

The USAID Broad Agency Announcement for Let Girls Learn Initiative

I. Overview

A. This Broad Agency Announcement (BAA) seeks opportunities to co-create, co-design, co-invest, and collaborate in the research, development, piloting, testing, and scaling of innovative, practical and cost-effective interventions to address adolescent girls' education. The United States Agency for International Development (USAID) invites organizations and companies to participate with USAID to create strategic, focused and results-oriented partnerships to promote adolescent girls' education and apply comprehensive scientific and research-motivated approaches to support sustainable development outcomes.

B. Federal Agency Name:

The United States Agency for International Development (USAID)

C. Opportunity Title:

The USAID Let Girls Learn Initiative BAA.

D. Opportunity Number: BAA-WW-LGL-2015

F. Authority:

This BAA is issued under Federal Acquisition Regulations (FAR) Part 35.016 (c). This is not a FAR Part 15 Procurement.

G. Catalog of Federal Domestic Assistance (CFDA) Number:

98.001 USAID Foreign Assistance Programs for Overseas

II. Collaboration

The intent of the BAA is to allow co-creation and co-design to the maximum extent to create high quality, effective partnerships with great efficiency in time and resources. The types of collaboration include:

1. Co-creation. Co-creation occurs after an Expression of Interest is approved, but before the concept is developed. The potential partners, USAID, the Department of State and potentially others work together to write and/or revise the Concept Paper, and jointly present the Concept Paper to USAID's Peer and Scientific Review Board.

2. Co-design/development. Co-design/development occurs after the Peer and Scientific Review Board recommends the project for further development, and the Contracting Officer or Agreement Officer has determined the proposer to be an Apparently Successful Partner. At this point, the Contracting Officer or Agreement Officer may determine the general nature of the award type or the specific award type, depending on the nature of the project, to facilitate project design. During co-design, the Apparently Successful Partner and the Activity Manager will design the technical approach, general resource requirements, and management control of the project under the guidance of the Contracting Officer/Agreement Officer.

3. Co-invest. Co-invest refers to the Government's strategic aim that the partnerships resulting from the individual BAA awards represent opportunities to achieve mutual or complementary development goals of the Partner, USAID, and potentially other resource partners, and therefore embrace shared responsibility, shared risk, and shared resourcing. Shared resourcing may be accomplished through funding by both parties, either through cash resources or the exchange of other resources, both tangible and intangible, such as in-kind contributions, expertise, intellectual property, brand value, high-value coordination, and access to key people, places, and information. Co-investing does not require equally shared resourcing (such as 1:1 leverage), but rather resource contributions that are appropriate to the specific project's objectives, considering the comparative advantages brought by the participation of each party and the award type.

III. Specific Rights Reserved for the Government under this BAA

The Government reserves specific rights, in addition to rights described elsewhere in this document or by law or regulation, including:

1. The right to award multiple awards, a single award, or no awards.
2. The right to make awards without discussions, or to conduct discussions and/or negotiations, whichever is determined to be in the Government's interest.
3. The right to accept proposals in their entirety or to select only portions of proposals for award or co-investment.
4. The right to select for award an instrument type that is appropriate to the specific development context, partner relationship, and proposal selected for award. Instruments types include but are not limited to contracts, grants, cooperative agreements, Global Development Alliance agreements, Development Innovation Agreements, Inter-Agency Agreements, Government to Government Agreements, Donor to Donor Agreements, and Memorandums of Understanding. In addition, the Government may craft a new instrument type to meet the needs of a specific relationship.

5. The right to co-create projects with one or more proposers under the BAA, when it is in the best interest of the Government.
6. The right to request any additional, necessary documentation upon initial review. Such additional information may include, but is not limited to, a further detailed proposal, budget, and representations and certifications.
7. The right to fund or co-invest in proposals in phases, with options for continued work at the end of one or more of the phases.
9. The right to award instruments under this BAA that do not commit or exchange monetary resources.
10. The right to remove proposers from award consideration should the parties fail to reach agreement on award terms, conditions, and cost/price within a reasonable time, the proposer fails to timely provide requested additional information, or the Government believes it is in its best interest.

IV. Problem and Challenge Statements

Around the world 62 million girls are not in school. Millions more are fighting to stay there. As girls reach adolescence, challenges related to remaining in school increase. Her family must be able to afford and be willing to pay school fees. She risks long, dangerous walks to school. She may become pregnant or be forced to marry. And she often lacks access to healthcare and the support she needs to learn. It's time to Let Girls Learn.

Let Girls Learn is a new whole-of-government initiative to ensure adolescent girls get the education they deserve. Building on USAID's initial Let Girls Learn funding and education programs, the initiative elevates existing programs, including in areas of conflict and crisis, leverages public-private partnerships, and challenges organizations and governments to commit resources to lift up adolescent girls worldwide.

Let Girls Learn will address a range of issues that prevent adolescent girls from completing their education by ensuring a quality education, reducing barriers to access, including harmful practices and attitudes, and empowering adolescent girls. Interventions to ensure a quality education may focus on providing girls with a quality, relevant education in safe schools, promoting the hiring and training of teachers as well as the use of gender-sensitive materials, and helping girls to acquire education alternatives, workforce training and employment opportunities.

Barriers addressed may include, but are not limited to, health vulnerabilities for adolescent girls, including early pregnancy, malnutrition, menstrual hygiene, and preventing and responding to HIV, economic barriers, including school fees and the cost of materials, and transportation and safety issues on the way to and from school as well as in the school building itself. Moreover, the low value of educating girls and social norms that perpetuate gender-based violence and other harmful practices, such as early and forced marriage could be addressed.

Finally, in order to empower adolescent girls, interventions may focus on increasing girls' rights, leadership and opportunity by providing beneficiaries access to information, skills, services and support, building broader skills in finance, digital literacy, science, technology, engineering, agriculture and mathematics, and raising girls' expectations for their lives, so that they can advocate for themselves, and make informed life choices.

V. General Criteria for Consideration

- A. Submissions are not evaluated against other submissions, but solely against the evaluation criteria from the BAA.
- B. Decisions regarding USAID's pursuit of a particular project, technology or relationship are based on the available evidence, data, and resulting analysis. USAID seeks solutions that comprehensively address challenges to adolescent girls' education and that have a significant impact (i.e. breakthroughs, not incremental improvements), and can achieve that impact at scale.
- C. The reputations of an organization, its past performance, the managerial and technical ability of the person or team of people engaged in the endeavor are always significant considerations in assessing the potential and the risks associated with each award.
- D. The USG recently announced Malawi and Tanzania as the first two Let Girls Learn pilot countries. Submissions are encouraged which focus on these two countries.

VI. Award Stages

The amount of resources made available under this BAA will depend on the concepts received and the availability of funds. Some award types may not include any funding. The award process under this BAA has the following steps:

Stage 1

Expression of Interest: Please submit an expression of interest in accordance with Section IX.

Expressions of Interest must indicate the research or development idea which will work toward discovering potential solutions to the Problem and Challenge Statement(s), by increasing knowledge and understanding of potential solutions, exploiting scientific discoveries or improvements in technology, materials, processes, methods, devices, or techniques, advancing the state of the art, or using scientific and technical knowledge in the design, development, testing, or evaluation of a potential new product or service (or of an improvement in an existing product or service).

Note that due to the large number of Expressions of Interest, USAID is unable to provide detailed information to those EOIs that are not selected to move forward.

Stage 2

Development of the Concept Paper. For Expressions of Interest which are deemed to have merit by USAID and pass criteria/eligibility stated within the BAA and/or specific addenda, USAID will issue an invitation to collaborate to the potential partner.* Working together, USAID and the potential partners will collaborate on a Concept Paper. It is during this phase of co-creation and co-design that the parties will begin to determine additional partners and resources to complement the project. The Concept Paper, generally 5-10 pages, will further detail and explain the project as initially provided in the Expression of Interest.

Additional Partners/Resources. During the project co-creation and co-design, both the Apparently Successful Partners and USAID will identify additional partners and resources, and whether additional mechanisms are necessary to implement the project.

*An invitation is sent to a potential partner to participate in a co-creation workshop, conference, meeting, or the method designated by USAID to work together with all invitees to further develop the idea presented in the expression of interest. All potential partners may not move forward to Stage 3.

Stage 3

Review by the Peer and Scientific Review Board. Concept Papers developed during Stage 2 will be reviewed by the Peer and Scientific Review Board, comprised of experts from USAID, partners, and/or outside parties. The Peer and Scientific Review Board will review Concept Papers and recommend which applicants should be considered Apparently Successful Partners. Using its technical expertise, the Peer and Scientific Review Board will recommend whether to move forward with the project including revisions/additions to the project, and potential partners and resources.

All potential partners may not move forward to Stage 4.

Stage 4

Contracting/Agreement Officer Determination. The Contracting/Agreement officer will review the Peer and Scientific Review Board's recommendations and consider other information, such as resource availability, preliminary partner responsibility assessment, and Agency priorities, and will make a determination that the respondent is an Apparently Successful Partner. The Contracting/Agreement Officer may also make or narrow down the anticipated instrument type to facilitate project design.

Request for Additional Information. USAID will work with partners identified by the Peer and Scientific Review Board, and co-design the project and assist the partners to provide additional information with respect to the proposer's technical approach, capacity, management and organization, past performance, and budget, as well as representations and certifications, as needed.

Final Review and Negotiation. The USAID Contract/ Agreement Officer will engage in final review, negotiation, and determinations of instrument type, responsibility cost reasonableness, etc., and will craft an award instrument with the Apparently Successful Partner. If the Apparently Successful Applicant and USAID cannot arrive at a mutually agreeable arrangement, the Contract/ Agreement Officer will cancel the project at no cost to the Government.

Award. Where USAID determines that the award of an instrument is appropriate, the USAID Contract/ Agreement Officer will award the instrument.

VII. Award Information

Number of awards could vary and may not mirror the number of expressions of interests or invitees to co-creation.

A. Awards under this BAA will be made to Apparently Successful Partners on the basis of their ability to further the goals of the Let Girls Learn Initiative. USAID is seeking new applications of innovations and partnerships that provide the best value to the Government and have the potential to substantially contribute to these goals.

B. Proposals identified for negotiation may result in a contract, grant, cooperative agreement, Global Development Alliance agreement, Development Innovation Agreement, Inter-Agency Agreement, Government to Government Agreement, Donor to Donor Agreement, Memorandum of Understanding or alternative agreement type, depending upon the nature of the work proposed, the required degree of Government involvement, and other factors. The Government Contracting/Agreement Officer will determine award instrument type and negotiate instrument terms and conditions with selectees. USAID may select the award instruments it deems appropriate.

C. Eligibility Information. Public, private, for-profit, and nonprofit organizations, as well as institutions of higher education, public international organizations, non-governmental organizations, U.S. and non-U.S. governmental organizations, multilateral and international donor organizations are eligible under this BAA. All organizations must be determined to be responsive to the BAA and sufficiently responsible to perform or participate in the final award type.

D. Standard Clauses and Provisions of Award. The standard clauses or provisions for awards are generally prescribed by law and regulation and will vary considerably by award type. Information regarding clauses and provisions will be offered to the proposer when the award type is identified.

E. Organizations are encouraged to consider providing reasonable cost sharing, leverage, or other exchange of resource arrangements, and are encouraged to suggest creative approaches to resourcing projects.

VIII. Information Protection

USAID's goal is to facilitate the research and development that will lead to innovative, and potentially commercially viable, solutions. Understanding the sensitive nature of submitters' information, USAID will work with organizations to protect intellectual property.

Expressions of interest should be free of any intellectual property that submitter wishes to protect, as the expressions of interest will be shared with USAID partners as part of the selection process. However, once submitters have been invited to engage in further discussions, submitters will work with USAID to identify proprietary information that requires protection.

Therefore, organizations making submissions under this BAA grant to USAID a royalty-free, nonexclusive, and irrevocable right to use, disclose, reproduce, and prepare derivative works, and to have or permit others to do so to any information contained in the expressions of interest submitted under the BAA. If USAID engages with the organization regarding its submission, the parties can negotiate further intellectual property protection for the organization's intellectual property.

Organizations must ensure that any submissions under this BAA are free of any third party proprietary data rights that would impact the license granted to USAID herein.

IX. Expression of Interest Information

- A. Be in English
- B. Be submitted electronically to letgirlslearn@usaid.gov by November 30, 2015.
- C. Be up to 2 pages in length, no smaller than 12 point font;
- D. Contain a header with the following information (included in the page count):
 - a. Respondent Name/Group and Contact Information;
 - b. Response Title;
 - c. BAA: The USAID Let Girls Learn Initiative BAA; BAA-WW-LGL-2015
 - d. Contain one optional graphic that fits on an 8.5"x11" or A4 piece of paper (included in the page limit);
- E. Be in .pdf, .docx, or .odf format