

FAQs

1. Eligibility and Applicant Roles

- **Can private entities, such as for-profit firms or individuals, participate in this NOFO as lead, co-leads, or subrecipients?**

Individuals and for-profit organizations are not eligible to apply. Eligible applicants include U.S. 501(c)(3) NGOs, overseas-based NGOs, institutions of higher education, and PIOs (Section C.1). Subrecipients and co-leads must also fulfill eligibility standards as indicated within the NOFO.

- **Are public international organizations (PIOs) eligible? Is a Unique Entity Identifier (UEI) required for public international organizations?**

Yes, public international organizations (PIOs) are eligible to apply under this NOFO (Section C.1). Yes, all applicants, including PIOs, must have a UEI and active registration in SAM.gov (Section C.3).

- **How will the review panel weigh past performance with the U.S. government for a sub-awardee to a 501(c)(3) prime applicant?**

Past performance will be considered under "Organizational Capacity and Record of Performance" (Section E.1). The prime applicant must demonstrate its own capacity to manage the project and meet the NOFO's requirements.

2. Budget and Financial Questions

- **When will funds be released and how will payments be managed throughout the project? Should the SF-270 form be completed for each monthly payment? Will payments be made via bank transfer or through the U.S. embassy? Should administrative costs be added to VAT?**

Payments will be managed through the SF-270 form (Request for Advance or Reimbursement) and require internal senior approvals as well as final approval from the Grants Officer (Section F.1). Payments may be requested on an advance or reimbursable basis in correlation to program activities and monitoring. SF-270 payments are issued via wire transfer to your bank upon vendor creation for selected applicants. Foreign assistance funds are not subject to VAT tax, if necessary, the recipient needs to obtain tax exemption status in correlation with the

U.S. Embassy. Foreign tax reporting is required, and recipients will be required to submit a report on an annual basis to the Grants Officer.

- **What percentage of the budget should be allocated to infrastructure investments versus programmatic activities?**

The NOFO does not specify a percentage allocation. Applicants should propose a budget that aligns with the project's objectives and demonstrates cost-effectiveness (Section E.1).

- **Can part of the budget be used to purchase laptops/tablets for training purposes? Are transportation, per diems, and rural logistics allowable expenses?**

Yes, these expenses are allowable and fall under supplies and equipment within the NOFO, items must be directly tied to the project's objectives and comply with 2 CFR 200 regulations as well as in accordance with its own procurement regulations and property standards.

- **Should applicants include full five-year internet service costs in the budget or only the first year with a sustainability plan?**

Applicants should budget for 54 months of project costs with an option to extend. Recipients must budget for installation and servicing costs for up to 3,600 sites within the project duration with an option up to 5 years of internet service coverage, prioritizing deployment and initial year of service (Section A.2).

- **Can grant funds be used for spectrum licensing or leasing in coordination with CONATEL?**

No, grant funds may not be used for spectrum licensing or leasing and must be used in accordance with the project's objectives and comply with 2 CFR 200 regulations (Section A.2).

3. Technical Specifications and Connectivity

- **What are the technical specifications for internet access points? Can different connectivity technologies (fiber, satellite, fixed wireless) be combined based on geographic needs?**

Technical specifications should align with international standards and be determined in consultation with MITIC (Section A.2). Combining different connectivity technologies is permissible and should be based on geographic needs and consultation with MITIC and CONATEL.

- **What international standards and certifications must connectivity equipment comply with? Are local internet service providers required, or is there flexibility to work with international vendors?**

Connectivity equipment must comply with international standards and certifications (Section A.2). Internet service providers should be selected in coordination with MITIC and CONATEL. Trusted vendor equipment must be used, and procurement must comply with 2 CFR 200 standards (Section A.2).

- **Who will be responsible for the installation and maintenance of infrastructure, including electrical power for equipment?**

Infrastructure installation and maintenance responsibilities should be outlined in the proposal and ultimately coordinated with MITIC and CONATEL (Section A.2).

- **Would a holistic, end-to-end managed service proposal be welcomed?**

Proposals should align with the NOFO's objectives and comply with procurement regulations (Section A.2).

- **Would the Department of State consider solutions using U.S.-developed, cloud-native secure cores and private APN gateways?**

Proposals should align with the NOFO's objectives and comply with procurement regulations (Section A.2).

4. Training and Digital Literacy

- **What is the baseline understanding and certification requirements for Trainers of Trainers (ToT)? Who selects them?**

Trainers of Trainers (ToT) should have relevant expertise, but specific certification requirements are not outlined in the NOFO. Applicants may propose selection and certifications based on project needs (Section A.2).

- **What language will training be conducted in? Will it be on-site, remote, or self-paced?**

Training may be conducted in Spanish and/or Guaraní, depending on the target population's needs. Accessibility requirements should be addressed for people with disabilities or low literacy. On-site, remote, and self-paced training methods are permissible if they align with project objectives and meet the needs of the target population (Section A.2).

- **Are there demographic studies or data on digital literacy levels in target communities?**

Demographic studies or data on digital literacy levels were not identified for this NOFO. Proposals may suggest data collection methods to assess digital literacy levels in target communities and propose trainings according to community needs (Section A.2).

5. Site Selection and Territorial Scope

- **Is there a minimum or maximum population threshold for defining “lower population density”?**

The NOFO does not specify population thresholds. Applicants may define lower population density to include rural areas or other criteria based on project objectives (Section A.2).

- **Can the implementing organization propose specific territories for connectivity infrastructure investment?**

Yes, applicants may propose specific territories, but these must align with Paraguayan government priorities (Section A.2).

- **Who will select the 3,600 internet access sites, and what criteria will be used to prioritize communities?**

Site selection will be coordinated with MITIC and CONATEL, and criteria should be outlined in the proposal (Section A.2).

- **To what extent are target territories aligned with IDB's Agenda Digital?**

This is a funding opportunity sponsored by U.S. Department of State WHA/PPC. It is not affiliated with IDB.

6. Administrative and Coordination Questions

- **What are MITIC and CONATEL's specific responsibilities in project implementation?**

The selected implementing partner is required to enter into a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) or cooperation agreement with the Government of Paraguay to formalize technical cooperation with MITIC and CONATEL, in consultation with U.S. Embassy Asuncion (Section A.2).

- **What is the timeline for obtaining U.S. Embassy approval for scope, budget, or personnel changes?**

Requests for approval must be submitted in writing and include a detailed justification. The timeline will depend on the complexity of the request (Section A.2).

- **How often will monitoring site visits from the Embassy or Department of State occur?**

Monitoring site visits will occur at least once during the project's lifetime (Section H.5).

- **Can a digital platform be part of the shared monitoring system?**

Yes, digital platforms may be proposed as part of the shared monitoring system if they align with project objectives (Section A.2).

- **Will MITIC or the selected implementing partner be responsible for implementing activities such as acquisition, installation, and maintenance of internet access points and digital literacy training?**

The selected implementing partner will be responsible for implementing activities, but coordination with MITIC and CONATEL, in consultation with U.S. Embassy Asuncion, is required (Section A.2). The selected implementing partner should develop an institutionalization plan with MITIC to take on monitoring, management, and maintenance of the internet access points post-award, including a plan to source spare parts and sustainment services over the determined period of years within the workplan established with MITIC and CONATEL (Section A.2).

7. Sustainability and Institutionalization

- **Can the proposal include a local technical support network as part of its sustainability strategy?**

Yes, proposals may include a local technical support network as part of the sustainability strategy (Section A.2).

- **Would off-grid connectivity solutions (e.g., solar-powered systems) be eligible within the scope of this initiative?**

The NOFO does not prohibit the use of off-grid connectivity solutions. Applicants should propose a budget that aligns with the project's objectives and demonstrates cost-effectiveness (Section E.1).

- **Does maintenance over the 54-month period include on-site technical support in rural areas?**

All project activities must be proposed for the 54-month project period and conducted within the period of performance of the award. Renewal of an award to increase funding or extend the period of performance is at the discretion of DoS.

8. Formatting and Documentation

- **In the event of discrepancies between the NOFO and PSI, which document prevails?**

The NOFO prevails, please use page limits and formatting requirements listed within the NOFO Section D.6.

- **Are there restrictions on how the additional page for attachments may be used?**

Attachments are detailed in Section D.6-Number 7 of the NOFO and not to exceed 9 pages total. The additional page for attachments may include further timeline information, letters of support, memoranda of understanding (MOU)/agreement, etc. For applicants with many letters/MOUs, it may be useful to provide a list of the organizations or government agencies that support the project rather than the actual documentation.

- **Can the proposal be submitted in Spanish or exclusively in English? Should it be uploaded in PDF format or follow a specific form?**

Proposals must be submitted in English as a Word Document. Technical formatting requirements are outlined in Section D.6.

9. Systems Access Issues

- **How can I get help if I have trouble accessing MyGrants?**

If organizations have difficulty registering on <http://www.grants.gov> or accessing the NOFO, please contact the Grants.gov Helpdesk at 1-800-518-4726 or via email at support@grants.gov for technical assistance. Please also contact AsuncionEmbassyGrants@state.gov to notify of issues accessing the NOFO or submitting required information.