

**REQUEST FOR APPLICATIONS (RFA)**  
**for Internet Governance/Internet Freedom**

**Issuance Date:** November 21, 2018  
**Closing Date:** January 4, 2019  
**Closing Time:** 11:59 PM Eastern time.

**Subject:** Request for Applications (RFA) Number 19-1  
Internet Governance/Internet Freedom (Sri Lanka, Ukraine,  
Venezuela, & Zimbabwe)

**Reference:** Issued Under a Counterpart International (CPI) USAID COAG  
Number AID-OAA-LA-11-00008

This Request for Applications outlines the information required by the applicant for the development and submission of a proposal for consideration. The potential applicant is expected to review, understand, and conform with specifications contained in this RFA. Failure to do so will be at the applicant's own risk.

All reasonable, allocable, and allowable expenses, both direct and indirect, which are related to the grant program and are in accordance with applicable cost standards (2 CFR 200 Subpart E Cost Principles or the Federal Acquisition Regulation (FAR) Part 31 for-profit organizations), may be charged under the grant. Construction is not eligible for reimbursement under this award. For US Nongovernmental Organizations (US NGOs), non-US organizations, the Standard Provisions for Non-US Nongovernmental Recipients will apply. (See Standard Provisions in Annex 1)

This RFA is being issued and consists of this cover letter, Schedule A, and Annexes.

Issuance of this RFA does not constitute an award commitment on the part of Internet Governance/ Internet Freedom/CPI nor does it commit Internet Governance/ Internet Freedom /CPI to pay for costs incurred in the preparation and submission of an application. The application is submitted at the risk of the applicant. All preparation and submission costs are at the applicant's expense.

Thank you for your interest in Internet Governance/Internet Freedom/CPI activities.

Sincerely,

Olivier Alais  
Project Director  
Cybersecurity & Internet Governance

## **SCHEDULE A**

### **SECTION I: FUNDING OPPORTUNITY DESCRIPTION:**

The Internet Governance/Internet Freedom program is a multi-year program funded by the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) and implemented by Counterpart International (CPI). CPI's Internet Governance/Internet Freedom project intends to provide civil society actors with advocacy tools and resources to advance a multi stakeholder human rights-based approach to internet governance in four key countries. The project supports civil society actors advocating in closing internet space where free expression, independent media, privacy, data security, and transparent access to information are contested or at risk. The project's overall approach is to identify gaps in research, knowledge, capacity building, the multi stakeholder governance model, resources, and other obstacles facing civil society advancing a rights-based advocacy and policy approach to internet governance.

**Small Advocacy Grants** will fund activities that foster a human rights-based approach to internet governance in Sri Lanka, Ukraine, Venezuela, and Zimbabwe, with the following objectives

- Expand understanding of online rights through capacity building for citizens and the media, documenting and spreading information or create new research in this area.
- Improve advocacy impact paying special attention to the inclusion of marginalized groups in the space.
- Stopping threats to online rights.

**Illustrative Activities/** Projects may include, but are not limited to:

- Policy and Advocacy – National, and international policy and advocacy efforts that empower civil society to counter restrictive internet laws; support policies to promote a free and open internet in targeted countries where the government has adopted, or is considering adopting, laws or policies that restrict human rights online.
- Local capacity-building programs to support the development of non-U.S. based civil society organizations to advocate for human rights online, e.g. advocacy training; expanding the circle of actors within the online rights advocacy community through increased outreach, greater literacy around online rights issues; activities which strengthen multi stakeholder coalition networks to coordinate and address internet governance issues; human rights sensitization training workshops for journalists covering media, human rights and internet issues, government and legal officials with authority over internet governance policy; raising awareness and understanding among journalists and the media of online rights and how to effectively cover them in the press.
- Advocacy campaigns around national online rights using media tools, platforms, and outlets to raise public awareness, engage and educate policy decision

makers and impacted constituencies.

- Creating advocacy resources and tools which can be used by stakeholders for sustainable educational and advocacy initiatives.
- Rapid response advocacy, e.g. press releases, statements and/or public petitions addressing emerging threats to online rights
- Internet measurements documenting speed, access, and deliberate attempts at network disruptions, i.e. censorship
- Advocacy activities that incorporate and amplify the voices of marginalized communities in internet governance public policy discussions, e.g. LGBTI community, women/girls, religious minorities, youth, the physically disabled, and labor activists, among others.
- Strategic Litigation. Filing court petitions in legal cases where online rights are threatened and an accompanying advocacy campaign raising public awareness around the filings.
- Production of research products (papers, brochures, multimedia content etc.) analyzing public policy environments in one of the four targeted countries, e.g. analysis of laws, regulations, and pending legislation which pose threats to online rights with public policy recommendations for ensuring rights are respected. The research product should identify and analyze the policy landscape, actors (governmental, and non-governmental), national, regional, international instruments and/or political dynamics impacting internet governance, online rights, censorship, etc. and provide recommendations for at least 2-3 stakeholders including government and civil society (e.g. policy reforms for government; advocacy actions for civil society, and/or contributions by the private sector for tech and policy solutions). Research components should serve as a basis for advocacy activities which should be completed within the grant period.
- Data Governance Projects that involve the use and/or study of Artificial Intelligence (AI), machine learning, algorithms, and countering the spread of fake news and disinformation as it relates to human rights.

#### USG Regulation:

For fixed amount awards: Standard Provisions for Fixed Amount Awards to Nongovernmental Organizations

For all other grant types: For non-US organizations, the Standard Provisions for Non-US Nongovernmental Recipients will apply. For US organizations, 2 CFR 200 and the Standard Provisions for U.S. Nongovernmental Recipients will apply. (See Standard Provisions in Annex 1)

#### **SECTION II: AWARD INFORMATION:**

Subject to the availability of funds, CPI expects to award Fixed Amount Award agreements (FAA) ranging from \$4,000 to \$24,999 USD. The total amount available is \$150,000 USD. The expected duration of CPI's support or the period of performance is from the issuance of the award through September 30, 2019. CPI reserves the right to fund any or none of the applications submitted.

#### **SECTION III: ELIGIBILITY INFORMATION:**

The applicant / application must meet the following requirements

- Be officially registered as an organization in any country and working in compliance with all applicable civil and fiscal regulations, including, but not limited to pertinent local laws and status. In lieu of official registration, a grantee may show proof of effort to secure registration, exemption from registration, or show cause why such registration is either not optional or practicable
- Meet the projects objectives and principles
- Contain expected outcomes and results consistent with and linked to the projects objectives
- Applicant is not a debarred organization

Types of Grantees Eligible:

- Non-US Nongovernment Organizations (Non-US NGOs)
- US Nongovernmental Organizations (US NGOs)
- International Non-Governmental Organizations (INGOs)
- Community Based Organization (CBOs)
- Civil Society Organizations (CSOs)
- Private Enterprises
- Professional Associations
- Universities

**Section IV: APPLICATION AND SUBMISSION INFORMATION:**

Any questions concerning this RFA should be submitted in writing not later than December 16, 2018 to proposals.igif@counterpart.org. Responses to questions will be made available the same way the RFA was communicated. Applicants should retain for their records one copy of all enclosures which accompany their application.

The application must be received electronically by sending the completed application (including attachments) with the subject line “CPI Project RFA #19-1 (Country)” to proposals.igif@counterpart.org, no later than the closing date listed on the front page of this RFA. Pre-award costs are not allowable and will not be reimbursed. An application and modifications thereof shall be submitted in electronic format and/or hard copy to the following address:

Application must be submitted in electronic form. The complete application packet must be submitted in the required format with the required attachments.

- Grant Application Form (Annex 2)
  - DUNS number
  - Organizational background
  - Program description [page limitation]
  - Beneficiaries, outcomes and expected impact
  - Communication Plan
  - Monitoring
  - Statement of liability
- Budget Template Form
- Work-plan

- Pre-Award Questionnaire
- Required Certification as per ADS 303.3.8

### **Technical Proposal Guidelines:**

Using the provided templates, applications submitted in response to this RFA should address how the applicant intends contribute to one or more of the Small Advocacy grant objectives. The proposal should include project deliverables that demonstrate specific and quantifiable outcomes,

Counterpart prefers to issue grants using the Fixed Amount Awards (FAA) mechanism, which is characterized by a focus on programmatic accomplishments . FAAs must have well-defined program elements and milestones that are finite in duration and easily tied to fixed cost amounts that can be determined in advance. FAAs' payment structure is based on the completion of milestones and cannot be made on an advance basis.

Applications should emphasize how the activities will advance best international policies, practices and awareness for a rights-based approach to internet governance, and the multi-stakeholder model of internet governance. Individual or joint applications are encouraged from civil society organizations, those working in digital rights advocacy and policymaking, and those engaged in academic research.

Civil Society organizations currently engaged in advocacy work may seek to identify a research partner able to operationalize a research question relevant to the organization's current work.

Applications should demonstrate a multistakeholder advocacy approach whereby activities, initiatives, and events should be broad based and pluralistic as appropriate and relevant to include members of civil society (e.g. human rights defenders, community based organizations, academic/policy specialists, members of the media, and marginalized communities), the government (e.g. relevant executive branch officials, legal, judicial, and/or parliamentary officials and staff), and the private sector (e.g. telcos, tech companies, and/or SMEs involved in relevant policy and access issues).

Applications , whether research or capacity building, that do not have specific and tangible policy & advocacy impact objectives will not be considered.

All research documents should be licensed under Creative Commons and software under one of these licenses: <https://opensource.org/licenses>

### **Submission Guidelines and Instructions:**

- Applications and all communications regarding grants should be submitted by email to [proposals.igif@counterpart.org](mailto:proposals.igif@counterpart.org).
- Completed applications must be in English. The narrative part should be single spaced and limited to ten (10) pages in total (application and budget

notes inclusive).

- Applicants may form partnerships, in which case only one entity may be the lead applicant.
- Applicants are solely responsible for all expenses associated with responding to this opportunity.
- Proposals that do not comply with the guidelines described in this RFA will not be considered. At Counterpart's discretion, any application received after the exact date and time specified as the deadline for submissions may be considered ineligible for consideration.
- Applications and accompanying documentation will not be returned.
- With the exception of Venezuela, applicant budget proposals should include costs for branded USAID/Counterpart International signage if public events or public documents (e.g.. brochures, research papers, posters, websites, etc.) are proposed as part of the project activities.

#### Restrictions:

- Grant funds provided under the terms of this RFA shall not be used to finance any of the following commodities as per ADS 312 Eligibility of Commodities:
  - ✓ **Ineligible Commodities:** Military equipment, surveillance equipment, commodities or equipment for the support of police or other law enforcement activities, abortion equipment and services, luxury goods, gambling equipment, weather modification equipment.
  - ✓ **Restricted commodities include:** Agricultural commodities, motor vehicles, pharmaceuticals, contraceptives and condoms, pesticides, used equipment, fertilizer.
  - ✓ **Others:** Purchases of goods or services restricted or prohibited under the prevailing USAID source and nationality and other regulations found under ADS 310 or from countries and suppliers as may be identified by USAID's consolidated list of debarred, suspended or ineligible subcontractors at <http://www.epls.gov/>.
- Any purchases or activities deemed unnecessary to successfully complete the activity, including any grantee headquarters expenses that are not directly linked to the implementation of the proposed project.
- Previous obligations and/or bad debts.
- Fines and /or penalties.
- Other costs unallowable under USAID and/or federal regulations such as referenced 2 CFR 200 Subpart E Cost Principles and FAR 31.2 Cost Principles for Commercial Organizations.

#### Late Application

Late applications are marked as “late” and are ineligible for review or award; however, CPI reserves the right to accept and include late applications in the review and award process when it is considered within the best interest of CPI to do so and if applications that were received on time have not been opened and reviewed. Applications that are submitted late or incomplete run the risk of **not** being considered for review.

**SECTION V: APPLICATION REVIEW INFORMATION:**

Within twenty one working days of the deadline for submitting applications, a technical review committee will convene. Throughout the evaluation process, Internet Governance/Internet Freedom shall take steps to ensure that members of the committee do not have any conflicts of interest or the appearance of such with regard to the organizations whose applications are under review. An individual shall be considered to have the appearance of a conflict of interest “if that person, or that person’s spouse, partner, child, close friend or relative works for or is negotiating to work for, or has a financial interest (including being an unpaid member of a Board of Directors) in any organization that submitted an application currently under the panel’s review.” Members of the committee shall neither solicit nor accept gratuities, favors, or anything of monetary value from parties to the awards.

*Note: Under unusual circumstances the technical review committee may be delayed. Verification of the application submission requirements will be conducted by the Grants & Finance Specialist along with the Program Staff. Awards notifications will be issued within twenty one working days after the technical evaluation committee completes its review.*

Applications will be evaluated according to the evaluation criteria set below. To the extent necessary (if an award is not made based on initial applications), negotiations may be conducted with each applicant whose application, after discussion and negotiation, has a reasonable chance of being selected for award.

Evaluation Criteria:

A total of 100 points are possible for a complete application. The relative importance of each criterion is indicated by approximate weight by points. In reviewing the applications, overall merit and feasibility will be considered, as well as specific criteria relevant to each component as elaborated below.

<b>Evaluation Criteria for Advocacy Grants</b>	
<b>Proposal innovatively addresses the Small Advocacy grant’s objectives, with preference given to projects that address more than one objective</b>	<b>20</b>
<b>Proposal reflects a clear vision of project impact and a structured implementation plan</b>	<b>20</b>
<b>Proposal provides accurate analysis of the local public policy context, threats to online rights, and how planned activities will address them</b>	<b>20</b>
<b>Project budget reflects reasonable line items that are in line with the activities and objectives of the project</b>	<b>10</b>

Past Performance / Organizational Capacity	20
Proposal demonstrates sustainability of activities, products, and other material produced beyond the life of the grant	10
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>100</b>

## **Section VI: AWARD AND ADMINISTRATION INFORMATION**

The recommendation or selection of an application in accordance with established procedures does not guarantee an award. All applicants must demonstrate that they possess, or have the ability to obtain, the necessary management competence to practice mutually agreed upon methods of accountability for funds and other assets provided.

A successful applicant can expect to receive an Award Letter, signed by the program. The award letter will be addressed to the organizations point of contact stated in the application. Applicants that were not successful can expect a letter explaining the reason for their unsuccessful application.

Following the Award Letter, final negotiations will take place before the signing of a grant agreement.

### Reporting Procedures:

A description of reporting requirements will be included in the Grant Agreement. The types of reporting required, along with the schedule of reporting, will depend on the grant type and project duration. Reporting forms will be provided to grant recipients.

Anticipated types of reporting will include the following:

- Program report to be submitted during project implementation according to a schedule described in the grant agreement. This report will include a description of progress made during the period, problems in project implementation; actions taken to overcome them; and activities planned for the next period.
- Final program report will describe how the project objectives and goals were reached, results of the project, and problems and solutions during implementation.

Issuance of the final installment of grant funds is contingent upon Internet Governance / Internet Freedom receipt and acceptance of Final Program Reports.

## **SECTION VII - OTHER INFORMATION**

Issuance of this RFA does not constitute an award or commitment on the part of CPI, nor does it commit CPI to pay for costs incurred in the preparation and submission of an application.

CPI reserves the right to fund any or none of the applications submitted. Further, CPI reserves the right to make no awards as a result of this RFA.



## Annex 1: Mandatory Standard Provisions

*For FAAs:*

Standard Provisions for Fixed Amounts Award for Nongovernmental organizations

<http://www.usaid.gov/policy/ads/300/303mab.pdf>

*For other Grant Types:*

Mandatory Standard Provisions for US Nongovernmental Organizations:

<http://www.usaid.gov/policy/ads/300/303maa.pdf>

Or

Mandatory Standard Provisions for Non-US Nongovernmental Recipients:

<http://www.usaid.gov/policy/ads/300/303mab.pdf>

## Annex 2: Grant Application

# Grant Application

GRANTEE INFORMATION		
Name of Applicant		
Address		
Name of Applicant's Authorized Representative		
E-mail Address		
DUNS Number		
VAT Number, if applicable		
Phone Number		
Fax Number		
Web Site		
PROJECT INFORMATION		
Project Title		
Location		
Period of Performance		
Budget Summary		
	USD	Local Currency
Amount Requested		
Total Budget		
Key Personnel <i>(Please list key Personnel: e.g. Project Manager, Technical Lead.)</i>		
Name	Title	SOW
<b>Organizational Background and Capability</b> <i>(Please provide a brief narrative describing your organization's mission and main activities, and also list annual income over the past three years and main financial contributor)</i>		
Organizational Background Narrative		
Organizational Capacity		

Year	Annual Income in USD	Financial Contributor

**Past Performance** *(Please describe three major projects in which your organization was involved in the past two years, which shows the organizations expertise and ability to meet the goals of the project)*

**First Project (if Applicable)**

Project Title	
Period of Performance	
Location	
Role of Organization	
Project Objectives	
Project Results	
Total Budget	
Funding Source and Contact Information	

**Second Project (if Applicable)**

Project Title	
Period of Performance	
Location	
Role of Organization	
Project Objectives	
Project Results	
Total Budget	
Funding Source and Contact Information	

**Statement of Liability**

I, the undersigned, being the person responsible in the applicant organization for this project, certify that the information given in this application is true and accurate.

Name	
Position	
Signature	
Date and Place	

**PROGRAM DESCRIPTION:**

**Background** *(Please provide any necessary background information on the issues and the problems that the project will address. Include a statement of the problem to be addressed.)*

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**Statement of Goals / Objectives** (Please state the projects goal and its corresponding objectives to address the problems identified above)

**Goal:**

- Objective 1
- Objective 2
- Objective 3

**Summary** (Please provide a brief summary of the project including project objectives and outcomes (including estimated target numbers))

**Technical Approach/Strategy**

**Activities** (Please provide a detailed description of all the activities to achieve each objective. Explain the logical connection between proposed activities and the fulfillment of objectives.)

**Expected Outcomes and Targets/Deliverables Narrative** (What are the expected results that the project will bring about. Please describe how data will be gathered and analyzed, and how performance will be monitored, measured, and reported. Please also complete the attached Monitoring & Evaluation chart)

**Projected Beneficiaries** (please describe the type and number of beneficiaries)

Explain the direct beneficiaries of your project:

**Project Work-Plan and Timeline** (*Please provide a summary narrative of the work-plan and timeline in addition to attaching a copy of the work-plan table. Include a description of how the project will be managed and operated administratively; for example, which staff will perform certain tasks*)

**Sustainability** (*Please describe the measures you will take to ensure sustainability after the end of the grant agreement e.g. capacity building, institutionalization etc. Please also describe how the organization will allocate its time and manage its existing commitments while also performing this project*)

Attach the following documents:

- Budget (template included)