



Indirect Cost Policy

Indirect Cost Policy

Definitions

The purpose of this policy is to give guidance to certain expenses that are directly attributable to project outcomes and outputs as direct costs and expenses associated with the general running of the business as indirect costs. Greater specificity in each category is described below.

Direct Costs

Direct costs are the expenses required to execute a grant that are directly attributable and can be reasonably allocated to the project. Program staff salaries, travel expenses, materials, and consultants required to execute the grant are examples. Costs that would not be incurred if the grant did not exist are often indicative of direct costs.

Indirect Costs

Indirect costs are general overhead and administration expenses that support the entire operations of a grantee and that may be shared across projects. Examples include facilities expenses, e.g. rent, utilities, equipment for the grantee's headquarters, and associated information systems and support and administrative staff such as HR, general finance, accounting, IT, and legal. Additional examples and details are included in Annex A. Expenses that would be incurred regardless of whether the grant is funded are often indicative of indirect costs. While these costs may not be directly attributable to a project, they are real and necessary to operate as an organization.

Indirect Cost Rate

Indirect Cost Rate = Budgeted Indirect costs / Budgeted Total Direct Costs (e.g. personnel, sub-awards, supplies, equipment, etc.)

The indirect cost rate proposed in the budget should not exceed the grantee's organizational rate (when defined by the same terms.)

While the definitions above are general guidance for all grants, the requirements and activities of each project should be considered when determining direct and indirect costs. We review budget assumptions and cost categorizations on a grant-by-grant basis, and the treatment of specific costs in one grant should not be considered precedent-setting for other grants.

Maximum Indirect Cost Rates

The rates provided above are the maximum rates allowed under the GCNg's policy. A grantee or contractor with an actual indirect cost rate lower than the maximum rate provided above should not increase the funding request to the maximum allowed. The intent is to sufficiently fund actual costs, not to generate financial surpluses for grantees.

The indirect cost rate awarded in a grant budget may vary up to the maximum percentages depending on factors including, but not limited to, the type of project, level of administrative effort required, cost structure of the grantee, overall grant size, and extent of sub-awards or commodity purchases.

Example 1:

A primary grantee will receive grant funds that will be largely sub-granted to other organizations. The foundation may limit indirect costs the primary grantee receives on the sub-granted funds depending on the level of effort required to manage the sub-awards. The overall effective indirect cost rate awarded to the primary grantee may therefore be less than the maximum allowable rate.

Example 2:

A material portion of a project budget is allocated for commodity purchases. A lower overall effective indirect cost rate may be negotiated to remove commodity cost from the indirect cost calculation.

Example 3:

An NGO grantee has an organizational actual indirect cost rate of 8%, i.e., for every N1,000 indirect costs, it has N80 in indirect costs. Rather than defaulting to the maximum rate of 15% in the grant proposal, 8% should be proposed in the grant budget.

Maximum Indirect Cost Rates and limitations apply to both the primary applicant organization and any sub-grantees. Each respective organization may receive indirect costs UP TO the rate applicable to their organization type.

For example: If a Nigerian university is the primary grantee and has an international nonprofit organization sub-grantee, the Nigerian university is eligible to receive up to a 10% indirect cost rate, while the international organization is eligible to receive up to a 15% rate.

We seek consistency across funding mechanisms and thus we reserve the right to apply this philosophy and principles to contracts. For-profit entities may propose indirect costs as a percentage from 0% up to 15% to the extent that an adequate explanation of the cost is provided. We reserve the right to request substantiation of any grantee's indirect cost rate.

APPENDIX A:

The following is a list of common direct and indirect costs. We recognize that there are categories of cost that can be considered either direct or indirect depending on grantee accounting practices and the nature of the cost relative to the project purpose.

It is the responsibility of grantees to submit proposal materials that allow us to understand the link between project outcomes and direct costs. We also expect that grant proposals speak to what is covered by the requested indirect cost rate.

EXAMPLES OF COMMON DIRECT AND INDIRECT COSTS

	DIRECT COSTS: The following may be included as direct costs if DIRECTLY ATTRIBUTABLE and REASONABLY ALLOCABLE to and specifically required to execute the project	INDIRECT COSTS: The following may be included as indirect costs if REASONABLY ALLOCABLE the project and not included as a direct cost
Personnel	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Salaries and wages of employees working directly on the project. Fringe benefits for employees These costs should be substantiated by time-keeping and/or an allocation methodology and can include directly attributable and allocable project management and support, project legal or accounting functions (substantiated by timekeeping) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Personnel cost of general management and administrative support personnel, such as executive management (CEO, COO, CFO, etc.) or central operational functions (Accounting, HR, IT, Legal, etc.)
Travel	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Travel expenses for trips directly needed to deliver the project 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Travel not directly related to the project
Consultants	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Contracted staff working directly on the project 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Contracted staff for general administrative functions, such as accounting or audits
Equipment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Costs for equipment directly used by the project (can include purchase/replacement, operation, maintenance; to be pro-rated in case of partial use) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Costs for equipment or depreciation on equipment¹ incurred by central operational functions
Other Direct Costs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Allocable facilities, utilities, and communications expenses that are required to execute the project, such as field clinics, laboratories, project office costs Project-specific supplies 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Costs for facilities, utilities, and communications associated with central operational functions such as university headquarters, U.S. office of an international NGO, back office of a biotech firm
Sub-awards	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Grants or contracts with other organizations that directly contribute to the project outcomes 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Outsourced general operating activities, such as accounting, audits, and IT support

¹ If depreciation is included in the indirect cost pool, the acquisition cost used for computing depreciation must exclude any portion of the cost donated by the foundation or another funder.