
NATIONAL ENDOWMENT FOR DEMOCRACY
PROPOSAL GUIDELINES – ADDITIONAL GUIDANCE

Use this document for additional assistance in writing a proposal narrative and budget.

If you have further questions, please email the appropriate NED regional staff or proposals@ned.org.

PROPOSAL NARRATIVE

PROJECT OBJECTIVES:

What are acceptable Project Objectives?

Project objectives should be limited in scope and time, and identify specifically what will be achieved with the funds requested for the particular project. Be sure to distinguish objectives from activities. For example, “to hold a workshop” is a proposed activity, not an objective.

Objectives should be measurable, and therefore capable of being evaluated. An objective such as “to enhance the growth of democracy in the country” is too broad and not reasonably measurable.

Here are some examples of well-stated objectives for different projects:

- To strengthen the organizational capabilities of local civic groups.
- To foster the development of a legal framework for a free press in (specify country).

EVALUATION PLAN:

What are acceptable Evaluation Plan criteria?

The project’s Evaluation Plan should describe how progress toward the Project Objectives will be measured. The plan should state what types of evidence, changes or results would indicate that project objectives have been achieved.

Remember that the implementation of planned activities does not demonstrate the success of the project. For example, “All five workshops for youth will take place” does not constitute an evaluation point because it describes an activity.

More relevant evaluation measures would include observing whether participants made concrete plans during the workshop; what activities participants carried out after the workshop, making use of the knowledge, skills, or alliances formed as a result of the workshop; and participants’ perception of the workshop’s value to their work (especially when there are objective measures of demand, such as receiving numerous requests for additional or follow-up trainings).

Some examples of acceptable Evaluation Plan criteria include:

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Objective: To strengthen the organizational capacity of local civic groups.

- If each participating group is able to launch at least one new activity, reduce staff or volunteer turnover, increase fundraising income, or achieve at least one other organizational goal, these changes will indicate that the participating groups have become stronger and the workshop will have made reasonable progress toward the objective. In order to measure progress, the [applicant organization] will collect information on each participating group's existing activity levels or management problems both before the workshops series and again four months afterwards, and will compare the results.
- In addition, groups' self-perception of areas of improvement will also provide evidence of progress. Before the workshop series begins, and again four months after it ends, participating groups will fill out a brief questionnaire on the group's strengths and weaknesses in the five areas of training (financial management, strategic planning, personnel management, project management, and external communications).

Objective: To encourage the development of a legal framework for a free press in (specify country).

- The key measure of success will be passage of new media legislation endorsed by independent journalists' associations and human-rights groups, and, following that, at least three test cases in the courts affirming press freedom. Even if all of these developments do not occur within the next year, some progress would be evident if, as a result of the project activities, additional influential groups and individuals endorse the necessary changes or court outcomes, especially political parties and candidates, academic experts, civil society organizations, judicial officials, lawyers' groups, and media outlets.
- The project staff will also assess media coverage of the project activities and comments on the topic made by ordinary citizens, including in Internet forums, to determine whether the project stimulated additional public awareness and support for strengthening the legal framework.

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PROPOSAL BUDGET

What are allowable budget items for a NED-funded project?

Please review the categories below to determine which items are allowable in a NED budget.

NOTE: Not all budgets will contain entries under each of the categories listed below. Please use only those categories that relate to expected costs of the activities described in the Proposal Narrative.

SALARIES

Includes employees of the organization working on NED projects during the grant period. The budget should show the titles of those employees to be paid and indicate the time devoted to the project and duration (months) that NED funds will cover as a percentage of the total annual salary.

Not included are consultant fees, honoraria, temporary services, and other fees for services. (See additional categories below.)

BENEFITS, TAXES AND ALLOWANCES

Includes actual known costs of fringe benefits provided by the employer. Examples may include health insurance, life insurance, social security (employer's share), disability insurance, pension plan, vacation, holiday, sick leave pay, and 13th month pay (for countries where it is applicable).

Not included are U.S. federal and state income taxes withheld (these are part of the employee's salary).

OFFICE SPACE AND UTILITIES

Includes rental costs of the organization's office space and utilities such as electricity, gas, oil, and water. The amounts for rent and utilities should be shown separately and include the monthly costs and number of months the space will be rented or utilities budgeted.

Not included is rent of space to hold meetings or conferences (this goes under Other Direct Costs).

SUPPLIES AND EQUIPMENT

Includes purchase of equipment and supplies for use in the project. Each item costing more than \$500 should be listed separately and the price per unit indicated.

The equipment budget should include the costs for accessories, transportation of equipment, in-transit insurance, taxes, and installation.

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Not included are costs for rented or leased equipment (these go under Contractual Services), except for rental or lease of vehicles for travel for a specific programmatic event which may go under Travel & Per Diem.

COMMUNICATIONS AND POSTAGE

Includes telephones (land line and mobile), e-mail, internet, postage, fax, courier services, and distribution of publications.

If the amount for communications and postage exceeds 10% of the total budget, a detailed list of items by type should be provided.

Not included is transportation of equipment (this goes under Supplies and Equipment).

TRAVEL AND PER DIEM

Includes airfare, per diem, and other travel costs for travel on official business related to the project (including travel by consultants). The budget should separate international and domestic travel. Please note the following definitions:

International Travel: travel between any two countries.

Domestic Travel: travel entirely within one country.

Local Travel: travel within a single city or its immediate surrounding areas (or suburbs).

Per Diem: lodging + meals and incidentals (Incidentals includes laundry costs, small personal items such as tooth paste, shampoo, soap, etc.)

Other Travel Costs: visas, airport tax, inoculations.

Each international trip should be listed separately, indicating the airfare (including origin and destination cities, if known. Otherwise, list country, region, or continent), the per diem (Lodging, Meals & incidentals), (indicating number of days for the trip and the proposed per diem rate), and other travel costs, such as local or in-country domestic travel.

CONTRACTUAL/CONSULTANT SERVICES

Includes any services that will be provided on a contract basis, including honoraria, temporary personnel services, translation services, rented or leased equipment, audit fees, legal fees, accounting services (if performed by an outside contractor rather than by staff). Please be sure to provide sufficient detail so that it is clear exactly what the contract is for.

Includes hourly or daily fee (8-hour day) paid to consultants hired under written agreements. The budget should specify the number of days to be worked. The daily fee should be determined according to the qualifications and previous salary history of the individual, and the nature and scope of the service required. Consultant fees in excess of reasonable rate require additional justification and prior approval. Consultants' expenses may include communications and postage and clerical help directly related to the consultant's efforts.

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A SINGLE INDIVIDUAL MAY NOT RECEIVE COMPENSATION FROM BOTH SALARY AND CONTRACTUAL/CONSULTANT SERVICES.

OTHER DIRECT COSTS

Includes items by major type such as printing costs, meeting and conference expenses (room rental, conference snacks and meals, audio visual services, interpretation, etc.). Please detail your publishing/printing costs in your budget. Smaller items in this category may include costs for reference materials and bank service charges.

SUPPORT GRANTS

Includes grants to be given by the direct NED grantee to another organization (sometimes also referred to as a subrecipient). The detailed budget of the proposed support grant should be provided in the proposal, using the same line items as described above. The direct NED grantee is responsible for verifying expenditures under the support grant award.

ITEMS NOT ALLOWABLE IN NED GRANTS

The list of items not allowable includes, but is not limited to, the following:

- Entertainment, gifts, gratuities, donations, alcoholic beverages, fines, and penalties.
- Activities involving physical violence by any individual, group, or government.
- Costs related to campaigns of candidates for public office.
- Lobbying directed at influencing public policy decisions of local, state, or federal governments in the U.S.
- Costs related to education, training, or informing U.S. audiences of any partisan policy or practice or candidate for office.
- Activities unlawful under local, state, or federal law in the U.S.
- Individuals who receive a salary from their national government may not also receive a salary in full or in part from NED funds.
- “Miscellaneous” and “Contingency” costs.

Please see the Sample Budget for examples.