

**Department of State – Embassy of the United States, Dushanbe, Tajikistan
Notice of Funding Opportunity**

Program Office:	Public Affairs Section, U.S. Embassy, Dushanbe
Funding Opportunity Title:	Workshop for Adventure Tourism Operators and Guides
Announcement Type:	Grant or Cooperative Agreement
Funding Opportunity Number:	SCAXX-19-XX-XXX-TBD
Deadline for Applications:	March 15, 2020 (11:59 p.m. U.S. Eastern time)
CFDA:	19.040 - Public Diplomacy Programs

CONTACT INFORMATION

- A) For questions relating to Grants.gov, please call the Grants.gov Contact Center at 1-800-518-4726.
- B) For assistance with the requirements of this solicitation, contact GrantProposalsDushanbe@state.gov

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A. PROGRAM DESCRIPTION

The U.S. Embassy Dushanbe Public Affairs Section (PAS) of the U.S. Department of State is pleased to announce funding is available through the Embassy's Public Diplomacy Grants program. Applications may be submitted at any time for consideration before the closing date of **March 15, 2020**.

Problem Statement: Many foreign adventure tourists, including Americans, seek opportunities to explore a country's beautiful scenery while still having authentic cultural experiences. These tourists also expect to find high-capacity guides with local cultural knowledge, emergency medical capabilities, and well-honed customer service skills. While Tajikistan has a wealth of natural resources that make it an ideal destination for these types of tourists, an underdeveloped infrastructure and perceived security concerns have historically inhibited the country's tourism industry. In order to support the development of Tajikistan's tourism industry, PAS aims to build the capacity of tour operators and guides through development of industry-wide professional standards and mentorship from American experts.

Goal: Build the Tajik tourism economy by increasing the capacity of Tajik tour companies to attract American adventure tourists.

Objectives:

Objective 1: Increase awareness of Tajikistan as a desirable adventure tourism destination

Outcome 1.1: Increase the number of partnerships between Tajik and American tour companies

Outcome 1.2: Increase the number of tour operators catering to foreign clients

Objective 2: Increase the quality of adventure guides' knowledge and training

Outcome 2.1: Develop a set of professional training standards regarding subject matter knowledge and skills for guides

Outcome 2.2: Develop a training course to help guides learn soft skills for interacting with the target tourist audience and understanding expectations of U.S. clients

Participants and Audiences: For the purposes of this grant, "participants" are defined as adventure tour operators and guides who are citizens of Tajikistan and working within Tajikistan.

Adventure tourism focuses on outdoor experiences such as hiking, biking, mountaineering, or rafting.

Project Activities: Activities are not limited strictly to workshops and PAS Dushanbe is open to a variety of proposed activities that will directly achieve the outcomes and contribute to the objectives above. Regardless of the proposed activities they should include, at minimum the following: one or more workshops for tour operators, led by a U.S.-based facilitator, in order to develop a network of Tajikistan adventure tour operators and develop a set of professional standards for guides. The workshops will take place in either Dushanbe, Khujand, Panjakent, and other locations depending on implementer capacity. Each workshop should last one week and involve at least 20 tour operators.

Proposals will also include one or more workshops for tour guides, led by a U.S.-based trainer, in order to develop professionalism skills in first aid, cultural knowledge, storytelling, and customer service. The workshops will take place in either Dushanbe, Khujand, Panjakent, and other locations depending on implementer capacity. Each workshop should last one week and involve at least 20 tour guides.

Other activities as determined by the implementer.

Grantee Responsibilities: The grantee will be responsible for all logistics, including, recruitment of American experts to serve as instructors and mentors for the workshops. The program itself should include sessions for follow-up activities, program materials, social media and technical support. The grantee will cover all the costs for the lodging, meals, airfare, visas, emergency health insurance, and honoraria for the American trainers selected to provide the workshops. The grantee will also be responsible to follow up after the workshops and to publish or repost videos and stories produced by the participants on a website section or Facebook page created for the program. Via this online presence, the grantee and participants will be asked to provide feedback on the stories as they are created. The final stories that are produced will be available to be posted on the Embassy's social media streams to leverage the potential reach. Finally, the Facebook page or website will also be used to create a virtual community between all the participants and pave the way to future collaboration.

All proposals should:

- Address how the project will contribute to one or more of the objectives listed above;
- Enumerate specific outputs and outcomes to be achieved by the end of the grant period, as well as information on when results will be reported to the Public Affairs Section – all outputs should align directly with the outcomes in this NOFO
- Describe involvement of American participants, expert/s, organization/s, or institution/s;
- Clearly specify the audiences to be reached and the geographic locations of program activities. Programs proposed in multiple locations should explain how that will be accomplished. The grantee must demonstrate capacity to implement activities in locations and with audiences proposed;
- Describe how elements of the project will have a multiplier effect and be sustainable beyond the life of the grant;
- Include a traditional and/or social media plan for marketing or advertising program activities and outcomes;

- Demonstrate competency to manage all financial and oversight aspects of the project, including participant costs and transparent arrangements of sub-grant relationships with partner organizations, if applicable.
- Clearly detailed logistics and travel plan including roundtrip economy air tickets, emergency health insurance and accommodation for the participants.
- Clearly detailed logistics and travel plan including roundtrip economy air tickets, emergency health insurance and accommodation for the trainers.
- Plan to solicit follow up with participants 3 months after the program to see how/if participants apply the lessons learned from the training

This program will be funded under the appropriate Public Diplomacy authorization. All programming is subject to the statutory limitations of the funding determined.

Applicants must also demonstrate competency to manage all financial aspects of the project, including participant costs and transparent arrangements of sub-grant relationships with partner organizations, if applicable.

B. FEDERAL AWARD INFORMATION

Funding Instrument Type: Cooperative Agreement

Anticipated period of performance: 5-6 months

Number of awards anticipated: 1

Floor of Individual Award Amounts: \$15,000

Ceiling of Individual Award Amounts: \$25,000

The U.S. Embassy Dushanbe Public Affairs Section reserves the right to award less or more than the funds described in the absence of worthy applications or under such other circumstances as it may deem to be in the best interest of the U.S. Government.

Project and Budget Periods: The Public Affairs Section will entertain applications for continuation grants funded under these awards, beyond the initial budget period, on a noncompetitive basis, subject to availability of funds, satisfactory progress of the program, and a determination that continued funding would be in the best interest of the U.S. Department of State.

C. ELIGIBILITY INFORMATION

The U.S. Embassy Dushanbe Public Affairs Section encourages applications from **U.S. and Tajik** registered not-for-profit, civil society/non-governmental organizations, and educational institutions with at least **two years** of programming experience. This experience should be documented in the organization's proposal. A copy of the organization's registration should be provided with the proposal application. **U.S.-based organizations should submit a copy of their IRS determination letter. Tajikistan-based organizations should submit a copy of their certificate of registration from the appropriate government organization.**

Cost Sharing or Matching

Inclusion of cost share is not a requirement of this opportunity.

Other Eligibility Requirements

In order to be eligible to receive an award, all organizations must have a unique entity identifier (Data Universal Numbering System/DUNS number from Dun & Bradstreet), as well as a valid registration on www.SAM.gov.

D. APPLICATION AND SUBMISSION INFORMATION

Application Deadline

All applications must be received by March, 15, 2020 at 11:59 p.m. U.S. Eastern Time. For the purposes of determining if an award is submitted on time, PAS will utilize the time-stamp provided by Grants.gov or the email time-stamp if submitted via email. This deadline is firm and is not a rolling deadline. If organizations fail to meet the deadline noted above their application will be considered ineligible and will not be considered for funding.

Please follow all instructions below carefully. Proposals that do not meet the requirements of this announcement will not be considered.

Application Submission Process: There are two submissions methods available to applicants. Applicants may submit their application using Submission Method A **or** Submission Method B outlined below.

- **Submission Method A:** Submitting all application materials directly to the following email address: GrantProposalsDushanbe@state.gov. Applicants opting to submit applications via email to GrantProposalsDushanbe@state.gov **must** include the Funding Opportunity Title and Funding Opportunity Number in the subject line of the email. **Applications must be submitted in English language only with the budget calculated in USD currency.**
- **Submission Method B:** Submitting all application materials through Grants.gov. For those opting to apply through Grants.gov, thorough instructions on the application process are available at <http://www.grants.gov>. For questions relating to Grants.gov, please call the Grants.gov Contact Center at 1-800-518-4726 or go to <https://www.grants.gov/support.html>. Please note that GrantProposalsDushanbe@state.gov is unable to assist with technical questions or problems applicants experience with Grants.gov.

Applicants utilizing Grants.gov must register with Grants.gov prior to submitting an application. **Registering with Grants.gov is a one-time process; however, it could take as long as two weeks to have the registration validated and confirmed. Please begin the registration process immediately to ensure that the process is completed well in advance of the deadline for applications.** Until that process is complete, you will not be issued a user password for Grants.gov, which is required for application submission.

There are four steps that you must complete before you are able to register:

1. **Step 1:** Apply for a DUNS number and an NCAGE number (these can be completed simultaneously)
 - a. **DUNS application:** Organizations must have a Data Universal Numbering System (DUNS) number from Dun & Bradstreet, if your organization does not have one already, you may obtain one by calling 1-866-705-5711 or visiting <http://fedgov.dnb.com/webform>
 - b. **NCAGE application:** Application page here (but need to click magnifying glass and then scroll down to click new registration)
<https://eportal.nspa.nato.int/AC135Public/scage/CageList.aspx>
 - i. Instructions for the NCAGE application process:<https://eportal.nspa.nato.int/AC135Public/Docs/US%20Instructions%20for%20NSPA%20NCAGE.pdf>
 1. For help from within the U.S., call 1-888-227-2423
 2. For help from outside the U.S., call 1-269-961-7766
 - ii. Email NCAGE@dliis.dla.mil for any problems in getting an NCAGE code. After receiving the NCAGE Code, proceed to register in SAM by logging onto: <https://www.sam.gov/>
2. **Step 2:** Once DUNS and NCAGE are obtained, continue to SAM registration on www.SAM.gov
3. **Step 3:** Once SAM registration is confirmed, continue to Grants.gov organization registration <http://www.grants.gov/web/grants/applicants/organization-registration.html>. Organizations must maintain an active SAM registration (www.SAM.gov) with current information at all times during which they have an active Federal award or an application under consideration by a Federal awarding agency. SAM registration must be renewed annually. Given the volume of applications, review may take up to 90 days, and we are unable to individually confirm receipt of proposals.
4. **Step 4:** Register yourself as an Authorized Organization Representative (AOR); and be authorized as an AOR by your organization on www.grants.gov

For more information, go to www.grants.gov. Please note that your SAM registration must be annually renewed. Failure to renew your SAM registration may prohibit submission of a grant application through Grants.gov.

Proof of Submission

Applicants will receive an acknowledgement of receipt and a tracking number from Grants.gov with the successful transmission of their application. When PAS successfully retrieves the application from Grants.gov and acknowledges the download of submissions, Grants.gov will provide an electronic acknowledgment of receipt to the email address of the Authorized Organization Representative (AOR).

If the applicant is submitting an application via email to GrantProposalsDushanbe@state.gov, they can expect a confirmation of receipt from PAS within three days. If the applicant does not receive an email confirmation in that time, they should contact GrantProposalsDushanbe@state.gov to ensure the proposal was received.

Technical Requirements

Address to Request Application Package

This Annual Program Statement (APS) document and any amendments can be found at www.grants.gov (search by Opportunity Number).

Please follow all instructions below carefully. Proposals that do not meet the requirements of this announcement or fail to comply with the stated requirements will be ineligible.

Content of Application

Please ensure:

- The proposal clearly addresses the goals and objectives of this funding opportunity
- All documents are in English
- All budgets are in U.S. dollars
- All pages are numbered
- All documents are formatted to 8 ½ x 11 paper, and

All Microsoft Word documents are single-spaced, 12 point Times New Roman font, with a minimum of 1-inch margins.

The following documents are required:

1. **Mandatory application forms:** Standard Forms 424 are available, along with guidance for completing these forms, at: <http://www.grants.gov/web/grants/forms.html> under the heading, “SF-424 Family.”
 - a. **SF-424** (*Application for Federal Assistance – organizations*)
 - b. **SF424A** (*Budget Information for Non-Construction programs*)
 - c. **SF424B** (*Assurances for Non-Construction programs*)
2. **Summary Page:** Cover sheet stating the applicant name and organization, contact information, proposal date, project title, project period proposed start and end date, and brief purpose of the project.
3. **Proposal (30 pages maximum):** The proposal should contain sufficient information that anyone not familiar with it would understand exactly what the applicant wants to do. You may use your own proposal format, but it must include all the items below.
 - a. **Proposal Summary:** Short narrative that outlines the proposed project, including project objectives and anticipated impact.
 - b. **Introduction to the Organization or Individual Applying:** A description of past and present operations, showing ability to carry out the project, including information on all previous grants from the U.S. Embassy and/or U.S. government agencies.
 - c. **Problem Statement:** Clear, concise and well-supported statement of the problem to be addressed and why the proposed project is needed
 - d. **Project Goals and Objectives:** The “goals” describe what the project is intended to achieve. The “objectives” refer to the intermediate accomplishments on the way to the goals. These should be achievable and measurable.
 - e. **Project Activities:** Describe the project activities and how they will help achieve the objectives.

- f. **Program Methods and Design:** A description of how the project is expected to work to solve the stated problem and achieve the goal. Include a logic model as appropriate
 - g. **Proposed Project Schedule and Timeline:** The proposed timeline for the project activities. Include the dates, times, and locations of planned activities and events
 - h. **Key Personnel:** Names, titles, roles and experience/qualifications of key personnel involved in the project. What proportion of their time will be used in support of this project?
 - i. **Project Partners:** List the names and type of involvement of key partner organizations and sub-awardees
 - j. **Project Monitoring and Evaluation Plan:** The Monitoring and Evaluation component of the proposal will outline in detail how the proposal's activities will advance the program's goals and objectives (listed above). A strong proposal will include:
 - i. Any outcomes the grantee expects to occur because of their program. Outcomes could include: change in knowledge, awareness, and attitudes; improved quality of services; increased capacity at a school, group; etc. Proposals should also include how the grantee will know those outcomes are occurring (surveys, interviews, observations, etc.)
 - 1. For example: If the program expects that a teacher-training program will improve the skills of a teacher, a proposal may explain the skills the teacher would gain and plan to perform a pre and post survey that would show a change in understanding due to the program.
 - ii. A schedule of when grant activities will occur (such as participant selection, workshops, travel, lectures, trainings, etc.), and when the grantee will check the grant's progress to know how it is performing. Results of those checks are expected to be reported in the quarterly reports.
 - iii. A plan to include the grantee's reflection of how their program, as a whole, contributed to the program's goals. As applicable, a strong final report would be supported by success stories, behaviors changed, lessons learned, and results obtained.
 - k. **Future Funding or Sustainability:** Applicant's plan for continuing the program beyond the grant period, or the availability of other resources, if applicable.
4. **Budget Justification Narrative:** Applicants must submit a detailed budget and budget narrative justification utilizing the template provided. Line item expenditures should be listed in the greatest possible detail. Personnel salaries should define the percentage of time each position will allocate to the project and the rate of pay. Budgets shall be submitted in U.S. dollars and final grant agreements will be conducted in U.S. dollars.
5. **Organization Information**
- a. **Applicant Organization Survey:** Applicants must complete and submit the survey (Attachment 1).

- b. A copy of the organization's registration should be provided with the proposal application. U.S.-based organizations should submit a copy of their IRS determination letter. Tajikistan-based organizations should submit a copy of their certificate of registration from the appropriate government organization.

6. Attachments:

- a. 1-page CV or resume of key personnel who are proposed for the project
- b. Letters of support should be included for sub-awardees or other partners. The letters must identify the type of relationship to be entered into (formal or informal), the roles and responsibilities of each partner in relation to the proposed project activities, and the expected result of the partnership. The individual letters cannot exceed 1 page in length.
- c. If your organization has a NICRA and includes NICRA charges in the budget, your latest NICRA should be included as a PDF file.
- d. Official permission letters, if required for project activities

Please note:

- 1. Other items **NOT** required/requested for submission, but which *may* be requested if your application is approved for funding include:
 - a. Copies of an organization or program audit within the last two (2) years
 - b. Copies of relevant human resources, financial, or procurement policies
 - c. Copies of other relevant organizational policies or documentation that would help the Department determine your organization's capacity to manage a federal grant award overseas.
- 2. The Embassy reserves the right to request any additional programmatic and/or financial information regarding the proposal.

Applications are accepted in English only, and final grant agreements will be concluded in English.

Funding Restrictions

- 1. **Construction:** This award does not allow for construction activities or costs.
- 2. **Pre-award Costs:** Pre-award costs are not an allowable expense for this funding opportunity.
- 3. **Program Activities:** Activities that are not typically funded include, but are not limited to:
 - a. profit-generating projects;
 - b. scholarships to support educational opportunities or study for individuals*;
 - c. paying to complete activities begun with other funds;
 - d. financial support for fundraising or fund development projects;
 - e. projects that are inherently political in nature or that contain the appearance of partisanship/support to an individual or single party in electoral campaigns;
 - f. political party and lobbying activities;
 - g. projects that support specific religious activities; and,

- h. microloans/microfinance projects, distribution of seed money for enterprises, and legal/land rights-focused programs are not allowable.

*Individuals interested in educational exchange or study opportunities in the United States should visit <https://tj.usembassy.gov/education-culture/> for more information on available programs.

E. REVIEW AND SELECTION PROCESS

Criteria

Each application will be evaluated and rated on the basis of the evaluation criteria outlined below.

- **Quality and Feasibility of the Program Idea – 25 points:** The program idea should be well developed, with sufficient detail about how project activities will be carried out. The proposals should demonstrate originality and outline clear, achievable objectives. The proposal includes a reasonable implementation timeline. The project scope is appropriate and clearly defined.
- **Organizational Capacity and Record on Previous Grants – 25 points:**
 - The organization has expertise in the subject area and demonstrates the ability to perform the proposed activities.
 - The organization demonstrates capacity for successful planning and responsible fiscal management. This includes a financial management system and a bank account.
 - Applicants who have received grant funds previously have been compliant with applicable rules and regulations.
 - Where partners are described, the applicant details each partner's respective role and provides curriculum vitae (CVs) for persons responsible for the project and financial administration. Proposed personnel, institutional resources, and partners are adequate and appropriate
- **Project Planning/Ability to Achieve Objectives – 15 points:** The project plan is well developed, with sufficient detail about how activities will be carried out. The proposal specifies target audiences, participant recruitment, and geographic areas of implementation. The proposal outlines clear, achievable objectives. The proposal includes a reasonable implementation timeline. The project scope is appropriate and clearly defined.
- **Budget – 10 points:** The budget and narrative justification are sufficiently detailed. Costs are reasonable in relation to the proposed activities and anticipated results. The budget is realistic, accounting for all necessary expenses to achieve proposed activities. The results and proposed outcomes justify the total cost of the project. Budget items are reasonable, allowable, and allocable.
- **Monitoring and Evaluation – 10 points:** The Monitoring and Evaluation component of the proposal should outline in detail how the proposal's activities will advance the program's goals and objectives. A strong proposal will include the following:
 - Any outputs and outcomes the grantee expects to occur because of their program. Outputs are direct actions or products that result from program activities, such as articles written, films shown, items produced, people trained, etc. Outcomes are

program results such as: change in knowledge, awareness, and attitudes; improved quality of services; increased capacity at a school, group; etc.

- How the grantee will know those outputs and outcomes are occurring (surveys, interviews, observations, success stories, etc.). For example: If the program expects that a teacher-training program will improve the skills of a teacher, a proposal may explain the skills the teacher would gain and plan to perform a pre- and post-survey that would show a change in understanding as a result of the program. The proposal may also include a plan to collect teacher's stories regarding how program participation affected them.
 - A schedule of when grant activities will occur (such as participant selection, workshops, travel, lectures, trainings, etc.) and when the grantee will check the grant's progress to know how it is performing. Results of those checks should be reported in the quarterly reports.
 - A plan to include the grantee's reflection of how their program, as a whole, contributed to the program's goals and objectives. As applicable, a strong final report would be supported by qualitative information such as success stories, behaviors changed, lessons learned, and results obtained.
- **Sustainability – 15 points:** Project activities will continue to have positive impact after the end of the project.

F. FEDERAL AWARD ADMINISTRATION INFORMATION

Federal Award Notices

The grant award or cooperative agreement will be written, signed, awarded, and administered by the Grants Officer. The assistance award agreement is the authorizing document and it will be provided to the recipient for review and signature by email. The recipient may only start incurring project expenses beginning on the start date shown on the grant award document signed by the Grants Officer.

If a proposal is selected for funding, the Department of State has no obligation to provide any additional future funding. Renewal of an award to increase funding or extend the period of performance is at the discretion of the Department of State.

The Federal government is not obligated to make any Federal award as a result of the announcement. Issuance of this NOFO does not constitute an award commitment on the part of the U.S. government, nor does it commit the U.S. government to pay for costs incurred in the preparation and submission of proposals. Further, the U.S. government reserves the right to reject any or all proposals received. The U.S. government also reserves the right to make an award in excess of the award ceiling.

Administrative and National Policy Requirements

Terms and Conditions: Before submitting an application, applicants should review all the terms and conditions and required certifications which will apply to this award, to ensure that they will be able to comply. These include: 2 CFR 200, 2 CFR 600, Certifications and Assurances, and the Department of State Standard Terms and Conditions, all of which are available at:

<https://www.state.gov/m/a/o/e/index.htm>

Reporting

Recipients are required to submit quarterly program progress and financial reports throughout the project period. Progress and financial reports are due 30 days after the reporting period. Final certified programmatic and financial reports are due 90 days after the close of the project period.

All reports are to be submitted electronically and in English.

Awardees that are deemed to be high risk may be required to submit more extensive and frequent reports until their high risk designation has been removed.

The Awardee must also provide the Embassy on an annual basis an inventory of all the U.S. government provided equipment using the SF428 form.

G. FEDERAL AWARDING AGENCY CONTACTS

If you have any questions about the grant application process, please contact:

GrantProposalsDushanbe@state.gov

For questions relating to Grants.gov, please call the Grants.gov Contact Center at 1-800-518-4726.

To inquire about the process for obtaining a Negotiated Indirect Cost Rate Agreement (NICRA) contact Donald Hunter at HunterDS@state.gov.

H. OTHER INFORMATION

Guidelines for Budget Justification

Personnel and Fringe Benefits: Describe the wages, salaries, and benefits of temporary or permanent staff who will be working directly for the applicant on the project, and the percentage of their time that will be spent on the project.

Travel: Estimate the costs of travel and per diem for this project, for both program staff, consultants or speakers, and participants/beneficiaries. If the project involves international travel, include a brief statement of justification for that travel.

Equipment: Describe any machinery, furniture, or other personal property that is required for the project, which has a useful life of more than one year (or a life longer than the duration of the project), and costs at least \$5,000 per unit.

Supplies: List and describe all the items and materials, including any computer devices, that are needed for the project. If an item costs more than \$5,000 per unit, then put it in the budget under Equipment.

Contractual: Describe goods and services that the applicant plans to acquire through a contract with a vendor. Also describe any sub-awards to non-profit partners that will help carry out the project activities.

Other Direct Costs: Describe other costs directly associated with the project, which do not fit in the other categories. For example, shipping costs for materials and equipment or applicable taxes. All “Other” or “Miscellaneous” expenses must be itemized and explained.

Indirect Costs: These are costs that cannot be linked directly to the project activities, such as overhead costs needed to help keep the organization operating. If your organization has a Negotiated Indirect Cost Rate (NICRA) and includes NICRA charges in the budget, attach a copy of your latest NICRA. Organizations that have never had a NICRA may request indirect costs of 10% of the modified total direct costs as defined in 2 CFR 200.68.

“Cost Sharing” refers to contributions from the organization or other entities other than the U.S. Embassy. It also includes in-kind contributions such as volunteers’ time and donated venues.

Branding Requirements: As a condition of receipt of a grant award, all materials produced pursuant to the award, including training materials, materials for recipients or materials to communicate or promote with foreign audiences a program, event, project, or some other activity under an agreement, including but not limited to invitations to events, press materials, and backdrops, podium signs, etc. must be marked appropriately with the standard, rectangular U.S. flag in a size and prominence equal to (or greater than) any other logo or identity. Note: Exceptions to the branding requirement are allowable under certain conditions. If an applicant is notified that their award has been chosen for funding, the Grants Officer will determine, in consultation with the applicant, if an exception is applicable.

Copyrights and Proprietary Information

If any of the information contained in your application is proprietary, please note in the footer of the appropriate pages that the information is Confidential – Proprietary. Applicants should also note what parts of the application, program, concept, etc. are covered by copyright(s), trademark(s), or any other intellectual property rights and provide copies of the relevant documentation to support these copyrights.