



# Internet Governance/Internet Freedom Request for Applications (RFA) #17-1

**Issuance Date of RFA: June 22, 2017**

Counterpart International is soliciting applications for advocacy grants. See below information.

<b>Grant Program Name</b>	Small Advocacy Grants for Sri Lanka, Ukraine, Venezuela, and Zimbabwe.
<b>Grant Value</b>	Counterpart anticipates one or more grants will be issued, based on the availability of funding and quality of applications. Applications should be in the approximate range of \$2,000 USD to \$24,999 USD. The grant pool for this round of grants is \$100,000 USD total. Counterpart International reserves the right to fund multiple grants or none at all.
<b>Duration of grant</b>	Up to 12 months
<b>Grant Description and Objectives</b>	<p>The purpose of the RFA is to solicit applications for Small Advocacy &amp; Grants supporting Counterpart International's internet governance/internet freedom project's core objective, specifically: to foster a human rights-based approach to internet governance in selected countries (Sri Lanka, Ukraine, Venezuela, and Zimbabwe), ensuring that policies governing the internet conform to international standards on fundamental human rights including freedom of expression, access to information, and privacy, among others.</p> <p>Counterpart International invites organizations to apply for funding for projects that have specific and tangible policy and advocacy impact objectives.</p> <p>Applications must include, but are not limited to, one or more of the following elements:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Support for new or current advocacy campaigns; initiatives seeking to improve the understanding of, or facilitate an ongoing, constructive dialogue among a variety of stakeholder groups related to internet governance policies, human rights, policy making, digital and online rights; use of technology to advance fundamental rights, and to increase democratic participation of civil society, particularly marginalized groups.</li> <li>2. Advance an Internet Governance Forum (IGF) multistakeholder governance model at the national level; capacity building for advocacy, IG literacy, and other convening events bringing together a diverse set of stakeholders from academia, the private sector, civil society, human rights organizations, media, the technical community, and government.</li> </ol>
<b>Required Documents</b>	Applications must be submitted in accordance with the instructions contained in this solicitation, and must meet all requirements described in this RFA. A complete application will include: a completed grant application proposal, budget, and budget notes using the formats provided with this RFA. Proposal narratives should not exceed 10 (ten) pages, excluding budget and budget notes. Incomplete applications will not be considered.
<b>Important Dates &amp; Deadlines</b>	<p><b>Deadline to Submit Questions:</b> July 10, 2017</p> <p><b>Posting of Answers to Questions:</b> July 15, 2017</p> <p><b>Application Submission Deadline:</b> July 25, 2017 and February 25, 2018 (11:59 pm Eastern Standard Time)</p> <p><b>Projected Date of Grant Award:</b> August 15, 2017 and March 15, 2018</p>

## **About CPI's Internet Governance/Internet Freedom Project**

Counterpart International's internet governance/internet freedom project intends to provide civil society actors with advocacy tools and resources to advance a multistakeholder human rights-based approach to internet governance in four key countries. The project will support 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 will identify gaps in research, knowledge, capacity building, the multistakeholder governance model, resources, and other obstacles facing civil society advancing a rights-based, advocacy and policy approach to internet governance.

### **Eligibility Requirements:**

The applicant / application must meet the following requirements. If the application satisfies these basic criteria, it will be submitted for review and evaluation by the Selection Committee.

1. Applications are requested from organizations registered in the selected countries (Sri Lanka, Ukraine, Venezuela, and Zimbabwe). Examples include those representing a professional association, non-profit organization, non-governmental organization, union, media organization, professional association, or partnership of such entities.
2. Applicant is not a debarred organization. Applicants must ensure that the names associated with the applicant entity (organization, and its principals, as applicable) are not listed as excluded parties on these public lists, including OFAC's Specially Designated Nationals (SDN) List (<https://sanctionssearch.ofac.treas.gov/>) and exclusion records from EPLS ([www.sam.gov](http://www.sam.gov)).
3. The proposal must comply with the guidelines and directions described in this RFA and the application. Proposals that do not comply with the guidelines described in this RFA will not be considered.
4. The complete application contains electronic versions of all necessary documents (the application form and detailed budget/budget notes).

### **Objectives, Approaches and Illustrative Activities:**

Small Advocacy Grants will primarily focus on activities that foster a human rights-based approach to internet governance in selected countries (Sri Lanka, Ukraine, Venezuela, and Zimbabwe), ensuring that polices governing the internet conform to international standards on fundamental human rights including freedom of expression, access to information, and privacy, among others.

**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. Projects may include but are not limited to:

- 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 multistakeholder coalition networks to coordinate and address internet governance issues.
- Advocacy campaigns around national online rights using media tools, platforms, and outlets to raise public awareness, and 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.
- International engagement opportunities to increase civil society participation in international policy dialogues to support multistakeholder engagement and promote internet freedom at key international forums.

## **Technical Proposal Submission**

Using the provided templates, an application submitted in response to this RFA should address how the applicant intends to carry out its proposed Advocacy. The proposal should include project deliverables that demonstrate specific and quantifiable advocacy outcomes, and be targeted toward policy makers, human rights defenders, the media, thought leaders, and other influencers shaping the development of internet policies.

Counterpart plans to issue grants using the Fixed Amount Awards (FAA) mechanism, which is characterized by a focus on programmatic accomplishments when proposed Grant activities have very well-defined program elements and milestones that are finite in duration and easily tied to fixed cost amounts that can be determined in advance.

Applicants should be focused on advancing best international policies, practices and awareness for a rights-based approach to internet governance, and the multistakeholder 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 campaigns may seek to identify a research partner able to operationalize a research question of relevance 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).

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

## **Project Budget Submission and Costing Guidelines**

Using the provided templates, an application submitted in response to this RFA should include a detailed budget with budget notes in Microsoft Excel identifying how grant funds will be allocated for the project, including proposal level of effort of any staff who will be working this grant. All costs must be justified in the budget narrative. Profit or fee is not an allowable cost and may not be included in your proposed budget.

*Pre-Agreement Costs:* Counterpart International will not reimburse costs incurred prior to the effective date of the award.

## **Documents to Attach as Part of the Application**

1. Copy of Registration Certificate
2. Copy of Organization's Charter or Document of Incorporation or Organization's bylaws
3. Organization's most recent annual financial statement and audit report for the past year.
4. Organizational chart outlining the staffing structure by name and title and showing the number of staff employed, if available.

## Submission Guidelines and Instructions

- All applicants must submit their final proposals, budgetary information as well as any other relevant enclosures directly responsive to the terms, conditions, specifications and requirements of this RFA as follows: Email the completed application (including attachments) with the subject line “CPI Project RFA #17-1 (Country)” to [proposals.igif@counterpart.org](mailto:proposals.igif@counterpart.org). Applications and all communications regarding grants should be submitted by email to [proposals.igif@counterpart.org](mailto:proposals.igif@counterpart.org). Public key for encrypted communications can be found [here on the MIT server](#).
- Completed applications must be in English. The narrative part should be single spaced and limited to ten (10) pages in total (budget and budget notes not inclusive). Please use font type “Calibri,” font size 11, page margins of 1” per side.
- 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.

## Evaluation Criteria

All applications that have met the eligibility requirements and were submitted timely and complete, according to the RFA guidelines and instructions, will be evaluated based on the criteria presented below.

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.

Evaluation Criteria	
Project proposal is relevant to Counterpart International and its stakeholders as described in the “Grant Description” and “About CPI’s IG/IF Project” and “Objectives, Approaches and Illustrative Activities” sections of this RFA and places a human rights-based approach to internet governance at the core of its project, increases IG/IF literacy, builds capacity for civil society and multistakeholder engagement, and incorporates marginalized communities (women, youth, LGBT, the differently abled, religious, and ethnic minorities, for example).	25
Project proposal reflects a clear vision of project impact, a structured plan, publicity, sustainability, and integrates well with other existing projects in country.	20
Analysis of relevant issue(s) and how advocacy initiatives will address them with tangible impact.	20
Project budget is justifiable and commensurate with the expected benefit of the proposed project. Budget demonstrates that costs are reasonable, necessary and allocable. Proposed amount reflects a clear understanding of the requirements stated in this RFA and is consistent with the various elements of the application.	15
Project supports activities that are collaborative, multi-disciplinary, and multi-stakeholder in nature.	10

Organizational capacity, current/past projects and a demonstrable ability to carry out internet governance, digital rights and/or advocacy projects	10
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>100</b>

As applicable, Counterpart may request applicants to provide additional information and refine their proposals within an established deadline for re-submission of a revised application.

**Funding and other limitations**

- Fixed Amount Awards (FAAs): Each FAA award cannot exceed \$24,999. Payments shall be made based on the successful achievement of agreed-upon milestones and Counterpart’s acceptance of milestone delivery. Please note the following key elements of FAAs:
  - FAAs are intended to support specific program elements, and accountability is primarily based on performance and results;
  - FAAs are used to support specific projects, where there is a certainty about cost, and where the accomplishment of the purpose or milestone(s) in the grant is readily discernible and feasible.
  - International airfare and indirect costs are not eligible for financing.
- Executive Order Preventing Terrorist Financing: Organizations are reminded that they must not engage in transactions with, or provide resources or support to, individuals and organizations associated with terrorism, including those individuals or entities that appear on the Specially Designated Nationals and Blocked Persons List maintained by the U.S. Treasury (online at: <http://www.treasury.gov/resource-center/sanctions/SDN-List/Pages/default.aspx>), or the United Nations Security designation list (online at: [http://www.un.org/sc/committees/1267/aq\\_sanctions\\_list.shtml](http://www.un.org/sc/committees/1267/aq_sanctions_list.shtml)).
- Debarment, Suspension, Ineligibility and Voluntary Exclusion: Grantee certifies that neither it nor its principals is presently excluded or disqualified from participation in this transaction by any U.S. Federal department or agency, and neither grantee nor principals have an “exclusion” associated with their names at [www.sam.gov](http://www.sam.gov).
- This RFA solicitation does not constitute a binding offer to applicants on the part of the Counterpart International to make an award. Counterpart International reserves the right to cancel this solicitation at any time and may award more grants than anticipated or no awards at its discretion.
- Only selected applicants will be contacted. Unsuccessful applicants will NOT be notified. Counterpart International reserves the right to discuss technical, cost, or other pre-award issues with any successful applicants as part of its pre-award process.

**RFA Enclosures:**

Attachment A: Grant Proposal Template

Attachment B: Budget Template