



Counterpart International
Initiative to Promote Afghan Civil Society
(I-PACS)



Request for Application

Human Rights Grant

Issuance Date of RFA: November 01, 2009
Closing/Submission Date: November 26, 2009 by 11:00 AM Kabul time
RFA Number: RFA 09-01 Human Rights
SUBJECT: Human Rights Grants

Dear Applicants,

Counterpart International – Afghanistan intends to award human rights grants for projects to locally registered Civil Society Organizations (CSOs). Counterpart International – Afghanistan is requesting concept papers from all civil society organizations for projects intended to promote and strengthen civil society in Afghanistan, within the context of addressing human rights issues affecting Afghan citizens. Counterpart International – Afghanistan anticipates that these projects will begin by January 01, 2010 with projected duration of not more than six (6) months.

Issuance of this RFA does not constitute an award commitment on the part of Counterpart International – Afghanistan nor does it commit Counterpart International – Afghanistan to pay for costs incurred in the submission of a concept paper. An RFA orientation session will be held for all interested organizations At 10:00 A.M on November 15, 2009 at the Counterpart International Afghanistan office in Kabul. Questions regarding clarification of the RFA requirements shall be in writing and must be submitted to:

Rafatullah@counterpart-afg.org

With copy to:

Suzana@counterpart-afg.org

tim@counterpart-afg.org

No later than 14:00 hours, November 19, 2009. No phone requests will be accepted.

The list of approved concept papers will be disclosed at 14:00 hours, December 05, 2009 at the Counterpart International – Afghanistan office. The list of approved concept papers will be also uploaded in the Counterpart International – Afghanistan website www.counterpart-afg.org at 14:00 December 06, 2009 for public review.

To receive all the attachments to this RFA and to ensure that the applicant organizations receive responses to questions, as well as modifications to this RFA, please acknowledge the receipt of this RFA by sending an email addressed to farzad@counterpart-afg.org with copy to Rafatullah@counterpart-afg.org .

A. Background

The mission of Counterpart International is to empower vulnerable people to implement innovative, holistic and enduring solutions to social, economic and environmental challenges.

Established in 1965, Counterpart International has forged strategic partnerships in more than 65 countries. Counterpart's programs encompass humanitarian aid and relief assistance, health care, democracy and governance, natural resource management and feeding the impoverished.

Counterpart International – Afghanistan is proud to be a key partner with the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) in the effort to build a more democratic, prosperous and gender equitable society in Afghanistan. Since January 2005, Counterpart has been the lead implementer of the USAID-funded Initiative to Promote Afghan Civil Society (I-PACS).

The I-PACS program includes international partner the International Center for Not-for-profit Law (ICNL), as well as two main local Afghan NGO partners, as Intermediary Service Organizations (ISOs).

Counterpart International – Afghanistan is providing training and technical assistance to two main local Afghan NGOs to strengthen their role as Intermediary Service Organizations (ISOs), service centres which provide advanced training and technical assistance to eight I-PACS Civil Society Support Centres (CSSCs) located throughout the Country. Resource centres within each of the 9 partner organizations assist individuals or organizations who come in seeking technical assistance in core development skills. They also provide access to information on international development and free, public Internet access. This infrastructure allows Counterpart International – Afghanistan, the ISOs and CSSCs to provide capacity building training and technical assistance to a core group of 200 local Afghan Civil Society Organizations (CSOs), including NGOs, social organizations, Community Development Councils (CDCs) and *shuras/jirgas* (indigenous councils of elders), assistance which helps these organizations provide critical services to their communities.

Counterpart International – Afghanistan views the availability of grants to CSOs as an important part of organizational capacity building. Linking grants with lessons learned and capacity developed through training and partnership provides a more tangible impact than generic grant giving. Counterpart International – Afghanistan disbursed over \$9.6 million in grant funding to support advocacy and community development projects throughout Afghanistan during the two phases of the program (2005-present). At the same time, ICNL works with the government of Afghanistan to establish a legal framework that enables national and international non-governmental organizations to effectively carry out their mandates in Afghanistan.

Mainstreaming a gender equity perspective throughout all I-PACS activities, for the promotion of Afghan civil society, is a cross-cutting theme for Counterpart International in Afghanistan. Half of the I-PACS local partners are women-led and/or women-focused NGOs, and more than half of all I-PACS grant funding is allocated to projects which directly benefit Afghan women. Counterpart International – Afghanistan has also completed a wide-ranging assessment of Afghan civil society which is informing I-PACS program interventions throughout the life of the project. The assessment has been distributed to a wide variety of Afghan and international organizations, national and international government agencies and research institutions, and serves as a critical resource for the socio-economic development of the country, a PDF file available at <http://www.counterpart-afg.org> .

Through I-PACS, local Afghan organizations are increasing their capacity to meet the vital development needs of people all over Afghanistan. Just as significantly, local Civil Society Organizations are improving their ability to represent citizens' interests through constructive engagement with the government of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan and ensuring citizen participation in political, social and economic decision-making. The end result will be a more participatory and prosperous Afghanistan for all its citizens

B. Purpose

Counterpart International – Afghanistan is requesting applications from civil society organizations with relevant mission, strategy, expertise and capacity to carry out human rights related project implementation, monitoring and advocacy projects aimed for improving human rights policies in Afghanistan.

Counterpart International – Afghanistan determines competitively to select concept papers from locally-registered civil society organizations for projects aimed for promoting and strengthening civil society in Afghanistan, within the context of addressing human rights issues affecting Afghan citizens.

The Goal of this competition is to promote the development of civil society in Afghanistan through the implementation of human rights initiatives.

This RFA is designed to link the capacity building component of the Counterpart I-PACS project to the financial resources provided by United State Agency for International Development (USAID) by awarding grants to civil society organizations.

C. Program Description

The human rights grant program is an important component of I-PACS. The program aims to provide funding for specific activities to promote and protect human rights of the citizens of Afghanistan. Human rights projects may include those designed to assist one or more disadvantaged or discriminated groups in fulfilling their human rights. Human rights grants are awarded to CSOs for human rights focused initiatives which further the projection and promotion of rights of vulnerable groups in Afghanistan.

These rights can include, but are not limited to, the right to life, liberty and security of person; freedom from torture or cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment; freedom of religion and expression; the right to an adequate standard of living (including food, clothing, housing, water and sanitation) and the right to the highest attainable standard of health [oneself and one's] family.¹

The grants will also support activities to advocate for the fulfilment of the Government of Afghanistan's human rights obligations and the enjoyment of human rights for all, regardless of sex, social, ethnic, religious affiliation, or other status. In addition, human rights grants may support initiatives which advocate for accountability for human rights violations.

Given the breadth and variety of the rights and freedoms guaranteed under the international human rights norms agreed to by the Afghan government, and reflected in the constitution and domestic legislation, as well as applicable international humanitarian law, proposals which address a variety of human rights issues may be eligible for funding

All grant proposals should be compliant with the human rights based approach, which requires an analysis of who is marginalized or vulnerable to discrimination, and prioritise interventions or activities on the basis of such vulnerability. Grant proposals should identify to the extent possible such groups, and disaggregate by sex, age (older and children), and main population groups.

In order to qualify for a grant, the CSOs are encouraged to conduct participatory issue identification through a process of mobilizing their communities in order to get the citizens involvement in prioritizing local human rights issues, involving all stake holders and community members.

¹ Universal Declaration of Human Rights. <http://www.un.org/Overview/rights.html>.

D. Partnership and Coalitions

Programmatically justified partnerships and coalitions between and among CSOs are encouraged for greater effectiveness of activities and expansive results of projects. Applications from a coalition should clearly define the programmatic and financial responsibilities of each member-organization in the implementation of the proposed project. Each organization or coalition is eligible to submit only one project proposal. CSOs included in a coalition as a member-organization that submit a proposal for this grant are not eligible to apply as an individual organization in addition to being a member of the coalition.

Consideration will be given to applications received from organizations including partnership with civil society organizations registered as target CSOs with Counterpart International – Afghanistan. An update list of all civil society organizations registered with Counterpart in 34 provinces of Afghanistan is attached to this RFA as attachment A. Counterpart International – Afghanistan will soon upload the contact detail for all of its CSOs in its website. Those interested can access the list at <http://www.counterpart-afg.org>.

E. The Application and award process

Concept Paper

The Concept paper in response to this RFA should address how the partner intends to carry out the project. It should also contain a clear understanding of the work to be undertaken and the responsibilities of all parties involved.

Step 1:

After the project concept has been developed the applicant organization will be required to complete the Concept paper and fill the project budget template. All the applicant organizations are required to submit the project concept papers as per the guidelines described in Counterpart International – Afghanistan concept paper standard template. A copy of the concept paper is attached to this RFA as attachment B.

Step 2:

The project concept paper will be submitted by the applicant organization to Counterpart International – Afghanistan for review.

Step 3:

The Concept paper will be analyzed by the Grant Technical Evaluation Committee “GTEC” including staff from Counterpart International – Afghanistan and USAID Afghanistan Office. The application will be reviewed based on the following standards:

Concept paper Technical Aspects for Selection	Scoring
1. Organizational Background and Mission Statement	5
2. Project Concept	15
3. Past Experience	10
4. Problem statement and Justification	15
5. Planned Activities and Expected Results	15
6. Partnership and Coalition with I-PACS target CSOs	10
7. Implementation Approach	15
8. Budget	15
9. Maximum Score	100

The technical review criteria for each above identified aspects are described in the project concept paper template attached to this RFA.

Project Proposal:

Step 4- The successful applicant organizations will be requested to submit the project proposal for the project concept.

Step 5- After the project proposals are received the Grant Technical Evaluation Committee “GTEC” consisting of staff only from Counterpart International – Afghanistan will recommend or oppose proposals by strictly reviewing the concept technicality of the proposal and by strictly examining the adherence to the submission criteria described for each section of the proposal in the proposal template.

The proposal template will be shared only with successful applicant organization which has been requested to submit project proposals.

Step 6- Counterpart International – Afghanistan will sign project agreements with those organizations whose project proposals have been accepted.

F: Project Budget Submission guidelines:

Only direct expenses, expenses which are directly attributable to project activities, should be budgeted. Counterpart International-Afghanistan doesn't allow any indirect charges to the grant budgets. The budget should reflect the resources necessary for project implementation. The budget narrative should provide details on types of resources to be obtained, cost per unit, and price justification. Allowable costs under this grant may include but are not limited to the following: program expenses, office supplies, personnel and other direct expenses. The applicant should solidly justify all the expenses.

Program expenses: - include types of costs associated with the implementation of the main steps of planned project activities. These include costs such as project publications, purchase of literature, conduct training & seminars and provide materials, supplies and per diem cost to training and seminar participants.

Office supplies: – the category includes costs of purchasing office stationeries, utilities and consumables. This should be very well justified within the overall context of project effectiveness. Counterpart International – Afghanistan does not allow purchase of office equipments (project assets) for any of its grants.

Personnel: – the line item includes salaries of full and part-time staff as well as experts involved in the project. They can be paid ONLY for activities performed within the framework of the proposed project. Consideration will be given to project concepts with project personnel cost consisting of a minimum 20 % allocated to cost related to female staff and all personnel expenses must be very well justified.

Administrative expenses: - include costs necessary for project implementation; for example, travel and transportation, office rent and communications (telephone, fax, Internet), utilities (electricity, water supply, etc.), and publication/duplication (paper, toner, envelopes, etc.). Counterpart will require a non-profit organization to share the cost of office rent if the organization implements other project(s) at the time of this project.

The project budget details should be submitted by using the project budget template attached to this RFA, attachment C. The maximum budget share from Counterpart International – Afghanistan for an individual award will not exceed **USD 70,000** (US dollars Seventy Thousand).

Pre-Agreement Cost- Counterpart International –Afghanistan will not reimburse costs incurred prior to the effective date of the award. Such cost will be directly pursuant to the negotiation and in anticipation of the award where such costs are necessary to comply with the proposed delivery schedule or period of performance. Such costs would be considered as allowable only to the extent that they would have been allowable if incurred after the date of the award and only with the written approval of Counterpart International – Afghanistan.

Project cost reimbursement- An initial advance will be made to the recipient after signing of the project agreement. Subsequent payment of grants will be carried out in quarterly installments set based on the approved workplan of each grantee. Continuous payment of grant installments for the period of implementation will be strictly contingent upon satisfactory performance and proper management of funds that will be monitored regularly based on quarterly programmatic and financial reports submitted by the grantee.

Cost Share- In order to be considered for this RFA, each applicant organization is required to match 20% of the project Cost.

G. Eligibility Criteria for Application

1. Institutional

- a. Applicant organizations must be registered with Ministry of Economy as NGO in Afghanistan.
- b. Have a well-defined and transparent governance structure with a charter, governing body and board of directors.
- c. Adhere to generally accepted democratic leadership and participation principles;
- d. Have a well-defined and established constituency or beneficiary base (i.e. clients, members, or target communities); and have relevance and access to a significant segment of the population in their target community or nationwide;
- e. Have prior experience and or experts in implementing human rights projects.

2. Other

- a. Counterpart will not fund activities which provide services to individuals. An exception to this policy may be certain proposals which address the issues of access to justice.
- b. Preference will be given to concept papers with coalitions/partnership with civil society organizations registered with Counterpart International – Afghanistan.
- c. Preference will be given to concept papers having cost share (either through cash or in-kind contribution).
- d. Only one concept paper may be submitted per organization.

Please note that Counterpart will not consider the following category of projects for funding:

- Legal aid;
- Income generation;
- Support to prisons;
- Construction/rehabilitation;
- Capacity building for Community Development Councils (CDCs);
- Health care provision.

Note:

Counterpart will not fund activities which are described as banned activities by NGO law of Islamic republic of Gov of Afghanistan (Article 8).

I. Submission Guidelines

All organizations must submit a proposal directly responsive to the terms, conditions, specifications and requirements of this RFA. Proposals not conforming to the requirements of this RFA may be categorized as unacceptable, thereby eliminating them from further consideration. Counterpart will not accept any concept paper submitted after the closing date and time.

In order to be considered, the concept paper should be submitted in accordance with the instructions in the RFA, to the following address:

Counterpart international-Afghanistan
C/O: Farzad Farzam
Wazir Akbar khan Street 15th Line two
House # 0000 Kabul Afghanistan
Mob# 0093(0)799 407983
0093(0)700693982

Sealed Concept papers must be received by Counterpart international-Afghanistan by 11:00 A.M Kabul time on the date indicated at the cover sheet and should be deposited into the bidding box located in the Grants Office.

One original and four additional hard copies of the Concept paper & Budget along with the soft copy of the mentioned documents should be submitted in one sealed envelope to Counterpart international-Afghanistan office.

Note:

There are three attachments to this RFA:

Attachment A: I-PACS target CSOs
Attachment B: Counterpart international-Afghanistan standard Concept Paper Template
Attachment C: Budget Template