



Community Grants Programme Question and Answer Sessions
ISOC Chapter & Individual Member E-Meetings

Date: 18th August 2009
Time: 1030 and 2000 UTC

Attendees:

Connie Kendig (Chair)	ISOC
Anne Lord	ISOC
Gerard Ross	ISOC
Rajnesh Singh	ISOC
Sivasubramanian Muthusay	ISOC India Chennai Chapter
Jean Robert Houtoumey	ISOC Togo Chapter
Rudi Vansnick	ISOC Belgium Chapter
Christine Madsen	ISOC Individual Member (UK)
Prasad Perera	ISOC Individual Member (Sri Lanka)
Gabriel Latjor Ndow	ISOC Individual Member (The Gambia)
Kroopa Shah	ISOC Individual Member (Canada)

ISOC Community Grants Programme: <http://www.isoc.org/isoc/chapters/projects/>

Both sessions were organized as a Q&A forum for members to learn more about the Community Grants Programme.

1. Introduction

There was a quick round of introductions from all those on the call.

2. Quick Overview of Programme

Connie explained that the e-meeting is based on the assumption that attendees have read the information on the web site.

Connie explained that this is the 2nd round of grants for 2009. For each round there is \$100,000 available to give out to awardees. Each round awards up to 10 grants only.

This round is accepting applications on 1 September and closes 30 September. Pre-screening is about 2 weeks long - this is the time that we may come back with questions. Following this is the selection process and final notifications will be around 30 November. It is important to keep this in mind when formulating timelines.

Connie explained the purpose of the programme as documented on the website (please see link above)

One of the new things to the September 2009 cycle, is that the committee is debating to provide 3-4 awards at \$15,000 USD and the remaining awards at \$10,000. ISOC would still be giving out

10 awards total. Regardless of money, ISOC does not fund the entire amount of the project. At least 25% must come from other sources. In-kind or cash contributions are accepted. In-kind may not be from the applicants themselves. The committee is looking to see collaboration between the project applicant and his or her community organizations/partners.

Payment is in two increments. The first payment is sent at the beginning of the project. The 2nd payment is typically paid at the end, but can be made at the midway point subject to documentation: a written report is required mid-way and at the end. At the same time, financial reports are required.

Kroopa asked what information is required on the financial reports, if we are funded? Connie responded that the applicant must submit a completed financial statement (similar to the application budget template) and as many receipts as possible.

Reporting guidelines may be found at <http://www.isoc.org/isoc/chapters/projects/reporting.php>

3. How to Apply

Connie put up a snapshot of the application form and then went through the fields for the application form. She stressed that the Community Grants programme is only available to ISOC members. In addition to filling out the application form, each applicant must complete and upload a Project Description and a Budget.

Templates for both documents can be found on the programme Criteria page at <http://www.isoc.org/isoc/chapters/projects/criteria.php>

In 2008, ISOC added a checklist coversheet to the Project Description to try to ensure that people have submitted all the necessary information in the application form. On the document, there are 2 pages to clarify sources of support. The first page is to clarify any cash you, the applicant, might be providing. The following page is for contributions from funding partners (in-kind or cash). The individuals listed here must sign the Memorandum of Understanding if you receive an award.

Project Description - relates to criteria information on ISOC website.

The budget template was explained. The categories for the template can be changed to fit your needs. The budget is divided into 3 areas: cash from the applicant, a breakdown for other sources of support (in-kind or cash) from project partners, and the final section is to show the breakdown of funds the applicant is requesting from ISOC.

Shiva asked "This application form will be put up on the Community Grants website on 1 September and not meant to be used until then?"

Connie confirmed that, yes the application form would not be available until 1 September but that the two documents that needed to be completed and uploaded (Project Description and Budget) were currently available on the programme Criteria page.

Connie emphasized that the online forms MUST be used to apply. Email submissions will not be accepted.

Rajnish Singh and Rudi Vansnick joined.

Christine asked about the different levels of funding (10K vs. 15K). Does ISOC expect a lot of people to apply at the higher level and would you fund them at the lower level if they were not successful. le.

Is it possible to apply for \$15 but to receive \$10k? Connie responded that since the 15K option is new to the programme that there isn't any indication at this time as to how many people would apply for the higher amount. The committee has the ability to only award a maximum of 4 awards at \$15K so that some successful applicants will receive 10K even though they requested 15K.

Kroopa ask if there a checklist the selection committee will use to establish who receives \$15K and who receives \$10K. Connie responded that since this is a new option for this round, there is no specific checklist. Funding decisions will be based on the project scale, the demonstrated need, the applicant's ability to raise the higher amount of matching funds, and of course the viability of the proposed project.

Connie then opened the floor to questions.

Shiva asked why not \$100,000 awards? Connie explained that the total budget for the programme for 2009 is 200,000, established in 2008. Not everything was spent in the first round of the year (May) so there is more money this round.

Gerard commented that this is a small grants programme. To have grants of up to \$100,000 would required a whole different approach. At the smaller level ISOC is able to support smaller projects with less certainty and more creativity.

Siva commented that the idea of a higher amount requiring greater management challenges is not true; they would be almost the same.

Anne commented that fiduciary responsibility would require much greater accountability and management.

Gabriel asked "How can I verify if I am an ISOC individual member? I get e-mails from ISOC regularly. The local chapter in my country, The Gambia, is not active and I want to apply to the programme." Connie explained that ISOC verifies each applicant's membership information using their internal database and that the programme is open to individual members, not just Chapters.

Prasad asked if there was a required "duration" for the projects. Connie replied that there was not a required duration but that approximately 80% of the projects tend to be in the 6-12 month range.

Connie explained that successful applications have been well documented: the matching funds are clearly documented, who the sources are, and how those funds will be used. A strong dissemination plan is also important. You can demonstrate a strong need for the project in the benefiting community and there is a reasonable and workable timeline.

Shiva described a project in India - a "village knowledge centre" - 100 local villages having computers. He asked how to present this as a Community Grants project. Connie clarified that the project is only open to members, so the chapter could apply for funds. The selection committee would be more comfortable if the chapter would take the lead on the project.

Prasad queried about the 25% from other sources: "Can it be from other companies or from individuals?" Connie clarified that one of the goals of the 25% matching funding is to encourage chapters or individual members to have a relationship with a community organization through in-kind or cash and to create a partnership.

Kroopa asked whether the 25% must be from partner organizations or can they be from the applicant? Connie explained that though cash from the applicant is accepted, preference is given to those that meet the requirement through in-kind or cash contributions from partners; the intent of the matching

funds requirement is for the applicant to establish partnerships and collaborate with organizations in his or her community.

Prasad: The goal is to nurture the communities that ISOC members and chapters live in.

Rudi asked if there would be in the future any way that organizational members could support chapters' funding. In the past there has been no collaboration, but Connie commented that this would be considered.

Siva commented that organizational members in India could contribute in-kind.

Connie invited further questions.

Gabriel asked for information on where past projects were funded. This information is available at:

<http://www.isoc.org/isoc/chapters/projects/awards.php>

Rudi asked if we could post more information on the chapter wiki about lessons learnt etc. The information would come from chapters. Connie said that she could ask a few chapters to provide feedback.

Connie reminded everyone of the next round opening on the 1st September and closing 30 September.

Thanks were extended to everyone on the call.

Any further questions or comments may be sent to projects@isoc.org.