

Request for Proposals (RFP): Strategic Planning Consulting Services

I. Introduction and Purpose

The Latin American Studies Association (LASA) invites proposals from experienced consultants or firms to design and facilitate a comprehensive strategic planning process for the Association. LASA seeks to chart a clear, ambitious, and achievable course for the next five to ten years, building on its rich history and adapting to a rapidly evolving academic and global environment.

This process will culminate in a new Strategic Plan that reflects LASA's mission, values, and vision while addressing the key challenges and opportunities that lie ahead. The selected consultant will guide LASA's leadership, staff, and stakeholders through a highly participatory process, resulting in a focused, actionable, and measurable strategic framework.

II. About LASA

The Latin American Studies Association (LASA) is the largest international professional association dedicated to the study of Latin America. With over 12,000 members from more than 80 countries, LASA brings together scholars, students, policymakers, practitioners, and professionals from diverse disciplines and backgrounds.

LASA's key activities include:

- Hosting the annual LASA International Congress, the premier global forum for Latin American studies, and continental congresses and regional symposiums.
- Publishing the Latin American Research Review (LARR) and other academic publications via the LASA Press.
- Supporting research, collaboration, and knowledge exchange.
- Advancing diversity, inclusion, and scholarly engagement across borders.

LASA is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization headquartered in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, with global membership and operations.

III. Background and Rationale for the Strategic Planning Process

LASA is at a pivotal moment. Like many academic associations, LASA faces:

- Shifting membership demographics and expectations.
- The need to diversify revenue streams beyond traditional congress registration.
- Evolving technologies for scholarly communication and collaboration.
- Growing demands for inclusion, accessibility, and regional engagement.
- Financial and organizational sustainability challenges.

The new Strategic Plan will:

- Clarify LASA's identity, mission, and future aspirations.
- Establish clear priorities to guide programmatic, operational, and financial decisions.
- Strengthen LASA's relevance and value to its members and partners.
- Identify ways to foster interdisciplinary collaboration and innovation among Latin American scholars and students.
- Suggest strategies to diversify sources and institutional partnerships to ensure long-term financial sustainability.
- Enhance LASA's capacity to adapt to change and seize emerging opportunities.
- Identify strengths, opportunities, weaknesses, and threats for LASA.

IV. Scope of Work and Consultant Responsibilities

The selected consultant will collaborate closely with LASA's Executive Director, Ways and Means, the Executive Council, Oversight Committee, committees appointed by the EC that contribute to this purpose (if necessary), and key stakeholders to:

Phase 1: Discovery and Assessment

- Review LASA's existing mission, vision, values, bylaws, policies, strategic documents, and program data.
- Conduct an environmental scan of trends in academic associations, area studies, and global higher education.

- Benchmark LASA against comparable organizations (area studies [1] and disciplinary associations of similar size).
- Strategically position LASA based on inputs generated through a participatory exercise.
- Gather input through stakeholder interviews, focus groups, and surveys (virtual and/or in-person), ensuring representation from:
 - Members at various career stages
 - Members who hold and have held representative (elective) positions in LASA
 - Global regions, especially underrepresented areas in Latin America and elsewhere
 - Institutional partners
 - LASA staff and leadership
 - Sponsors and collaborators

Phase 2: Strategic Plan Development

- Facilitate strategic planning sessions with the Ways and Means, Executive Committee, and working groups (Oversight Committee, committees appointed, others).
- Assist in refining LASA's mission, vision, and values (as needed).
- Identify strategic priorities, goals, and objectives, with associated metrics.
- Propose governance, organizational, or operational revisions to support the plan.
- Draft a comprehensive Strategic Plan document and an executive summary for external audiences.
- Pursue a participatory plan to include the membership's perspective from the beginning of this exercise (at least through a survey, though innovative tools are highly valuable) [2].

Phase 3: Finalization and Implementation Guidance

- Present the draft plan for review and feedback.
- Incorporate revisions and produce final deliverables.
- Provide recommendations for implementation, communication, and progress monitoring and evaluation.
- Optional: Facilitate an internal presentation or training to support rollout.

V. Deliverables

The consultant is expected to provide:

- Stakeholder engagement plan and facilitation of sessions
- Environmental scan and organizational assessment report
- Draft and final Strategic Plan (full version and executive summary)
- Presentation materials for internal and external audiences
- Implementation recommendations, including timeline and success metrics

VI. Project Timeline

The anticipated timeline is as follows:

January 7, 2026	●	RFP Issued
February 10, 2026	●	Deadline for Vendor Questions
February 13, 2026	●	LASA Posts Consolidated Q&A
February 20, 2026	●	Proposal Submission Deadline
March 6, 2026	●	Consultant Selection (prior sessions of the Strategic Planning Subcommittee) & Notification
March 7, 2026	●	Designation of the oversight committee members by the EC
March 13, 2026	●	Project Kickoff
March 15–May, 2026	●	Stakeholder Engagement (discovery) and implementation of the proposed methodological tools
July–September, 2026	●	Strategy Development Workshops and implementation of the proposed methodological tools
October 15, 2026	●	Draft Plan Submitted
December 15, 2026	●	Final Plan Approval

Note: Timeline is subject to adjustment based on consultant availability and LASA’s scheduling needs.

VII. Proposal Requirements

Proposals should include the following components, in order:

1. Cover Letter (1 page)

2. Firm or Consultant Overview

- Relevant experience with strategic planning, particularly for academic associations, nonprofits, or international organizations.
- Familiarity with issues facing scholarly communities and area studies (preferred).
- Significant experience and understanding of both U.S. and Latin American academic and social contexts, reflecting LASA's regional diversity.

3. Proposed Approach and Methodology

4. Work Plan and Timeline

5. Project Team

- Names, roles, and brief bios of key personnel.

6. Relevant Work Samples

- Examples of strategic plans developed for similar organizations.

7. Client References (minimum of 3)

8. Fee Structure and Budget Estimate

- Detailed cost breakdown, including professional fees, travel (if applicable), and other expenses.

VIII. Evaluation Criteria

Proposals will be evaluated based on:

- Relevant experience and qualifications (20%)
- Understanding of LASA's needs (20%)
- Quality of proposed approach and methodology (30%)
- Cost-effectiveness and value (15%)
- References, and prior performance (15%)

Non-negotiable criteria:

Conflict of Interest: Those serving on the expert panel of the selected consultant firm must not have participated in previous years. Candidates must certify that they have had no prior collaborations in previous years or in previous strategic plans, neither with the Secretariat nor with current Executive Council members.

Diversity and Plurality: The selected firm or firms should demonstrate significant experience and understanding of both U.S. and Latin American contexts, reflecting LASA's regional diversity. The firm or firms selected may be based in the United States or in another country in Canada, the European Union, or Latin America, as long as it demonstrates the knowledge outlined above.

IX. Submission Instructions and Contact Information

All proposals must be submitted electronically in PDF format by February 20, 2026, to:

Milagros Pereyra-Rojas
Executive Director
Latin American Studies Association (LASA)
lasa@lasaweb.org

Questions regarding this RFP must be submitted by February 10, via email. LASA will provide written responses to all inquiries by February 13, which will be shared with all interested parties upon request.

X. Additional Information

LASA reserves the right to:

- Request additional information or clarification from any respondent
- Conduct interviews with finalists
- Reject any or all proposals
- Award the contract based on best value, not solely price

[1] The Latino Studies Association, for example, has increased its membership and may be absorbing members of LASA's Latino Studies Section.

[2] It includes taking the opportunity of Congresses to meet with members in person.