Notice of Funding Opportunity
Strengthening Government Through Civil Society Engagement

Announcement Type:	New Grant
Public Opportunity Title:	CARSI Small Grants Program: **Strengthening Government Through Civil Society Engagement**
Catalog of Federal Domestic Assistance (CFDA) Listing:	19.750
Funding Amount:	$500,000 USD
Issuance Date:	April 1, 2022
Deadline for Receipt of Questions:	May 1, 2022, at 11:59 PM Eastern Time (ET)
Closing for Submission of Applications:	June 1, 2022, at 11:59 PM Eastern Time (ET)
Funding Activity Category:	Governance
Program Type:	U.S. Embassy San Jose
Grant Program:	Central America Regional Security Initiative
Assistance Type:	Grant
Eligibility Category:	U.S. non-profit/non-governmental organizations (NGOs) having a 501(c)(3) status with the IRS or non-U.S.-based NGOs, U.S. and non U.S.-based public and private institutions of higher education. A consortium of non-profits can apply together as long as there is one lead organization submitting the proposal, and public international organizations.
Est. Project Start Date:	September 30, 2022
Est. Project End Date:	Variable
Fiscal Year:	FY2021
Award Ceiling:	$250,000
Award Floor:	$100,000
Expected # of Awards Funded:	3 to 5
Cost Sharing Requirement:	No

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The U.S. Embassy in San Jose, Costa Rica, announces a Notice of Funding Opportunity (NOFO) to strengthen government institutions through civil society engagement. U.S. Embassy San Jose intends to issue awards in an amount not to exceed $500,000 in Economic Support Funds (ESF) , pending availability of funding. The anticipated start date for this activity is September 30, 2022, and project periods should not exceed two years. The U.S. Department of State is under no obligation to fund any of the proposals submitted under this funding opportunity.

The NOFO and submitted proposals should focus on Pillar II of the Root Causes Strategy (RCS): *Combating corruption, strengthening democratic governance, and advancing the rule of law.* Within Central America (Belize, Costa Rica, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras, Nicaragua, and Panama), the United States works with partner nations to strengthen institutions to counter the effects of organized crime, uphold the rule of law, and protect human rights. Institution building is coupled with both prevention projects that dissuade at-risk youth from turning to crime and gangs and community policing projects that engage local communities on citizen security issues.

U.S. Embassy San Jose invites qualified U.S. non-profit/non-governmental organizations (NGOs) having a 501(c)(3) status with the IRS or non U.S.-based NGOs, and U.S. and non U.S.-based public and private institutions of higher education to submit proposals that include an implementation strategy focused on: Strong, Capable and Accountable Governments through Governance, an objective of U.S. assistance for Central America. Proposals should be oriented toward activities by civil society organizations working with governments to improve the delivery of government services, particularly to vulnerable and/or marginalized communities and in areas outside of the Central Valley but within Costa Rica. These proposals will assist or complement central/local/municipal government efforts to increase and improve services. Proposals should facilitate citizens' abilities to hold the government accountable for its responsibilities. Proposals cannot provide direct support to the central, regional, or municipal governments of Costa Rica.

Applicants should address the following objective:

Objective: Post is interested in projects that focus on activities by CSOs working with the government to fight corruption and increase transparency and openness, especially at the municipal level. Proposals aimed at combatting corruption could help Costa Rica in its efforts to digitalize government services and/or procurement processes to increase efficiency, delivery, and transparency. Post is also interested in projects that help governments take action to reduce the impacts of climate change, by building the capacity of local institutions and empowering them to generate solutions and manage adaption initiatives over the long term.

U.S. Embassy San Jose reserves the right to fund any or none of the applications submitted and will determine the resulting level of funding for the award. The authority for this NOFO is found in the Foreign Assistance Act of 1961, as amended.

Eligible organizations interested in submitting an application are encouraged to read this NOFO thoroughly to understand the type of project sought and the application submission requirements and evaluation process.

For further information, please contact:
U.S. Embassy San Jose

E-mail: SanJoseCarsiESF@state.gov

NOTICE OF FUNDING OPPORTUNITY

U.S. Embassy San Jose is seeking applications from qualified U.S. nonprofit/non-governmental organizations (NGOs) having a 501(c)(3) status with the IRS or non-U.S.-based NGOs, U.S.- and non-U.S.-based public and private institutions of higher education, and public international organizations for a grant to implement a project entitled "Strengthening Government Through Civil Society Engagement." A consortium of non-profits can apply together as long as there is one lead organization submitting the proposal, The authority for this NOFO is found in the Foreign Assistance Act of 1961, as amended.

Pursuant to 2 Code of Federal Regulations (CFR) 200.400g, it is U.S. Department of State policy not to award for profit under assistance instruments. All reasonable, allocable, and allowable expenses, however, both direct and indirect, which are related to the agreement and are in accordance with applicable cost standards (2 CFR 200 for US and non-U.S.-based non-profit organizations, and universities; the Federal Acquisition Regulation (FAR) Part 31 48 CFR 31.2 for-profit organizations; and the Mandatory Standard Provision "Allowable Costs (APR 2011)" for public international organizations), may be paid under the grant agreement. NOTE: Non U.S.-based non-profit organizations are legally required to comply with the 2 CFR 200 and must be registered in the country of operation.

Subject to the availability of funds, Embassy San Jose intends to issue approximately three to five awards in an amount not to exceed $500,000. Each award will be for an amount between $100,000 and up to $250,000. The U.S. dollar amount will be funded from U.S. Embassy San Jose allocated funds, for a project period not to exceed two years per award. The anticipated start date for this activity is September 30, 2022. U.S. Embassy San Jose reserves the right to fund any or none of the applications submitted and will determine the resulting level of funding for each award.

Eligible organizations interested in submitting an application are encouraged to read this NOFO thoroughly to understand the type of project sought and the application submission requirements and technical review process.

To be eligible for award, the applicant must submit all required information in its application through Grants.gov (http://www.grants.gov), including the requirements found in any attachments to this Grants.gov opportunity. (Please contact Grants.gov Applicant Support at 1-800-518-4726 and support@grants.gov with any submission problems.

This NOFO consists of this cover letter plus the following Sections:

1. Section I – Funding Opportunity Description
2. Section II – Award Information
3. Section III – Eligibility information
4. Section IV – Application and Submission Instructions
5. Section V – Application and Review Information
6. Section VI – Agency Contacts

This funding opportunity is posted on Grants.gov and may be amended. See Section IV for further details. Potential applicants should regularly check the website to ensure they have the latest

information pertaining to this NOFO. Applicants will need to have available or download Adobe software to their computers in order to view and save the Adobe forms properly. If you have difficulty registering on 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.

It is the responsibility of the recipient of this NOFO document to ensure that the submission has been received in its entirety from Grants.Gov. U.S. Embassy San Jose does not bear any responsibility for data errors resulting from transmission or conversion process associated with electronic submissions. The deadline for this NOFO is June 1, 2022, 11:59 PM Eastern Time.

Any questions concerning this NOFO should be submitted in writing to SanJoseCarsiESF@state.gov. The deadline for submission of questions for this NOFO is May 1, 2022 at 11:59 PM Eastern Time (ET) Responses to questions emailed to the U.S. Embassy will be made available to all potential applicants through the Embassy's website posting of the NOFO in: https://cr.usembassy.gov/embassy/sanjose/apply-u-s-government-funded-grant/

Issuance of this NOFO does not constitute an award commitment on the part of the U.S. government, nor does it commit the U.S. government to pay for costs incurred in the preparation and submission of an application. In addition, final award of any resultant grant agreement cannot be made until funds have been fully appropriated, allocated, and committed through internal U.S. Embassy San Jose procedures. While it is anticipated that these procedures will be successfully completed, potential applicants are hereby notified of these requirements and conditions for award. Applications are submitted at the risk of the applicant. All preparation and submission costs are at the applicant's expense.

Sincerely,

Cynthia A. Telles
Ambassador
U.S. Embassy San Jose

SECTION I – FUNDING OPPORTUNITY DESCRIPTION

BACKGROUND

Bordering the Caribbean Sea and the Pacific Ocean, Costa Rica has a total of 1,228 km of coastline (212 km on the Caribbean coast and 1,016 km on the Pacific). Drug-trafficking organizations continue to move illicit material from South America through Central America to the United States and beyond, leaving Costa Rica's coastal and border communities, typically the most economically disadvantaged, highly vulnerable to the influence of traffickers. Strong, capable, and accountable governments are vital to respond to this threat, and civil society organizations that work with local governments to improve delivery of government services can assist vulnerable and marginalized communities outside of the Central Valley. Functional government services are critical to provide economic opportunities in local communities as attractive alternatives for at-risk populations that may turn to crime and illicit drugs for their livelihood.

A secure and stable Central America contributes to a safer and more prosperous United States. Through the RCS, of which the Central America Regional Security Initiative (CARSI) is a component, U.S. assistance seeks to secure U.S. borders and protect U.S. citizens by addressing the security, governance, and economic root causes of irregular migration and illicit trafficking, and to promote fair and reciprocal trade in Central America. To promote improved governance, U.S. assistance in Central America supports anti-corruption efforts that improve the ease of doing business; strengthen the rule of law; promote strong institutions and government accountability; reduce impunity; and improve fiscal management by promoting efficient tax collection, civil society engagement, and institutional reform. U.S. assistance enhances the capabilities of government entities and civil society organizations to build more accountable, transparent, and effective public institutions. CARSI ESF small grants, such as this opportunity, provide programming to strengthen civil society's role in improving governance and supporting a professional, non-partisan civil service.

The RCS identifies, prioritizes, and coordinates actions to improve security, governance, human rights, and economic conditions in the region. The RCS lays out a framework to use the policy, resources, and diplomacy of the United States, and to leverage the expertise and resources of a broad group of public and private stakeholders, to build hope for citizens in the region that the life they desire can be found at home. The end goal is a democratic, prosperous, and safe Central America, where people advance economically, live, work, and learn in safety, have confidence in public institutions, and enjoy opportunities to create futures for themselves and their families at home.

The RCS is organized into five pillars. Due to congressional global earmarks for democracy and governance programming, projects must contribute to one or more of the three lines of effort under Pillar II of the Strategy, *Combating corruption, strengthening democratic governance, and advancing the rule of law:*

- **Strengthen democratic institutions to improve governance and rule of law.** The United States will work with countries to promote reform agendas across all branches of government, so government better serves all citizens. This will include a focus on adequately resourcing judicial and oversight institutions, ensuring their independence, and promoting reform of personnel selection and retention processes.

- **Prioritize an anticorruption agenda.** The United States will work regionally, bilaterally, and, if we must, unilaterally to root out corruption and enhance transparency across the region.
- **Improve administration of public resources.** The United States will work with governments to establish proper budgeting, management, and use of public resources at the local and national levels to enhance service delivery for all citizens, including in underserved areas and vulnerable populations.

CARSI assistance supports a safer and more secure region where criminal organizations no longer wield the power to destabilize governments or threaten national and regional security and public safety, as well as to prevent the entry and spread of illicit drugs, violence, and transnational threats to countries throughout the region and to the United States. The five pillars of CARSI are:

1. Create safe streets for the citizens of the region;
2. Disrupt the movement of criminals and contraband within and among the nations of Central America;
3. **Support the development of strong, capable and accountable Central American Governments;**
4. Re-establish effective state presence and security in communities at risk; and,
5. Foster enhanced levels of security and rule of law coordination and cooperation among the nations of the region.

Solicitations must reflect support for CARSI pillar three (strong, capable, and accountable governments), and results, particularly indicators, will be reported under the Strategy's Governance objective. Applicants must provide governance indicators that correlate with CARSI pillar three to track results. U.S. federal assistance seeks to promote improved governance in the following ways: supporting anti-corruption efforts; encouraging strong institutions; promoting government accountability; and improving fiscal management, thus strengthening government entities and civil society organizations in order to build more accountable, transparent, and effective public institutions. In addition, applicants should consider the implications of the novel coronavirus (COVID-19) on project activities and any possible restrictions in Costa Rica. The risk template (Tab G) should include a contingency plan for the various restrictions that may occur due to COVID-19 and a review of project activities that could be completed virtually if necessary.

PROJECT GOALS

The funds supporting this NOFO will focus on: (a) Supporting the development of strong, capable, and accountable Central American governments; and (b) Central American civil society demanding government accountability without reprisal of their rights and are able to influence policy outcomes. Host nation governments uphold the values and practices of liberal democracy; citizens hold their governments accountable for these actions.

PROJECT OBJECTIVES

As applicable, proposals should specify the expected results from projects benefitting from these funds, such as the number of participants trained; improvement in government transparency or e-government; and other improvements in basic government services that impact citizens and small

business. All proposals should state clear objectives and show plans to measure project performance and contributions to meeting Objectives.

Applicants should address the following objective:

Objective: Civil society provides support to improve basic local, municipal, or central government services. Proposals should be oriented toward activities by civil society organizations working to improve, expand or complement the delivery of government services, particularly to vulnerable and/or marginalized communities and in areas outside of the Central Valley but within Costa Rica, in an effort to help create strong, capable, and accountable governments. In addition, civil society provides support to increase the accountability of local, municipal, or central governments to its citizens and ensures that citizens hold their government accountable for its actions.

Proposals should be oriented toward activities by civil society organizations (CSOs) working with governments to improve the delivery of government services, particularly to vulnerable and/or marginalized communities in areas outside of the Greater Metropolitan Area. Post is interested in projects that focus on activities by CSOs working with the government to fight corruption and increase transparency and openness, especially at the municipal level. Proposals aimed at combatting corruption could help Costa Rica in its efforts to digitalize government services and/or procurement processes to increase efficiency, delivery, and transparency. Post is also interested in projects that help governments take action to reduce the impacts of climate change, by building the capacity of local institutions and empowering them to generate solutions and manage adaption initiatives over the long term.

DESIRED RESULTS AND REQUIRED INDICATORS

By the end of the project, grantees should demonstrate that the project has (1) improved government services, (2) made government stronger, more capable, and accountable, (3) strengthened civil society organizations to promote accountability, and/or (4) contributed to safer and more productive communities through improved government services.

Suggested output and outcome indicators for the project are provided below. The applicant should provide pertinent output and outcome indicators from this list. The applicant is expected to identify targets for these indicators based on what it can reasonably achieve within the performance period of the project and based on the expected overall project results described above.

REQUIRED - – Output Indicator for U.S. Assistance in Central America :	***Required targets:***
Number of civil society organizations (CSOs) receiving USG assistance engaged in advocacy interventions.	TBD

ILLUSTRATIVE OUTPUT INDICATORS

Illustrative output indicators for funded projects are provided below. The below are examples; there are no specific output indicators required. However, the applicant must develop and

provide a list of output indicators and targets appropriate for the applicant's application.

***Example* Output Indicators**	***Illustrative targets:***
Software developed to facilitate public requests for services.	TBD
Number of telecom/ICT governance or cybersecurity policies, laws, or regulations drafted, proposed, adopted, improved, or implemented with USG assistance.	TBD
Number of non-state-owned internet governance institutions strengthened or established with USG assistance.	TBD
Number of USG-assisted non-government entities that engage in advocacy or legislative proceedings to influence national telecom/ICT, internet, or digital economy policies.	TBD

REQUIRED - Outcome Indicators for Objective:	***Required targets:***
Number of requests for government service that are addressed by beneficiary communities	TBD
Number of civil society organizations (CSOs) strengthened to promote policy dialogue, advocate for change and/or serve as watchdogs on key issues.	TBD

Illustrative output indicators for funded projects are provided below. The below are examples; there are no specific output indicators required. However, the applicant must develop and provide a list of output indicators and targets appropriate for the applicant's application.

The recipient will be required to collect baseline data for all the performance management plan indicators during the first year of the project. In addition, certain terms included in the outcomes and indicators will need to be defined at the very beginning of the project so that it is possible to measure the change during and at the end of the project. Examples of such are "capacity," "spread effect," etc. Baseline information will be critical for both monitoring and evaluation of project progress and results.

[END OF SECTION I]

SECTION II – AWARD INFORMATION

U.S. Embassy San Jose expects to award approximately three to five grant agreements based on this NOFO. The anticipated total U.S. Federal funding amount is $500,000 The period of performance for each award is up to two years with an anticipated start date of September 30, 2021.

The U.S. government may issue one or more awards resulting from this NOFO to the responsible applicant(s) whose application(s) conforming to this NOFO are the most responsive to the objectives set forth in this NOFO. The U.S. government may (a) reject any or all applications, (b) accept other than the lowest cost application, (c) accept more than one application, (d) accept alternate/revised applications, and (e) waive informalities and minor irregularities in applications received.

After a merit review panel, the U.S. government may make an award on the basis of initial applications received, without discussions or negotiations. Therefore, each initial application should contain the applicant's best terms from a cost and technical standpoint. The U.S. government reserves the right (but is not under obligation to do so), however, to enter into discussions with one or more applicants in order to obtain clarifications, additional detail, or to suggest refinements in the project description, budget, or other aspects of an application.

[END OF SECTION II]

SECTION III – ELIGIBLITY INFORMATION

(1) Eligible Entities: Applicants that are eligible to apply are U.S. non-profit/non-governmental organizations (NGOs) having a 501(c)(3) status with the IRS or non-U.S.-based NGOs, and U.S. and non U.S.-based public and private institutions of higher education that are able to respond to the NOFO and be able to mobilize in a short period of time. A consortium of non-profits can apply together as long as there is one lead organization submitting the proposal, and public international organizations. Must be registered in the country of operation.

To be eligible for a grant award, in addition to other conditions of this NOFO, organizations must have a commitment to non-discrimination with respect to beneficiaries and adherence to equal opportunity employment practices. Non-discrimination includes equal treatment without regard to race, religion, ethnicity, gender, and political affiliation.

Applicants are reminded that U.S. Executive Orders and U.S. law prohibits transactions with, and the provision of resources and support to, individuals and organizations associated with terrorism. It is the legal responsibility of the recipient to ensure compliance with these Executive Orders and laws. This provision must be included in any sub-awards issued under this grant award.

(2) U.S. Embassy San Jose encourages applications from potential new partners.

[END OF SECTION III]

SECTION IV – APPLICATION AND SUBMISSION INSTRUCTIONS

U.S. Embassy San Jose urges prospective applicants to immediately confirm their organizations have a Unique Entity Identifier (UEI) number issued via www.SAM.gov as well as a valid registration on www.SAM.gov.

In order to be eligible to receive an award, all organizations must have a UEI number issued and a valid registration on www.SAM.gov.

Applicant organizations can obtain assistance for SAM.gov registration by using the following link: https://www.sam.gov or calling 1-866-606-8220 (U.S. calls)/or 1-324-206-7828 (international calls).

Note: As of April 2022, a DUNS number is no longer required.

Required Registrations:

All organizations applying for grants (except individuals) must obtain these registrations. All are free of charge:

- www.SAM.gov registration which will generate a UEI
- NCAGE/CAGE code

Any applicant with an exclusion in the System for Award Management (SAM) is not eligible to apply for an assistance award in accordance with the OMB guidelines at 2 CFR 180 that implement Executive Orders 12549 (3 CFR, 1986 Comp., p. 189) and 12689 (3 CFR, 1989 Comp., p. 235), "Debarment and Suspension."

The Unique Entity Identifier (UEI) is one of the data elements mandated by Public Law 109-282, the Federal Funding Accountability and Transparency Act (FFATA), for all Federal awards. SAM.gov is the Federal government's primary database for complying with FFATA reporting requirements. OMB designated SAM.gov as the central repository to facilitate applicant and recipient use of a single public website that consolidates data on all federal financial assistance. Under the law, it is mandatory to register in SAM.gov.

Starting April 2022, the UEI will be assigned when an organization registers or renews it's registration in SAM.gov at www.SAM.gov. To access SAM.gov an organization is required to have a Login.gov account. Organization can create an account at https://login.gov/. As a reminder, organizations need to renew its sam.gov registration annually.

US-based organizations: A CAGE code will be automatically assigned when the U.S. organizations registers in www.sam.gov. CAGE must be renewed every 5 years. Site for CAGE: https://cage.dla.mil/Home/UsageAgree. Grantees may be asked for more information to finalized and must comply.

Foreign-based organizations: Must apply for a NCAGE code before registering in SAM.gov. Go to: https://eportal.nspa.nato.int/AC135Public/CageTool/home to apply for a NCAGE code. NCAGE codes must be renewed every 5 years.

It is in the organization's best interest to check if their CAGE/or NCAGE codes are active. Organizations are required to register/or renew their CAGE or NCAGE codes **prior** to registering or renewing www.sam.gov . Both registration and renewals for both CAGE and NCAGE can take up to 10 days. Organization's legal address in NCAGE/CAGE must mirror www. sam.gov.

www.sam.gov requires all entities to renew their registration once a year in order to maintain an active registration status in SAM.gov. It is the responsibility of the applicant to ensure it has an active registration in SAM.gov.

If an organization plans to issue a sub-contract or sub-award, those sub-awardees must also have a unique entity identifier (UEI number). Those entities can register for a UEI only at SAM.gov.

If an organization does not have an active registration in SAM.gov prior to submitting an application, the application will be deemed **ineligible.** All organizations applying for grants (except individuals) must obtain these registrations, the latter are free of charge.

TECHNICAL FORMAT REQUIREMENTS

For all application documents, please ensure:

A) All pages are numbered, including budgets and attachments,
B) All documents are formatted to 8 ½ x 11 paper, and
C) All Microsoft Word documents are single-spaced, 12-point Times New Roman font, with a minimum of 1-inch margins.

Complete applications must include the following for proposal submissions:
1. Completed Cover Sheet that includes a project title, name of the solicitation organization, and Unique Entity Identifier (UEI). (See Tab F)
2. Completed and signed SF-424, SF-424a [and SF424b,] submitted to Grants.gov, as well as, if applicable, your organization's most recent audit.
3. Table of Contents (not to exceed one [1] page in Microsoft Word) that includes a page-numbered contents page, including any attachments.
4. Executive Summary (not to exceed two [2] pages in Microsoft Word) that includes:

a) The target country,
b) Name and contact information for the project's main point of contact,
c) A statement of work or synopsis of the project, including a concise breakdown of the project's objectives, activities, and expected results,
d) The total amount of funding requested and project length, and
e) A brief statement on how the project is innovative, sustainable, and will have a demonstrated impact.

5. Proposal Narrative (not to exceed ten [10] pages in Microsoft Word). Please note the ten-page limit does not include the Table of Contents, Executive Summary, Attachments, Detailed Budget,
Budget Narrative, or NICRA. Applicants are encouraged to submit multiple documents in a single Microsoft Word, (i.e., Table of Contents, Executive Summary, Proposal Narrative, and Budget Narrative in one file).

6. Budget Narrative (preferably in Microsoft Word) that includes an explanation and justification for each line item in the detailed budget spreadsheet, as well as the source and a description of all cost share offered. For ease of review, U.S. Embassy San Jose recommends **applicants order the budget narrative as presented in the detailed budget**. Project management and/or personnel costs should include a clarification of the roles and responsibilities of key staff and percentage of time devoted to the project. The budget narrative should communicate to U.S. Embassy San Jose any information that might not be readily apparent in the budget, not simply repeat with words what is stated numerically in the budget.

7. Detailed Line-Item Budget (preferably in Microsoft Excel) that includes three [3] columns including the request to U.S. Embassy San Jose, any cost-sharing contribution (not required), and total budget (see below for more information on budget format). A summary budget should also be included using the OMB-approved budget categories (see SF-424 as a sample). Costs must be in U.S. dollars.

8. Attachments (not to exceed nine [9] pages total, preferably in Microsoft Word) that include the following in order:

a) Page 1-2: Project Monitoring Plan (see below for more information on this section).
b) Page 3: Roles and responsibilities of key project personnel with short bios that highlight relevant professional experience. This relates to the organization's capacity. Given the limited space, CVs are not recommended for submission.
c) Page 4: Timeline of the overall proposal. Components should include activities, and project closeout.
d) Page 5-7: Additional optional attachments. Attachments may include further timeline information, letters of support, memoranda of understanding (MOU)/agreement, etc. For applicants with a large number of 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.

9. Applicants with a negotiated indirect cost rate agreement (NICRA) must include the latest NICRA as a .pdf file if including NICRA charges in the budget. This document will not be reviewed by the panelists, but rather used by U.S Embassy San Jose project and grant staff if the submission is recommended for funding and therefore does not count against the submission page limitations, as described above. If the applicant's proposal involves sub-grants to organizations charging indirect costs, please submit the applicable NICRA also as a .pdf file (see below for more information on indirect cost rates). Applicants must specify if

their organization instead elects to charge the *de minimis* rate of 10% of the modified total direct costs.

Note: U.S. Embassy San Jose retains the right to request additional documentation for those items not included on this form.

INFORMATION ON STANDARD FORMS
Please see Tab D for instructions for completion of Standard Forms 424, 424A, and 424B.

OFFICE OF MANAGEMENT AND BUDGET (OMB) 2 CFR 200
Organizations should be familiar with 2 CFR 200 on cost accounting principles. For a copy of the 2 CFR 200, please contact Government Publications or download from http://www.ecfr.gov/cgi-bin/text-idx?tpl=/ecfrbrowse/Title02/2cfr200_main_02.tpl. Non U.S.-based nonprofit organizations are legally required to comply with 2 CFR 200.

AUDITS
The recipient's proposal should include the cost of an audit that:
1. Complies with the requirements of 2 CFR 200 Subpart F "Audit Requirements;"
2. Complies with the requirements of American Institute of Certified Public Accountants (AICPA) Statement of Position (SOP) No. 92-9, "Audits of Not-for-Profit Organizations Receiving Federal Awards;"
3. Complies with AICPA Codification of Statements on Auditing Standards AU Section 551, "Reporting on Information Accompanying the Basic Financial Statements in Auditor-Submitted Documents," where applicable. When the U.S. Department of State is the largest direct source of Federal financial assistance (i.e., the cognizant Federal Agency) and indirect costs are charged to Federal grants, a supplemental schedule of indirect cost computation is required;
4. A non-Federal entity that expends $750,000 or more during the non-Federal entity's fiscal year in Federal awards must have a single or program-specific audit conducted for that year in accordance with the provisions of 2 CFR 200 subpart F.
   The audit costs shall be identified by 2 CFR 200.425.

INDIRECT COST-RATE
An organization with a negotiated indirect cost rate agreement (NICRA) negotiated with a cognizant Federal government agency other than the U.S. Department of State must include a copy of the cost-rate agreement. Applicants should indicate in the proposal budget how the rate is applied and if any of the rate will be cost-shared. Per 2 CFR 200.414, any non-Federal entity that has never received a negotiated indirect cost rate, except for those non-Federal entities described in Appendix VII to Part 200—States and Local Government and Indian Tribe Indirect Cost Proposals, paragraph D.1.b, may elect to charge a de minimis rate of 10% of modified total direct costs (MTDC), which may be used indefinitely. As described in 2 CFR 200.403, factors affecting allowability of costs, costs must be consistently charged as either indirect or direct costs, but may not be double charged or inconsistently charged as both. If chosen, this methodology once elected must be used consistently for all Federal awards until such time as a non-Federal entity chooses to negotiate for a rate, which the non-Federal entity may apply to do at any time.

TAB A: PROPOSAL GUIDELINES

Proposals should include the following components:

- Introduction and Problem Statement
- Planned Activities
- Indicators

Problem Statement and Rationale: Describe the problem and how the project will achieve or contribute to achieving a sustainable solution and a measurable outcome. The applicant should explain the extent of existing assistance within the particular geographic area, and how the proposed intervention may complement (or differ from) other similar interventions. The applicant should also explain, as necessary, the particular experience and qualifications it brings to the project. The rationale should also reflect an understanding of the priorities and policies of U.S. Embassy San Jose or project with which this proposal is associated.

Planned Activities and Indicators: Describe the planned activities, and relevant stakeholders for implementation. The applicant should highlight key stakeholders and their expected roles in the project, along with any contingencies. The applicant should list assumptions that are dependent upon the ultimate success of the project. This could include elements like geographic location, coordination efforts with other international organizations, or political will from host governments, private sector, and NGOs. As appropriate, limited contingency possibilities should be included in the proposal, in case the initial planning assumptions are not met. Example of a planned activity and contingency:

Sample Planned Activity	**Contingency**
Government services workshops in collaboration with the central Government of Costa Rica, focused on improving knowledge of protocols for delivery of a government service. (Example: the equitable provision of public services.)	If the appropriate agency of the Government of Costa Rica does not engage at the expected level, project team will look to municipal or local governments to assist in convening key stakeholders.

In the proposal, there should be a clearly defined link between each of the following elements as delineated:

Problem Statement → Planned Activities/Inputs → Process Indicators Output Indicators → Outcome Indicators → Impact

Output Indicators, otherwise known as deliverables associated with the agreement, should be included. Unlike process indicators, outputs are what is produced, and are often tangible. At this level, it is the measurement of ability, knowledge, skills, or access. All indicators must include targets. Example of an output indicator involving the same participants:

Output Indicator	80 percent of participants demonstrate at least 75 percent cognizance of standards to effectively provide government services.

Output Indicator	50 government workers trained in protocols or standards for providing a particular government service

Outcome Indicators measure the change in system, behavior, or practice. Expected outcomes are the results that come from a series of activities that are necessary to achieve impact. All indicators must include targets. Example of an outcome indicator:

Outcome Indicator	30 percent of government services offered by the targeted agency(ies) begin to implement new protocols as a result of participants' participation.

All indicators **must** include measurable, numerical targets, which should serve as the foundation for monitoring and evaluation efforts. Ultimately, proposed activities and achievement of indicator targets will lead to impact.

TAB B: PROJECT MONITORING PLAN (PMP)

U.S. Embassy San Jose will work with recipient organizations to implement the appropriate monitoring plan that meets both the needs of U.S. Embassy San Jose and the implementing partner. Incorporating a well-designed monitoring component into a project is one of the most efficient methods of documenting the progress and potential success of a project. Proposals should include a methodology to survey beneficiaries before and after activities occur to measure quantitative and qualitative progress. Successful monitoring depends on the following:

- Setting objectives that are specific, measurable, attainable, results-focused, and placed in a reasonable time frame (SMART);
- Linking project activities to stated objectives;
- Developing key performance indicators that measure realistic progress towards the objectives.

U.S. Embassy San Jose expects implementing organizations will track participants or partners as appropriate and be able to respond to key evaluation questions, including satisfaction with the project/training, information learned as a result of the project/training, changes in attitude and behavior as a result of the project, and effects of the project on institutions with which participants work or partner. Applicants should include the monitoring and evaluation process in their timeline.

Recipients will be required to provide reports with an analysis and summary of their findings, both quantitative and qualitative, in regular progress reports to U.S. Embassy San Jose.

The Project Monitoring Plan (PMP) should include, at a minimum, the following elements:

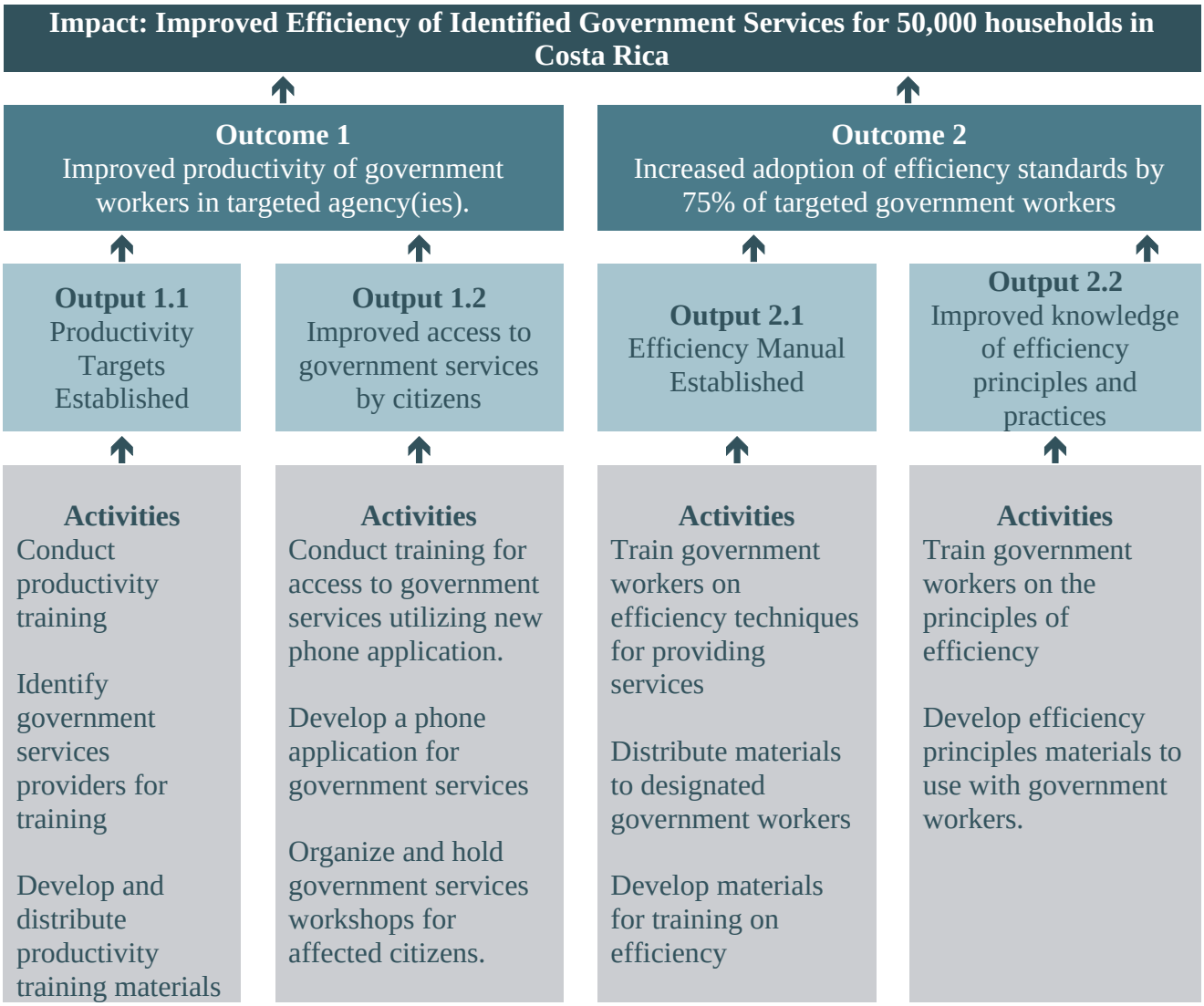
- A results "Logic Model" planning document (see sample)
- Indicators, as described in Tab A, as well as details on how each indicator will be measured, frequency of the measurements, units of measure, etc. Provide indicators at the output and outcome levels. The PMP should include a chart component that clearly delineates indicators and targets. <u>All indicators must include measurable, numerical targets.</u>
- Establish, where possible, performance baseline data and expected performance targets for each indicator/outcome. In some cases, the baseline may be zero.
- Describe monitoring and evaluation tools, such as rapid assessment surveys, site visits, key stakeholder interviews, etc., that will be used.
- Plans should describe how the project's impact and effectiveness will be monitored and evaluated throughout the project.

Sample Evaluation Plan

Activity: Training Course						
Indicator Type	**Indicator Name**	**Source**	**Target FY18 Q1**	**Results FY18 Q1**	**Target FY18 Q2**	**Results FY18 Q2**
Output	# of government workers trained	Training records	10	20		
Outcome	Improved level of support provided as a result of participants' direct or indirect participation in training	Project reporting				-+0
Activity: Government Roundtable						
Indicator Type	**Indicator Name**	**Source**	**Target FY18 Q1**	**Results FY18 Q1**	**Target FY18 Q2**	**Results FY18 Q2**
Output	xxx					
Outcome	yyy					

Sample "Logic Model" Planning Tool

Note: Outcomes, outputs, and activities should include numerical, measurable targets. A Logic Model is a useful tool for planning and utilized when designing monitoring and evaluation methodology and frameworks.



TAB C: BUDGET GUIDELINES

Complete budgets will provide a detailed line-item budget outlining specific cost requirements for proposed activities. A minimum of three columns should be used to delineate the Embassy funding request, cost share by applicant, and total project funding. Complete applications will include a budget narrative to clarify and justify individual line items (i.e. calculations of how the costs were derived per month or year, their necessity, and overall contribution to the project's cost-effectiveness).

The three-column proposal line-item budget should include the following components, in the suggested format below:

	Proposal Request	Cost Share	Total
A. PERSONNEL			
B. FRINGE BENEFITS			
C. TRAVEL			
D. EQUIPMENT (single items $5,000 and above)			
E. SUPPLIES (single items below $5,000)			
F. CONTRACTUAL (sub-grants or consultant fees)			
H. OTHER DIRECT COSTS			
I. TOTAL DIRECT CHARGES (Sum of A-H Subtotals)			
J. INDIRECT CHARGES (NICRA or 10% de minimis)			
K. TOTAL COSTS (Sum I-J)			

Note: This budget is designed to serve as an example of the format for complete budget submissions and is NOT exhaustive. Please utilize the attached template or download from Grants.gov. Individual line items included in each applicant's budget should reflect specific project activities. (pax = participants)

LINE-ITEM BUDGET – (applicants are instructed to utilize the following Excel budget template, which includes an instruction sheet):



Before grants are awarded, U.S. Embassy San Jose reserves the right to reduce, revise, or increase proposal budgets in accordance with the needs of U.S. Embassy San Jose's project and availability of funds.

As mentioned above, the detailed budget should also include an accompanying budget notes document that explains and justifies each line item, in the suggested format below:
A. Personnel: Identify staffing requirements by each position title and brief description of duties. For clarity, please list the annual salary of each position, percentage of time and number of months devoted to the project. (e.g., Administrative Director: $30,000/year x 25% x 8.5 months; calculation: $30,000/12 = $2,500 x 25% x 8.5 months = $5,312.).

B. Fringe Benefits: State benefit costs separately from salary costs and explain how benefits are computed for each category of employee - specify type and rate.

C. Travel: Staff and any participant travel:
1) International airfare
2) In-country travel
3) Domestic travel in Country X., if any
4) Per diem/maintenance: includes lodging, meals and incidentals for both participant and staff travel. Rates of maximum allowances for U.S. and foreign travel are available from the following website: http:/www.policyworks.gov/. Per diem rates may not exceed the published U.S. government allowance rates; however, institutions may use per diem rates lower than official government rates.
5) Staff refers to grantee staff only, and not sub-grantee staff or contractors.

D. Equipment: Please provide justification for any equipment purchase/rental, defined as tangible personal property having a useful life of more than one year and an acquisition cost of $5000 or more.

E. Supplies: List items separately using unit costs (and the percentage of each unit cost being charged to the grant) for photocopying, postage, telephone/fax, printing, and office supplies (e.g., Telephone: $50/month x 50% = $25/month x 12 months).

F. Contractual:
a) Sub-grants. For each sub-grant/contract, please provide a detailed line-item budget breakdown explaining specific services. Please provide a sub-grant budget using the approved OMB budget with the above budget format. (See Tab C: Budget Guidelines, above.)
b) Consultant Fees. For example, lecture fees, honoraria, travel, and per diem for outside speakers or independent evaluators: list number of people and rates per day (e.g., 2 x $150/day x 2 days).

G. Other: These will vary depending on the nature of the project. The inclusion of each should be justified in the budget narrative. All costs must be allowable, allocable, and reasonable, and consistent with OMB guidelines. Line items such as “Miscellaneous,” “Contingency Fund,” and “Reserve Fund” are permissible but must comply with the cost principles and include justification.

H. Indirect Charges: See 2 CFR 200.414, "Indirect Costs”

1) If your organization has an indirect cost-rate agreement with the U.S. government, please include a copy of this agreement. Please specify if your organization elects to charge the de minimis rate of 10% of the modified total direct costs. This does not count against submission page limitations.
2) If your organization is charging an indirect rate, please indicate how the rate is applied–to direct administrative expenses, to all direct costs, to wages and salaries only, etc.
3) Do not include indirect costs against participant expenses in the proposal budget, as the embassy generally will not pay for these costs.

Cost Share/Cost Effectiveness: Cost sharing is not required. Explanation of contributions should be included, whether cash or in-kind. Assign a monetary value in U.S. dollars to each in-kind contribution. If the proposed project is a component of a larger program, identify other funding sources for the proposal and indicate the specific funding amount to be provided by those sources. In addition, it is recommended that budget narratives address the overall cost-effectiveness of the proposal, including leveraging of institutional or other resources. Cost sharing or matching refers to a portion of project or program cost that is not borne by the Federal government. Grantees must follow the cost sharing or matching policy as stipulated in 2 CFR 200.306. Cost-sharing amounts proposed will be incorporated as part of the allowable budget items. If selected for an award, the organization will have to provide the minimum amount of cost sharing as stipulated in the budget approved by an Embassy Grants Officer. If the organization does not meet its cost-share amount stipulated in the approved budget by the end of the period of performance, the Embassy will have the option to (1) reduce its contribution in proportion to the organization's contribution in the event that it does not provide the minimum amount of cost sharing stipulated in the budget or (2) hold the organization accountable for the amount specified in the approved budget.

BUDGET CONDITIONS AND RESTRICTIONS

The Embassy does not pay for the following:

- Publication of materials for distribution within the United States
- Administration of a project that will make a profit
- Expenses incurred before or after the specified dates of award period of performance (unless prior written approval received)
- Projects designed to advocate policy views or positions of foreign governments or views of a particular political faction
- Alcoholic beverages
- Costs of entertainment, including amusement, diversion, and social activities and any associated costs are unallowable, except where specific costs that might otherwise be considered entertainment have a programmatic purpose and are authorized either in the approved budget for the Federal award or with prior written approval of the Federal awarding agency
- Purchase of land
- Construction
- Direct social support
- Support for police law enforcement officials or military forces

The Embassy may make conditions and recommendations on proposals to enhance proposed projects. Conditions and recommendations are to be addressed by the applicant before approval of the award. To ensure effective use of U.S. Embassy San Jose funds, conditions or recommendations may include requests to increase, decrease, clarify, and/or justify costs.

TAB D: GUIDELINES FOR STANDARD FORMS

See below links for standard forms:

Link for form SF-424: https://apply07.grants.gov/apply/forms/sample/SF424_4_0-V4.0.pdf

Link for form SF-424A: http://apply07.grants.gov/apply/forms/sample/SF424A-V1.0.pdf

Link for form SF-424B: http://apply07.grants.gov/apply/forms/sample/SF424B-V1.1.pdf

SF-424 – Complete all fields except fields noted as "Leave Blank" below.

1. Type of Submission: Application
2. Type of Application: New
3. Date Received: Leave blank. This will automatically be assigned
4. Applicant Identifier: Leave blank

5a. Federal Entity Identifier: Leave blank

5b. Federal Award Identifier: Leave blank

6. Date Received by Embassy: Leave blank. This will automatically be assigned
7. State Application Identified: Leave blank. This will automatically be assigned

8a. Enter the legal name of the applicant organization.

8b. Employer/Taxpayer ID Number: N/A.

8c. Organizational UIE: Organizations can request a UIE number at https://sam.gov/content/home

8d. Enter the full address of the applicant

8e. Enter the name of the primary organizational unit (and department or division, if applicable) that will undertake the assistance activity, if applicable

8f. Enter the name, title, organization, and contact information of person to be contacted on matters involving this application

9. Select an applicant type (type of organization)
10. Enter: U.S. Embassy San Jose
11. Enter: N/A
12. Enter the Funding Opportunity Number and title. This number will already be entered on electronic applications.
13. Enter the Competition Identification Number and title. This number will already be entered on electronic applications.
14. Areas Affected by Project: List the country or countries where project activities will take place in alphabetical order.
15. Enter the title of the proposed project (if necessary, delete pre-printed wording)

16a. Enter congressional district of Applicant.

16b. Enter: 00

Program: Leave blank

17. Enter a start date of [insert date] and a projected end date

18a. Enter the amount requested for the project under "Federal"

18b Enter any cost-share under "Applicant."

19. Enter "c"

20. Select the appropriate box. If you answer "yes" to this question you will be required to provide an explanation.
21. Enter the name, title, and contact information of the individual authorized to sign for the application.

SF-424A – Please review the detailed instructions below BEFORE completing this form online.

Section A - Budget Summary - Complete Row 1

1a. Enter: CARSI Program (This is the only grant program that needs to be entered)
1b. Enter: N/A
1c-d. Leave these fields blank
1e. Enter the amount of Federal funds you are requesting for this project
1f. Enter the amount of any other funds you will receive towards this project
1g. Enter the total cost of this project

Rows 2, 3, and 4 should be left blank.

Section B - Budget Categories – Enter total project costs in each category in Column 1 as described below. In Column 5, the form should automatically show the sum. Columns 2, 3, and 4 should be left blank.

6a-h. Enter the amount for each object class category (Include cost share).
6i. Enter the sum of 6a-6h
6j. Enter any indirect charges
6k. Enter the sum of 6i and 6j
7. Enter any program income that will be earned as a result of the project. If there is none, leave this section blank.

Section C - Non-Federal Resources *(Only complete this section if your project includes an applicant cost share or funds from other sources-cost share is not required)*

8a. Under Grant Program enter: U.S. Embassy San Jose
8b. Enter your cost share amount
8c. Enter the amount of any other funding sources for this project
8d. Leave blank
8e. Enter the total amount for all non-Federal resources (the form should automatically show this sum)

Rows 9, 10, and 11 should be left blank.

Section D - Forecasted Cash Needs

13. In the first column, enter the amount of Federal funds you expect to expend in the project's first year. Forecasted cash needs by quarter are not required.
14. In the first column, enter the amount of non-Federal funds you expect to expend in the project's first year. Forecasted cash needs by quarter are not required.
15. In the first column enter the sum of 13 and 14 (the form should automatically show this sum). Forecasted cash needs by quarter are not required.

Section E - Budget Estimates of Federal Funds Needed for Balance of the Project

16a. Under Grant Program enter: CARSI Program
16b. Enter the amount of Federal funds you expect to expend in year two of the project.
16c. Enter the amount of Federal funds you expect to expend in year three of the project.
16d. and 16e. Leave blank
Rows 17, 18, 19 should be left blank.
20. Enter the total amount for each year (The form should automatically show this sum).

Section F - Other Budget Information
21. Enter: Direct Charges **– Leave Blank**
22. Enter: Indirect Charges – If Indirect Charges are shown in Section B 6, enter the type of Indirect Rate used (Provisional, Predetermined, Final, or Fixed)
23. Enter any comments

SECTION V – APPLICATION REVIEW INFORMATION

The technical applications will be evaluated in accordance with the Technical Review Criteria set forth below. Applicants shall organize the narrative sections of their technical applications in the same order as the selection criteria. Technical evaluation of applications will be based on the extent and appropriateness of proposed approaches and feasibility of achieving the strategic objectives, in accordance with the following criteria.

If award is not made on the initial applications, U.S. Embassy San Jose may request clarification and supplemental materials from applicants whose applications have a reasonable chance of being selected for award. Entering into discussion is part of the technical review process and shall not be deemed by U.S. Embassy San Jose or the applicants as indicative of a decision or commitment upon the part of U.S. Embassy San Jose to make an award to the applicants with whom discussions are being held.

I. TECHNICAL REVIEW CRITERIA

A technical review committee, using the criteria shown in this Section, will assess the technical applications. The various functional elements of the technical criteria are assigned weighted scores, so that the applicants will know which areas require emphasis in the preparation of applications.

Where applications are considered technically essentially equal, cost may be the determining factor. Applicants should note that these criteria serve as the standard against which all applications will be reviewed and serve to identify the significant matters which applicants should address in their applications.

The relative importance of each criterion is indicated by the number of points assigned. A total of 100 points is possible.

Quality of Program Idea Rating (Total Possible 25) – Rating:

1. Responsive to the solicitation (5 points)
2. Appropriate in the country/regional context (5)
3. Exhibits originality, substance, and precision (5)
4. Prioritizes innovation but is feasible (5)
5. In countries where similar activities are already taking place, provides an explanation as to how new activities will not duplicate or merely add to existing activities (5)

Program Planning/Ability to Achieve Objectives Rating (Total Possible 25) – Rating:

- Includes a clear articulation of the proposed program activities' expected contributions to the overall program objectives (3)
- Each activity is clearly developed and detailed (3)
- Provides a comprehensive quarterly work plan for project activities that demonstrates substantive undertakings within the logistical capacity of the organization (3)
- Objectives are clear, specific, attainable, measurable, results-focused, and placed in a reasonable time frame (3)
- Addresses how the program will engage or obtain support from relevant stakeholders and identifies local partners where appropriate (3)
- Describes the division of labor among the direct applicant, any partners and any potential sub-grantees (2)
- Proposal clearly articulates understanding of the security situation/operating environment and plans for ensuring safety of participants (2)
- Includes contingency plans for potential difficulties in executing the original work plan (6)

Cost Effectiveness (Total Possible 15) - Rating:

- The overhead and administration of the proposal, including salaries and honoraria, are explained and justified for the work involved (5)
- All budget items are necessary, appropriate and linked to program objectives (5)
- Personnel costs are reasonable for the work involved (5)
- NOTE: Cost share is not required. Applicants may offer cost share, however cost share will not be considered or factored in when proposals are reviewed.

Program Monitoring Plan (Total Possible 15) - Rating:

- The Project Monitoring Plan (PMP) includes:
  - Narrative explaining how monitoring and evaluation will be carried out and who will be responsible for monitoring and evaluation activities (5)
  - Table listing by program objectives the output- and outcome-based performance indicators with baselines and (yearly and cumulative) targets; data collection tools; data sources; types of data disaggregation, if applicable; and frequency of monitoring and evaluation (7)
  - Logic model that includes outcomes, outputs, and activities that specify measurable numerical targets (3)

Multiplier Effect/Sustainability of Impact Rating (Total Possible 10) - Rating:

- Clearly delineates how elements of the program will have a multiplier effect (5)
- Clearly delineates how impact will be sustainable beyond the life of the grant (5)

Institution's Record and Capacity Rating (Total Possible 10) - Rating:

- The proposal demonstrates an institutional record of successful programs in the proposed country, the content area (e.g., media, access to justice), or other (describe) (4)
- Personnel and institutional resources are adequate and appropriate to achieve the project's objectives (2)
- Roles, responsibilities, and brief bios/resumes are included for key staff, and demonstrate relevant professional experience (2)
- Applicant is a current/past Embassy grantee where performance: (2)
  - Was/is on target
  - Showed/shows responsible fiscal management

OR

- The proposal is from a NEW APPLICANT and proposal: (2)
  - Demonstrates capacity for responsible fiscal management
  - Illustrates success in similar sized projects

COST REVIEW

Cost will be evaluated for realism, reasonableness, allowability, allocability, and cost effectiveness. The pre-award assessment of cost effectiveness will include an examination of the application's budget detail to ensure it is a realistic financial expression of the proposed project and does not contain estimated costs which may be unallocable, unreasonable, or unallowable. Applications that have more efficient operational systems that reduce operation costs will be favorably considered.

Applications that maximize direct activity costs including cost sharing and that minimize administrative costs are encouraged. Other considerations are the completeness of the application, adequacy of budget detail and consistency with elements of the technical application. In addition, the organization must demonstrate adequate financial management capability, to be measured by a responsibility determination.

[END OF SECTION V]

SECTION VI – AGENCY CONTACTS

Any prospective applicant desiring an explanation or interpretation of this NOFO must request it in writing by the deadline for questions specified in the cover letter to allow a reply to reach all prospective applicants before the submission of their applications. Any information given to a prospective applicant concerning this NOFO will be furnished promptly to all other prospective applicants as an amendment of this NOFO, if that information is necessary in submitting applications or if the lack of it would be prejudicial to any other prospective applicants.

Any questions or comments concerning this NOFO must be submitted in writing by email to SanJoseCarsiESF@state.gov by the deadline for questions indicated at the top of this NOFO's cover letter.

[END OF SECTION VI]

TAB F: CARSI Economic Support Funds Project Proposal Cover Sheet

Country: **Costa Rica** Project No. (To be assigned by U.S. Embassy)

Date of Submission: _____

Project Title: _____

Name of Organization: _____

Mailing Address: _____

Street Address: _____

Telephone: _____ Fax: _____

Alternate Telephone: _____ E-Mail: _____

Principal Officer: _____ (name and position)

Project Contact: _____ (name and position)

Proposed Project Duration (not more than two years: _____

FINANCES:

Total ESF Funds Requested _____ (US$)
Total Cost Share *(optional)* _____ (US$)
Total Project Cost _____ (US$)

The following items are required in your proposal:

____ Cover Sheet (This page filled in)
____ Completed and signed SF-424, SF-424a and SF424b, submitted to grants.gov
____ Table of Contents
____ Executive Summary
____ Proposal Narrative
____ Budget Narrative
____ Detailed Line-Item Budget
____ Additional attachments: Organizational Capability; PMP; Resumes of Key Persons; Proof of Organization's Legal Status; Letter of Support from Government agency(ies) that has agreed to be a project partner