

Mexico CSA Activity: Annual Program Statement

HICD, CAPACITY DEVELOPMENT AND LOCAL SYSTEMS STRENGTHENING FOR CIVIL SOCIETY ACTIVITY IN MEXICO

Project:	Mexico CSA
Funder:	Social Impact
APS Release Date:	November 2, 2018
APS Closing Date	November 1, 2019
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Annex	Annex I: Concept Paper Instructions

INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

CSA

The Civil Society Activity (CSA) is a program of the United States Agency for International Development's bilateral Mission in Mexico (USAID/Mexico) designed to increase the sustainability of a set of target Mexican civil society organizations (CSOs) and Intermediary Support Organizations (ISOs) and improve their institutional capacity. The program will support ISOs and CSOs in Mexico City and Mexico's northern states in implementing their development agendas related to issues of crime prevention and violence, reform of the justice system, and human rights.

USAID believes that incorporating local actors such as CSOs is essential to achieve the objectives of crime prevention and violence, justice, and human rights. With specialized technical assistance, USAID will help build the capacity of CSOs to implement their own projects and achieve their objectives, as well as to increase their ability to contribute to USAID's development objectives in a sustainable way through strategic alliances with partners in the public and private sector.

CSA uses a methodology based in Human and Institutional Capacity Development (HICD) that identifies the causes of gaps in performance and addresses them through a wide range of solutions. In addition, CSA facilitates a cyclical performance improvement processes through the development of monitoring and management systems. To achieve long-term, sustainable results in reducing crime and violence and promoting justice and human rights, USAID and CSA will combine the capacity building approach of HICD with a focus on strengthening the systems within which civil society operates.

In the context, CSA is committed to working with local actors in creative and novel ways to improve capacity development opportunities for the local organizations with which we work. Creative engagement improves the ability to solve development problems, strengthens the design and implementation of solutions and has the potential to increase the level of sustainability.

This Annual Program Statement (APS) is designed to describe and provide a process through which organizations that are working on civil society capacity development projects can work with CSA to support local Civil Society Organizations that have a strong influence in their field. The goal of the APS is to identify organizations that are working to:

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- a) Improve the capacity of CSOs in Mexico to communicate and work collaboratively.
- b) Increase the connections between CSOs and key stakeholders to achieve their goals.
- c) Strengthen the capacity of CSOs to develop strategies that effectively respond to their environment.
- d) Improve the ability of CSOs in Mexico to access knowledge and resources for the pursuance of their goals.

CSA reserves the right to fund any or none of the applications submitted under this APS.

The CSA APS is not a Request for Applications (RFA) or a Request for Proposals (RFP). Instead, the CSA **APS requests Concept Papers**. Based on those Concept Papers, CSA will determine whether to request a full application from an appropriate partner.

Firms may express interest in bidding or may submit questions by the date specified above by writing CSAproposals@socialimpact.com and copying agould@socialimpact.com. Concept papers may be submitted at any point during the open period stated above and CSA reserves the right to request full applications at any point within that period. Please refer to Annex I for the concept paper format.

GOAL

The USAID Civil Society Activity (CSA) is interested in supporting Civil Society Organizations (CSOs) that currently wield significant influence in the civil society sector in Mexico. CSA welcomes concept papers for innovative projects that contribute to:

- a) Improve the capacity of CSOs in Mexico to communicate and work collaboratively.
- b) Increase the connections between CSOs and key stakeholders to achieve their goals.
- c) Strengthen the capacity of CSOs to develop strategies that effectively respond to their environment.
- d) Improve the ability of CSOs in Mexico to access knowledge and resources for the pursuance of their goals.

SCOPE OF WORK

CSA is seeking innovative and thoughtful concept papers of ongoing projects that are focused in one or more of the following dimensions:

- I. **Organizational capacity and resilience of CSOs** – projects aimed at improving the organizational capacities of CSOs, with emphasis on their ability to develop impactful and relevant programs, establish strategic alliances with other actors, and build their resilience -their ability to recover from setbacks, adapt well to change, and keep going in the face of adversity.
- II. **Availability of resources for CSOs** - projects aimed at improving access of civil society organizations in Mexico to resources to carry out their activities. Examples may include initiatives to promote donations or volunteerism, promote and improve the mechanisms by which donors (private sector, major foundations, or even government institutions) do grant-making, promote innovative models of collaboration that allow for the pool of resources and creative, effective ways to use existing funds, among others.

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- III. ***Improving the ability of Mexican CSOs to do advocacy, dialogue, and collaborate with government institutions*** - projects aimed at improving CSOs ability to monitor and evaluate public policies and governmental actions, elaborate viable public policy proposals and promote them, promote effective dialogue between CSOs and government, and foster collective impact initiatives with government and other stakeholders, among others.
- IV. ***Promoting the design of impactful CSOs programs and services*** - projects aimed at providing tools and incentives for organizations to develop sustainable, relevant and impactful programs, rooted in the needs and priorities of their communities and with appropriate monitoring and evaluation programs that allow for constant improvement.
- V. ***Strengthening a support system for CSOs work*** - projects aimed at fostering a support system for Mexican CSOs that allows organizations to access valuable information, tools, training, mentoring and/or advise; or access to networks and coalitions that allow for peer-to-peer learning and pursuing issues of common interest.
- VI. ***Improving CSOs visibility and positioning in the public agenda*** - projects aimed at promoting a broad understanding and appreciation of the role that CSOs play in society, raising public awareness of the challenges they face, and boosting their credibility with key target audiences or society in general.

Anticipated Schedule

CSA will review and evaluate concept papers as submitted. In the event and organization or firm is requested to provide a full application, additional instructions will be provided by CSA at that time.

ELIGIBILITY REQUIREMENTS

The APS invites civil society organizations, and/or other institutions and organizations that are legally registered, non-governmental organizations in Mexico to identify and suggest ways we can work together to address key challenges in the developing world in a manner that advances our respective interests and objectives. Organizations must be legally able to work and operate in Mexico.

The actors presenting proposals also must demonstrate:

- a) Leadership and expertise in the field of the proposed initiative, and extraordinary ability to convene actors from different backgrounds, connect them, and spark collaboration;
- b) The ability to innovate in the development of models, approaches, and tools that are valued, used, and replicated.

We encourage interested applicants to review the following resources for further detail on CSA's approach:

- USAID Human and Institutional Capacity Development available at:
 - <https://usaidlearninglab.org/library/human-and-institutional-capacity-development>
- USAID, Social Impact & FHI360, "Capacity Development Interventions. A Guide for Program Designers" available at:
 - <https://www.scsglobal.org/resource/capacity-development-interventions-guide-program-designers>
- USAID, "CSO Sustainability Index Methodology", available at:

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- <https://www.usaid.gov/what-we-do/democracy-human-rights-and-governance/cso-sustainability-index-methodology>
- USAID Learning Lab, “Capacity 2.0”, (December 2017) in:
 - <https://usaidlearninglab.org/library/capacity-20>
- USAID, “Local Systems: A Framework for Supporting Sustained Development”, available at:
 - <https://www.usaid.gov/sites/default/files/documents/1870/LocalSystemsFramework.pdf>

CONCEPT PAPER INSTRUCTIONS

Concept papers submitted under this APS must clearly demonstrate a proven track record of system level impact in at least one of the dimensions listed above. Further, concept papers should describe how the organization will use CSA support to advance their current work and strengthen relations and interconnections among key actors, as well as fill the gaps in the system.

Specific Instructions

In order to submit a Concept Paper under this APS, **an applicant must use the [Concept Paper Template](#) and follow the directions and requirements set forth in that template (see Annex I)**. Applicants should only submit the information and materials specified in the template. Concept Papers submitted in any other format will not be accepted or reviewed. Applicants **cannot** submit any alternative document or narrative as a substitute for a Concept Paper. In addition, and as noted in the Concept Paper Template, ***all concept papers MUST be in English or Spanish and submitted electronically via email.***

CONCEPT PAPER EVALUATION CRITERIA AND CONSIDERATIONS

Any Concept Paper submitted under this APS should propose a concept of ongoing innovative and thoughtful projects of capacity development and/or creating strong and sustainable system linkages. In addition, the following criteria and considerations, many of which reflect the characteristics discussed in the Scope of Work above, will be used to review and evaluate concept papers submitted under this APS.

Demonstration of Novel or Creative Ideas related to HICD and Capacity Development

Concept papers shall clearly define how their ongoing projects are proposing new ideas on capacity development and/or creating linkages based on the dimensions listed above and how the outcomes of their work can have a systemic impact. The organizations shall also provide information of the partners and other organizations that are involved in their project if that is the case.

Demonstration of Impact, Feasibility, Sustainability and Scalability

Concept papers must demonstrate how the project contributions will lead to valuable outcomes and results and what those outcomes and results will be.

CONCEPT PAPER REVIEW PROCESS

Once a Concept Paper has been submitted under the CSA APS a technical review will be completed using

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the above criteria. The CSA will notify applicants within 45 calendar days following receipt whether their concept paper will be considered for further discussion.

During the initial review of the Concept Paper, the pertinent CSA technical staff may contact the applicant to clarify elements of the concept paper, request additional information, or discuss other aspects of the proposed work.

The purpose of the initial review and related communication is to determine whether CSA wishes to engage in further alliance development discussions and efforts. The initial review and communication will result in one of three outcomes:

1. A decision to forego further consideration of the alliance proposed in the Concept Paper;
2. A decision to provide the applicant an opportunity to submit a revised Concept Paper (this is very rare); or
3. A decision to engage in more in-depth and specific discussions aimed at funding of the proposed concept.

Note: A decision to engage in more in-depth and specific alliance development discussions is NOT a commitment to funding, nor is it a commitment to requesting a full application. It is simply a decision to move forward in discussion and understanding of the concept paper.

Award Amounts: CSA will not award more than \$100,000.00USD to any specific grantee. Final Awards will be made in Mexican Pesos and based on the exchange rate at the time of the submission. There is no minimum and CSA encourages bidders to submit bids that are appropriate and commensurate with their Scope of Work. Projects and activities are expected to be less than twelve (12) months in duration.

In order to be eligible to receive CSA funding, organizations must meet certain requirements. While these requirements do not have to be met in order to submit a concept paper under the APS, they will need to be met if the applicant is requested to submit a full application. The requirements are:

- Proof of Registration and Ability to Conduct business in Mexico
- Submission of a Pre-Award Survey
- Provide a Valid DUNS Number. If your organization does not have this, you may still submit an application and guidance can be provided as to how to obtain a DUNS number.
- Willingness and ability to submit a complete application within the requested or negotiated timeframe

Cost associated with the development of an application are not eligible for reimbursement or payment under this APS.

It is anticipated that awards under this APS will be issued with a Fixed Amount Award mechanism and applicants will be required to submit a detailed line item budget as well as milestone-based activities. This detail is not required at the concept paper stage; however, applicants should be prepared to provide it should further information be requested. Please also note that any future deliverables produced with CSA support may be used and shared with other organizations.

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ANNEX I: CONCEPT PAPER TEMPLATE

CSA APS Concept Paper Template: Required Format

The main body of the concept paper must not exceed 5 pages and must use standard margins and 12pt Times New Roman font. Submissions are accepted in both English and Spanish. The required supporting information must not exceed 6 pages. The concept paper and supporting information must use the format described below. The concept paper must be submitted to CSA electronically at csaproposals@socialimpact.com.

SECTION I - SUMMARY INFORMATION

- A. Name and Contact Information of Applicant
- B. Title of Proposed Activity
- C. Overall Objective of Activity (1-2 sentences)
- D. Brief description of Activity
- E. Amount of Funding (if any) Requested from CSA \$ _____

SECTION II – DESCRIPTION OF WORK

- A. Identification of the problem to be addressed (1-2 paragraphs)
- B. Description of prospective innovative solutions to the problem
- C. Discussion of desired results to be achieved
- D. Description of clear objectives (SMART)
- E. Anticipated outputs, outcomes, results and impact in the system
- F. How this work will creatively contribute to the CSA project
- G. Monitoring and Evaluation Approach (1-2 paragraphs)

[Sections I and II of the Concept Paper must not exceed five pages.]

SECTION III – SUPPORTING INFORMATION (four pages maximum)

- A. Proposed Estimated Cost and Cost Breakdown (1-page maximum)
This should include a summary budget and potential milestones to be achieved.
- B. Two examples of past performance