

Call for bids: The Latin American Regional Investigative Journalism Project 2022

Overview

- The Combatting Illicit Economies Programme (“CIEP”) is a programme funded through the UK’s Conflict Stability and Security Fund. It partners with countries in Latin America to tackle threats including serious organised crime (from drugs to money laundering to environmental crime), grand corruption and instability/conflict.
- Primarily, the CIEP does this through an illicit economies approach: tackling the corrupt and criminal networks operating transnationally and through a focus on the illicit finances that sustain them.
- The CIEP seeks to maintain a constant understanding of illicit finance mechanisms, threats and modalities in region recognizing that those dynamics are constantly evolving. As part of this approach, we are seeking to partner with a suitable implementer to undertake a regional investigative journalism project over a 3 year period and which focuses on the dynamics of corruption, serious and organized crime and illicit economies impacting Latin America.
- We recognize that illicit finances are a transnational issue and do not respect (indeed, exploit weaknesses at) international borders. For that reason, the project should take a regional approach in terms of following illicit flows around Latin America. However, we expect that journalists or journalist networks within CIEP focus countries – Colombia, Peru, Ecuador, Panama and Venezuela – would be the principal beneficiaries of project funding.

Bid Priorities

- Proposals should demonstrate a clear strategy by which investigative journalism can be used to analyse, provide evidence and raise awareness around the interplay of transparency and corruption dynamics, organised crime and illicit financial flows within Latin America. Successful bidders should outline a series of project outputs that will support the achievement of an outcome or outcomes linked to the strategy.

- As stated, the CIEP is particularly interested in how criminal and illicit financing works cross-region, sustaining illicit economies of concern in Colombia, Peru, Ecuador, Panama and Venezuela. Recognizing the transnational nature of illicit financial flows, projects that can show how they will build inter-regional collaboration (that is to say the promotion of investigative journalism initiatives across multiple countries/territories) will be preferred.
- Bidders are otherwise encouraged to develop their own proposal incorporating innovative approaches to strengthening the capacity of investigative journalism in the region. Nonetheless – and although in no way prescriptive – the following indicative criteria might guide bidders in so far as they are able to:
 1. Demonstrate a track-record of producing transnational investigative journalism around corruption, serious organized crime and illicit economies. A focus on illicit finances, money laundering and corruption is most appropriate to the CIEP's aims, including how these typologies interact with broader illicit economies.
 2. Produce initiatives that will increase coverage (particularly in the CIEP focus countries of Colombia, Peru, Ecuador, Panama and Venezuela) of investigations/stories with the desired thematic focus and, particularly, that are trans-regional in scope;
 3. Demonstrate a proven capacity to assist media outlets/organizations throughout the region in their investigations including editorial, legal, and security advice;
 4. Have awareness of – and a proven capacity to deliver/enhance – the platforms and instruments that will enhance the capacity of journalists in CIEP focus countries to undertake investigative journalism in the core thematic areas and including in editorial, legal, and security matters;
 5. Produce a clear and detailed, multi-year strategy of impact showing how the resourcing of this project would lead to an improvement in the capacity of journalists/journalist organizations to work on the identified themes (particularly trans-regionally/trans-nationally) over the project's lifetime;
 6. Rely upon a pre-existing presence (or proven ability to work) in the CIEP focus countries – Colombia, Peru, Ecuador, Panama and Venezuela. The project need not have a permanent base in each of these countries and can operate from one or more with regional reach; and

7. Gender mainstream activities across the project lifecycle to ensure a gender-sensitive approach that demonstrates compliance with UK Equality Act 2010. The project must be underpinned by a gender analysis that is monitored and updated regularly, and that demonstrably shapes the project's design and implementation, with concrete commitments and action demonstrating the project is suitably privileging gender.
- In terms of the desired impact of the project, again, we invite bidders to suggest their own bespoke approaches to demonstrating the impact of their activity. The CIEP itself operates an 'outcome harvesting' approach to monitoring and evaluating its activity across the region and the successful implementer would be expected to adopt similar processes in collaboration with the programme.
 - The project implementer will need to be (or be aligned to) a not-for-profit or non-governmental organization as required by Official Development Assistance obligations (see below).

Scope and Scale of Project

- The total project bid should not exceed GBP£900,000 over a three-year period (starting April 2022 through to March 2025). We are open to considering different proposals as to how that funding might be split over the three-year period
- Because of the nature of the CIEP's funding, resource cannot be guaranteed beyond one-year windows within the three-year project life-cycle. Break clauses will be included within the documentation governing the grant and a review of activity, impact and general grant compliance will take place at the end of each UK financial year and before funding can be released for additional years.
- The proposal should provide the specific outcomes, outputs and activity the project aims to deliver. Each output should be linked to clear indicators, milestones and target dates. The CIEP welcomes suggestions as to innovative methods of achieving results/impact against the broad themes proposed as focus areas of the project. Details of these methods should be captured in the project proposal and work plan accompanying the bid.
- The bidder should also state in the proposal the scope and scale of the personnel, resource and time required to complete the project, its activities and achieve the outputs.

- The successful bidder would be expected to be able to operate in Spanish and English. For international organizations expecting to sub-contract delivery to regional implementers, a clear strategy for control and management of these sub-contracted relationships will be required. Whilst not a disqualifying criteria, it would be anticipated that a Spanish-speaking management team would be in place (likely in region but possibly remotely) to manage downstream implementation.
- The project should ensure gender mainstreaming, risk mitigation strategy, and conflict sensitivity.

Official Development Assistance

- All expenditures must qualify as ODA. Official Development Assistance (ODA) is a term created by the Development Assistance Committee (DAC) of the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) to measure aid. ODA should be undertaken by the official sector (official agencies, including state and local governments, or their executive agencies) and has promotion of economic development and welfare as the main objective.

Confidentiality

- The Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office seeks no editorial control over the activity produced through the funding of this project, trusting instead the successful implementer to support the development of investigative journalism of interest and relevance to the region whilst upholding relevant legal and integrity standards. Consequently, it is not anticipated that any particular British Embassy nor the British Government itself would be expressly referred or linked to within the individual outputs of the project (i.e. individual articles, events etc).
- In so far as there is scope to make reference to or publicise the British Embassy/British Government's involvement in the project, this will be discussed and agreed with the successful bidder upon award of the grant/contract but usually will be decided on a case by case basis.

Essential skills and competencies of the implementer

- The successful implementer will have:

1. Experience working on the relevant issues identified in this document;

2. Network of contacts in Colombia, Ecuador, Peru, Panama, and Venezuela.
 3. Experience of developing training sessions for journalists and producing transnational investigative pieces in issues related to corruption, illicit economies and illicit finances;
 4. Familiarity with challenges and solutions related to investigative journalism of thematic including specifically illicit finances, money laundering and corruption (but also including how they link to broader illicit economies such as illegal mining, drugs, environmental crime etc);
 5. Proven project and budget management experience, including mitigation of risks to ensure the project is delivered effectively.
 6. Fluent Spanish is essential for operating in the region.
 7. Fluent English is essential for drafting communications and financial reports.
 8. Policy or Programme experience in Latin America.
- Private consultancy firms, consortia of multidisciplinary experts or non-profit organisations can participate in this call for bids.

How to bid: General Guidance on Project Proposals

- Stage 1: Bidders are invited to submit by 15 of May 2022, 11.59pm Bogotá time, to CSSF.CIEP@fco.gov.uk, the following documentation:
 1. Full proposal (template attached)
 2. Activity Based (template attached)
 3. Work plan (bidder's own template)
 4. Risk register (bidder's own template)
- Stage 2: The CIEP Programme technical committee will evaluate all proposals based on the above requirement. A decision is anticipated to take place end of May 2022
- Stage 3: The CIEP Programme team will seek to notify the successful bidder by June 2022 and start project mobilisation / set up afterwards.

Duty of Care

The implementer is responsible for the safety and well-being of their personnel and third parties affected by their activities under this grant agreement, including appropriate security arrangements. They will also be responsible for the provision of suitable security arrangements for their domestic and business property. HMG will share available information with the implementer on security status and developments in country where appropriate.

The implementer is responsible for ensuring appropriate safety and security briefings for all of their personnel working under this contract and ensuring that their personnel register and receive briefing as outlined above. Travel advice is also available on the FCDO website and the implementer must ensure they (and their personnel) are up to date with the latest position.

Tenderers must develop their tender response on the basis of being fully responsible for Duty of care in line with the details provided above. They must confirm in their tender that:

1. They fully accept responsibility for security and duty of care;
2. They understand the potential risks and have the knowledge and experience to develop an effective risk plan; and
3. They have the capability to manage their duty of care responsibilities throughout the life of the contract.

Acceptance of responsibility must be supported with evidence of capability. In providing evidence, Tenderers should consider the following questions:

1. Have you completed an initial assessment of potential risks that demonstrates your knowledge and understanding, and are you satisfied that you understand the risk management implications (not solely relying on information provided by FCDO)?
2. Have you prepared an outline plan that you consider appropriate to manage these risks at this stage (or will you do so if you are awarded the contract) and are you confident/comfortable that you can implement this effectively?
3. Have you an appropriate mechanism in place to monitor risk on a live/on-going basis (or will you put one in place if you are awarded the contract)?
4. Have you ensured or will you ensure that your staff are provided with,

and have access to, suitable equipment and will you ensure that this is reviewed and provided on an on-going basis?

5. Have you appropriate systems in place to manage an emergency/incident if one arises?

Gender sensitivity

The FCDO views gender equality and women's rights as central to promoting peace and stability overseas. This project will take into account any gender-related differences where data is available; consider its contribution to reducing inequality between persons of different gender; and ensure that the project does no harm to any particular gender group.

As such, gender must be fully integrated across all aspects of the intervention. The project design must be underpinned by a gender analysis that is monitored and updated regularly, and that demonstrably shapes the project's design and implementation, with concrete commitments and action demonstrating the project is suitably privileging gender.

The work plan and project monitoring mechanism must set out how the implementer proposes to adopt a gender-sensitive approach that demonstrates compliance with UK Equality Act 2010. The implementer is expected to mainstream gender in all activities of the project by integrating a gender equality perspective that takes into account the needs of all beneficiaries, men, women and LGBTQ+ people.

Conflict sensitivity

The FCDO requires implementers to take a robust approach to conflict sensitivity. This includes going beyond 'do no harm' principles to include maximising opportunities for positive effect on peacebuilding and conflict dynamics, such as improved community relations, enhanced mediation, and good governance

The FCDO also expects implementers to demonstrate an understanding of how the project might affect/is affected by extremist groups and can contribute to addressing drivers and enablers of violent extremism. This requires a well elaborated conflict sensitivity plan, including how conflict sensitivity will be brought into design (including processes, baseline analysis), implementation, monitoring, evaluation and lessons learning, and conflict sensitive communications. It requires the Implementer to have the required team capacities, and an approach to building the capacity of beneficiaries and other stakeholders on conflict sensitivity.

[Review the Call for bids: Local Legal and Criminal Justice Policy Development Capacity in Support of Programming if interested.](#)