

Program title: Chapter/Member Project Funding for 2007

Abstract: ISOC Chapter/Member Project Funding Program for 2007.

Description: This program was begun by ISOC in 2005 and has now been in existence for two years.

In 2005 the Program had authority to grant funding of up to US\$150,000 in individual project increments of not more than US\$10,000. The Spring 2005 round saw twenty five applicants with seven eventually receiving awards that totaled US\$64,300. The Fall 2005 round saw thirty seven applicants and resulted in seven awards totaling US\$63,650 for the yearly total of awards coming to US\$127,950 out of the US\$150,000 available.

In 2006 the Program had authority to grant funding of up to US\$200,000 with the same US\$10,000 individual project cap. The Spring 2006 round saw twenty seven applicants overall but seven of them were outside our guidelines and did not qualify for review. Of the remaining ones the Committee funded four for a total of US\$37,450. The Fall Round of 2006 is currently underway with applications closing this past October 17th. There are eighteen applications and David McAuley, as Committee Chairman, has estimated that this round has more applications that appear likely to achieve funding than the Spring Round of 2006 – he estimates that the sum total of the Spring and Fall Round of 2006 will be funded at approximately US\$166,000. This is an estimate and subject to full committee input that will be concluded by mid-November.

The Project Funding website is located at: <http://www.isoc.org/isoc/chapters/projects/>

In nearly two years of existence the Program has been served by Committee Members comprised of staff and Board Members. The Committee Chair has solicited comments from those who have served on the Committee with a view to suggesting modifications or other comments to making the Program more effective.

In general comments, all members who have served on the Committee support its existence and continuation. We have experienced some difficulty in some applications in cases where we were evenly split on the merits of the application or regarding the nature of the application but we have been able to work through these and achieve a result that we believe has in all cases been consistent with the Program goals and requirements.

In addition, some members have desired more specific guidance from the Board with respect to the nature of projects to be funded (for example, we have received a number of applications to fund events such as an annual symposium on an Internet related subject and we have struggled with the merits of considering an event as a project). We have also grappled with two other questions: should we insist on 50% matching funds from another source (we currently indicate that we 'expect' that to be the case and the Committee has interpreted that to mean best efforts to achieve this), and may we fund projects where there will be payments for labor in the project (we have no specific guidelines on the latter issue).

Here are two tables showing input by various Committee members:

Three Specific Questions – views of certain Committee Members

Issue	Veni Markovski	Rosa Delgado	Patrick Vande Walle	Jim Galvin	Matthew Shears	Mirjam Kuehne	David McAuley
1. Should 'events' be funded as projects?	It depends. Approach ISOC separately for these kinds of funding. If there are no such funds available then they may be considered here.	Yes for first time events that need help getting started	ISOC should be open to this but in another way than project funding. Events are what many chapters are best at.	No. ISOC should do this but not through the Project Funding vehicle	Not unless ISOC has more than a logo presence. ISOC should somehow gain measurably from the funding of any project. Agree that this could be done through alternative mechanisms.	In general No. Don't think this is the right mechanism. There might be exceptions with fruitful, visible collaboration between ISOC and event organizers (see Matthew).	Yes in some cases. The Committee should have general guidance but should be able to fund events that they see as appropriate.
2. Must we insist on matching funds?	Be flexible here – these may not be available in some countries.	Nice to have but flexibility to fund worthwhile efforts more important	There are good reasons pro and con. Undecided.	Qualified yes. They may be 'in-kind'. Exceptions on case by case basis.	No. Some start up situations may not have the luxury of matching funds. "Mature" projects should have matching funding requirements.	In general, Yes. This shows efforts and 'seriousness' of the project. Flexibility on case by case basis is good.	Be flexible and recognize that a good idea might come our way first. Committee preference for such validation but not required.
3. May we pay for Labor in funding projects?	Yes. In many countries there is no other way to get the work done and it is fair.	Why not? In order to add professionalism to the projects ISOC should allow to pay for labor but, it shouldn't exceed 30% of the total fund. Salaries in developing countries are rather low and this could promote some job creation in these areas of the world.	Definitely yes. Volunteer work goes only so far and we want these to be looking professional.	No – ISOC founded on principle of volunteerism. Expenses are ok but not charges for labor.	Aren't we paying for labor one way or another? It's the overall fit, impact and suitability of the project that is more important. Volunteerism only goes so far.	I am undecided, but tend to say no. I don't think this should be a job-creation mechanism.	Yes so long as reasonable under the circumstances. Not meant to fund a top-level 'job'.

Other Comments/suggestions by Committee Members (Original comment noted as 'POINT' and reactions included):

Issue	Veni Markovski	Rosa Delgado	Patrick Vande Walle	Jim Galvin	Matthew Shears	Mirjam Kuehne	David McAuley
Languages		POINT: Use additional languages and arrange translations (at least add Spanish and French)					Agree
Principle	Agree with Jim on this			POINT: Use principle that each project be funded unless there is a reason not to do so	Disagree. Each project should meet a clear set of criteria otherwise there is no basis for comparison	Agree with Matthew	Disagree, prefer Committee to exercise best judgment on case by case basis.
Output	Agree with Jim on this			POINT: A project should produce something (not just a summary report) – some kind of legacy	Agree with Jim.	Agree with Jim	
Recurring costs	Agree to a point – that no further ISOC funding be needed.			POINT: A project should not have recurring costs – should be one-off	Disagree. Case-by-case basis – if a project leads to a relevant ongoing program we may want to consider further funding,	Agree with Matthew, but there needs to be a clear end to ISOC funding or a mechanism to make it self-funded eventually.	Agree with Matthew
General					POINT: Boost the funding to 500K. Outsource management, project evaluation and monitoring. Professionalize	Evaluation and follow-up needs to be done more professionally, maybe even outsourced	Not sure but if this were to be done suggest it be done in 2008. Outsourced management takes a lot of the funds

					further. Make into a truly substantive program or revisit completely.		away from the chapters. But inability to audit is a concern. Suggest it stay at this level in 2007 and be re-evaluated in 2007.
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Considering all of this input the Committee Chair makes the following observations. In summary, it is the opinion of the Committee Chair that this Program has started well and will benefit from the additional Chapter/Member resources to be available to ISOC in 2007 and beyond. Further, that like any small grants program this one will continue to be 'tuned' so as to develop into a consistently sound and beneficial program. Thus the input from the Committee Members will be considered and acted upon as reasonably possible. At bottom this program puts real resources in the hands of local and regional ISOC members to further ISOC's mission and goals. It has been well served by the Committee members who have dedicated considerable thought and insight into this process and for which the Committee Chair is quite grateful.

Involvement of and benefit to ISOC community: This program is self-evidently of, and for the benefit of, the entire ISOC community.

Partners: None although there will be matching funds 'partners' at the project level in most cases.

Sponsors: None at present.

Measurable goals: Projects will be reporting progress to their application.

Risks: Some projects will likely be funded that do not achieve their aim. In a program such as this that appears to be an expected risk that will be managed by close vetting by the Committee prior to award (we do not have the resources to do audits and thus this pre-award stage is the most important in this respect) and by staging payment in at least two installments where the second payment depends on progress reported.

Why ISOC and not someone else: This is a unique ISOC Program for its chapters and members to have access to resources to further ISOC's mission and goals on a local/regional basis.

Costs: Budget line item of US\$200,000 in FY2007 (this is a 'not-to-exceed' number and actual funding may be less depending on the quality/quantity of applications).

Impact in 2007 Budget: This is a good program and is being embedded into operations effective with this budget. The US\$200,000 Program level in 2007 is being approved as part of the budget process.