected to incorporate a self-sustainability model from the outset?

Answer: Please refer to and Section D, Point 2 – Project Proposal, which requires a Future Funding Plan/Sustainability to be included in the proposal narrative. Additional details can be found in Section B, Point 1 – Project Implementation Period.

52. What expectations, if any, exist regarding the transfer of capacities or the institutionalization of the platform within Mexican entities at the conclusion of the project?

Answer: Please refer to and Section D, Point 2 – Project Proposal, which requires a Future Funding Plan/Sustainability to be included in the proposal narrative.

53. Are there specific institutional guidelines related to data governance, data storage, interoperability, or cybersecurity standards that should be taken into account at the design stage?

Answer: No, not at this stage.

54. Beyond the evaluation criteria outlined in the solicitation, are there strategic institutional priorities (for example, alignment with specific INL programs in Mexico) that applicants should consider in order to strengthen the project's coherence with U.S. foreign policy objectives?

Answer: No, not at this stage.

55. Leahy Vetting: Will INL/U.S. Embassy Mexico accept participants who already have a current/valid Leahy vetting clearance from another U.S. Government-funded program, or must Leahy vetting be conducted specifically for this award and for each planned activity? If prior vetting can be leveraged, what documentation is required to confirm validity (e.g., vetting reference number, date of clearance, validity period), and under what conditions would re-vetting still be required?

Answer: Please refer to answers on question #12.

56. For planning and budgeting purposes, does INL have an expected range for the scale of implementation under this NOFO (e.g., approximate number of participants trained, number of cohorts, training days/hours per cohort, and/or number of participating units/agencies) within a 12–24 month period? If INL does not have targets, should applicants propose their own scale assumptions, and will scale (volume) be evaluated primarily on possibility, cost-effectiveness, and alignment with the stated outcomes?

Answer: Please refer to answers on question #19 and 30.

57. An organization may submit more than one application under this NOFO. Since the funding opportunity outlines four distinct objectives, would it be permissible to submit separate proposals targeting different objectives (for example, one application per objective), or are applicants limited to submitting only one proposal in total?

Answer: Please refer to answers on question #1.

58. May an organization serve as the lead applicant (prime) on a proposal addressing a single goal, while also participating as a subrecipient or consortium partner on a separate proposal submitted by another organization that proposes to address both goals within a single application?

Answer: Yes.

59. To what extent does INL expect or encourage direct engagement with U.S. law enforcement or prosecutorial counterparts within proposed activities, as referenced in the Objectives (p. 4), as compared to strengthening Mexican institutional capacity that supports cross-border cooperation more indirectly?

Answer: INL expects direct engagement with U.S law enforcement and prosecutorial counterparts will likely be more beneficial to achieving stated outcomes, than focusing on indirect efforts.

60. May proposed activities include technical assistance or training for judges or judicial training institutes, where such engagement supports the prosecutorial objectives outlined in Section A, noting the defined primary and secondary audiences (pp. 4–5)?

Answer: Proposed activities should be focused on the operators the NOFO targets. INL expects proposals to address the objectives and sub-objectives as directly as possible.

61. Criminal phenomena prioritization: While the NOFO does not restrict proposals to specific offenses, does INL have priority criminal phenomena (e.g., financial crimes, asset forfeiture, narcotics trafficking, human trafficking, cyber-enabled crime) that applicants should consider when designing training scenarios and operational modules?

Answer: INL expects proposals to address the Project Goals and Objectives through potential training and operational modules on the subject matter each applicant considers most relevant.

62. Pretrial proceedings and evidentiary admissibility: Does INL consider capacity building focused on pretrial hearings, including admissibility and exclusion of evidence, legality of procedures, and defense of chain of custody, to be within the intended scope of this NOFO, in addition to courtroom presentation in oral proceedings?

Answer: Training on pretrial hearings, such as admissibility and exclusion of evidence, legality of procedures, and defense of chain of custody, may be considered within the scope

of this NOFO. However, proposals must clearly demonstrate how these activities support and advance the NOFO's stated goals and objectives.

63. Given the security requirements associated with engagement with vetted units and/or coordination with U.S. law enforcement counterparts, can INL confirm whether the prime applicant is required to hold a U.S. facility security clearance?

Answer: Applicants are not required to hold a U.S. facility security clearance.

64. Is the goal of the training to improve the success of criminal cases adjudicated in Mexican courts only?

Answer: The goal of the training is to support and advance the NOFO's stated goals and objectives.

65. Given that the proposed activities focus on training and capacity building, and considering the typical duration of judicial processes, does INL consider it sufficient for proposals to measure results at the level of improved practices, case file quality, and institutional coordination during the project period, with indicators such as prosecutions or convictions treated as longer-term impacts?

Answer: As required by the NOFO, applicants must include a Change Map with quantitative indicators demonstrating the applicant's ability to monitor key outcomes over the 24-month period of performance of the award; a Performance Indicator Reference Sheet outlining a plan for collecting data on those outcome indicators; and a thorough and realistic Risk Assessment covering their proposal and respective activities.

66. The proposal mentions that the goal population is "frontline" prosecutors and law enforcement. What distinguishes these prosecutors and law enforcement from other prosecutors and law enforcement agencies? Are there any specific roles or institutions that INL has in mind?

Answer: INL considers "frontline" prosecutors and law enforcement agents to be personnel who are directly involved in investigating cases, interacting with victims and witnesses, and litigating cases

67. The NOFO references vetted and special units that frequently collaborate with U.S. law enforcement counterparts. Can INL clarify the anticipated level of coordination with U.S. agencies (e.g., DEA, FBI, HSI) under this cooperative agreement? Specifically, should applicants assume U.S. agency participation in selected training or mentorship activities,

or should proposed activities be designed to function independently of direct U.S. operational engagement unless otherwise directed by INL?

Answer: Proposed activities should be designed to be independently implemented, as INL does not plan for direct U.S. operational engagement. Applicants should not expect U.S. agencies to participate in trainings or mentorship activities unless they can secure that participation and it directly supports the goals and objectives of this NOFO. INL will, however, help selected grantees connect with U.S. law enforcement partners when it aligns with the goals and objectives of this NOFO and when INL deems it appropriate.

68. For the law enforcement objective, does INL intend for proposals to focus exclusively on federally vetted investigative units (e.g., within FGR/AIC), or is INL also seeking engagement with state-level Policía de Investigación or municipal police as well?

Answer: INL expects proposals to clearly identify the stakeholders who will help achieve the goals and objectives of this NOFO. Also, please refer to answer on question #3.

69. For the law enforcement objective, given the 24-month period of performance, does INL anticipate measurable prosecutorial outcomes within the award period, or is emphasis placed on demonstrable improvements in investigative processes and capacity-building milestones?

Answer: As required by the NOFO, applicants must include a Change Map with quantitative indicators demonstrating the applicant's ability to monitor key outcomes over the 24-month period of performance of the award; a Performance Indicator Reference Sheet outlining a plan for collecting data on those outcome indicators; and a thorough and realistic Risk Assessment covering their proposal and respective activities.

70. Are there any restrictions or sensitivities regarding collection of investigative data (e.g., chain-of-custody tracking, case documentation reviews) for performance monitoring purposes?

Answer: For performance monitoring, INL expects proposals to comply with local laws, including any restrictions on collecting investigative data.