USAID
FROM THE AMERICAN PEOPLE

March 14, 2014

Reference: RFA No. RFA-OAA-14-000009: FTF Innovation Lab for Sustainable Intensification
Subject: Amendment 01

Dear Interested Applicants:

The following Amendment 01 to Request for Applications Number RFA-OAA-14-000009 provides a transcript of the webinar held on March 6, 2014, a link to the full audio of the webinar, as well as responses to two questions that were not fully addressed during the webinar.

Any additional questions should be submitted to Christine Dwulet, Agreement Specialist, at cdwulet@usaid.gov, by Tuesday, March 18th at 10:00am, in accordance with Section IV.A.11.b of the RFA.

Please note that the Application closing date has not been extended.

Applications are submitted at the risk of the applicant; all preparation and submission costs are at the applicant's expense. Issuance of this RFA does not constitute an award commitment of the part of the Government, nor does it commit the Government to pay for costs incurred in the preparation and submission of an application.

Sincerely,

Charles Jackson
Agreement Officer

A. Questions and Answers

1. **Question:** *Please clarify the entity types and countries of origin that are eligible to partner and share partner resource through the project as sub-recipients or contractors. The RFA states that all types of U.S. and non-U.S. entities are eligible as collaborating partners. For example, sub-recipients and/or contractors at various tiers provided they are not excluded from U.S. government acquisition and assistance awards. However, this appears to contradict the authorized geographic code 937 on page 28.*

   USAID Response: As stated in Section II.D.1.C on page 28 or the RFA, the Authorized Geographic Code 937 applies to the procurement and long-term lease (as defined in 22 CFR 228.01) of goods and services with USAID funds.

   As stated in Section III.D.1.B of the RFA, subawards are not subject to Authorized Geographic Code 937. Collaborating partners may be contractors or sub-recipients, and applicants should be aware of the distinction between procurement contracts (acquisition) and sub-awards (assistance), as terms are defined in 22 CFR 226.2. Contracts are subject to 22 CFR 226.40-49 and the USAID standard provision entitled "USAID Eligibility Rules for Goods and Services". Sub-awards are subject to 22 CFR 226.5 and the USAID standard provision entitled "Applicability of 22 CFR Part 226." It is primarily the responsibility of the applicant to determine whether subtier awards are procurements or subawards in accordance with the OMB Circular A-133 guidance and their own internal procedures as verified and approved by USAID.

   For more information on this guidance or determining if a partner would be considered a contractor or subrecipient, please reference “Profit Under USAID Assistance Instruments” http://www.usaid.gov/sites/default/files/documents/1868/303sai.pdf

2. **Question:** *How should the lump sum items of the budget be handled? By single line item? Are we expected to estimate the number of subawards for each?*

   USAID Response: Applicants should use a single line item for each of the lump sum items. It isn't necessary to estimate the number of subawards under each lump-sum amounts.

B. Webinar Link

The following link provides the full audio for the information webinar held on March 6, 2014: https://kdad.adobeconnect.com/p621f6obfdu/

C. Webinar Transcript

The following transcript reflects the information provided during the informational webinar held on March 6, 2014 for the FTF Innovation Lab for Sustainable Intensification RFA.

Julie Maccartee: All right. Good morning everyone. Thank you very much for joining us today. Welcome to the Feed the Future Innovation Lab for Sustainable Intensification RFA webinar that we are holding today. My name is Julie Maccartee and I'm a knowledge management specialist with the USAID Bureau for Food Security. Now you might notice that a few things are a little bit different about our layout today in contrast to – sorry about that everyone. I was just adjusting my microphone volume. So hopefully this is a bit better for you all.

As I mentioning our layout is a little bit different today than for many of our usual webinars. You will notice that there is no attendees pod on display on the screen so that you're unable to see who else is joining us today and also there is no public chat box on display on the screen as we usually do. So for that reason our questions pod that you'll see on the left next to our presentation screen is our main way of communicating today.

So if you have questions either about the RFA or about the webinar in general like you're having any audio issues or have general questions please go ahead and type those into the questions pod. We have a team on hand to answer them and make sure that you are helped with your issues. We will be keeping the questions anonymous today so please feel free to be free with any questions you have about the RFA. We will be taking every effort to keep your name anonymous and to keep any identifying information anonymous but we'll be collecting all of the questions. Any questions that you submit we are unable to answer today but you still need them answered please feel free to resubmit them to Christine Dwulet whose contact information you will receive a bit later.

All right, so we are going to go ahead and get started. Please feel free to enter questions at any point into the questions pod. But we will begin with a very short presentation to raise your awareness of a couple of items. So starting off giving an introduction we will have Jerry Glover, who is a senior research scientist with the USAID Bureau for Food Security and he will be covering some organizational and technical structure issues with the program. Then we'll be passing it along to Christine Dwulet who is the Agreement Specialist for this RFA and she'll be providing some guidelines on the application process. All right, so I'm going to go ahead and pass the microphone over to Jerry who will get started with a short presentation. Again, please feel free to enter questions at any time.

Jerry Glover: Thanks Julie and good morning to everyone. This first slide I just want to remind everyone about eligibility. This award is available to Title XII institutions, U.S. colleges and universities engaged in agricultural research. Of course partners will likely include many other non-U.S. university, non-Title XII institutions both in the U.S. and abroad. To put this award in the context of our overall research strategy USAID has a Feed the Future food security innovation center that takes the lead on implementing the research strategy for the Feed the Future initiative and we have seven program areas within that innovation center some of which focus specifically on crop improvement, methods to manage pests and disease, we have a program area on safe and nutritious foods, human and institution capacity development and markets and policy research. Of course we also within those program areas have a program for sustainable intensification and that program area is where this new award area fits.

Within a program for sustainable intensification we have several projects ongoing and we will have some new ones coming out of course like this sustainable intensification innovation lab. These range from systems based research in target areas around the world such as the Cereal Systems Initiative for South Asia (CSISA) and Africa Rising programs, more specific innovation labs focused on either irrigation, integrated pest management and other water issues. So that’s just to give you an idea of how this new innovation fits into the overall research structure at USAID’s Feed the Future initiative. It’s probably important to understand that this new innovation lab will be expected to engage with to the extent that is relevant and useful with these other activities both within the program for sustainable intensification and within the other program areas.

Now this next slide is a bit small for the screen. It’s on page ten of the RFA. You can bring it up to full screen for a little bit greater clarity on it but this shows the overall program structure that we’ve outlined with the management entity at the top directly overseeing those blue areas and the blue areas – a key component of that is the geospatial and farming systems research consortium with some of the details laid out there. So the management entity will be a necessary participant in that consortium but may or may not be the actual lead of that.

We do request that the leader of that consortium be a Title XII university but many of the partners on that do not necessarily have to be Title XII universities and do not necessarily need to be within the U.S. university system. In fact we would encourage applicants to include where relevant and useful institutions in the target developing countries that could be seen as part of capacity building efforts. We have focused on three broad regions; West Africa, East and Southern Africa and South Asia. We’ve limited the countries in West Africa and East and Southern Africa to those Feed the Future initiative countries. The information on those can be found on FeedTheFuture.gov.

In South Asia we've limited the country considerations to three; Bangladesh, Burma and/or Cambodia. We don't expect this innovation lab to necessarily cover all the countries in all the regions and we do expect to have a regional leader on the ground in each one of those regions with direct activities in at least one of the countries in each region. There's a lot more information on that in the RFA itself.

You can see from the green boxes that there will be a number of subsequent awards made available, one in particular is the appropriate scaled mechanization consortium to focus on mechanization opportunities for different regions. We hope that the mechanization consortium can serve all three regions in terms of evaluating opportunities, identifying obstacles to adoption and then even perhaps doing some on the ground work in those specific regions. Then of course within each region we expect some sub-awards for specific activities to be identified through a network of work between the geospatial and farming systems research consortium, the on the ground directors and the management entity. Once issues are identified, opportunities are identified then sub-awards can be released. You'll see in the boxes proposed timelines for release times for the RFAs, 9 to 12 months, for example, for the regional sub-award RFAs and within a 3 month time period after the leader award has been made for the appropriate scaled mechanization consortium.

In terms of allocation of funds this is a $25 million to $50 million award. $25 million will be coming from what we call core support from the Bureau for Food Security, roughly $5 million per year and of course that's pending annual availability of funds but you can see from the pie chart how we suggest that allocation to be made. Now we're not suggesting it needs to be exact but if budgets differ much from those suggested allocation amounts then there should be some justification for that. This is a leader with associate award so there is quite an opportunity for buy-ins from USAID missions for more specific work within countries and other associate awards. So that's an additional $25 million indicated by the shaded area of the pie.

You will notice in that box also that we've indicated 7 percent of the central of the core funds be budgeted for knowledge sharing and communications. That's an important way to help us get the message out, the information out, the lessons learned out to our other programs, to our other development partners and also of course to the target communities that we're focused on.

In terms of how the applications will be evaluated we have a number of evaluation criteria that are listed here. There's not a lot of detail I need to go in here. There's quite a bit of information within the RFA but you can see the relative importance of each area. I do want to emphasize that, for example, when we talk about gender and nutrition the applications will be rated based on how well those items are integrated throughout the programs. So just having a separate section focused only on gender and nutrition isn't what we're after. We're after looking – we want well integrated gender and nutrition components in all those other areas. Now I'll turn it over to Christine for a few additional words.

Christine Dwulet: Thank you, Jerry. My name is Christine Dwulet and I'm the Agreement Specialist for this award. I'll be working with the Agreement Officer, Charles Jackson. We just want to emphasize that USAID anticipates awarding only one cooperative agreement in response to this RFA. Application should be in response to the criteria set forth in Section V of the RFA which Jerry just displayed. Your narrative and technical application should be organized as described in Section IV of the RFA. Please make sure that you do not exceed the 30 page limit for the technical application. Any information beyond that will not be furnished to the USAID Tech Committee. As stated in the RFA, we will be awarding one leader with associates award and this award will cover all subsequent associate awards.

Since this award is a cooperative agreement and not a contract, USAID involvement will be limited to the substantial involvement listed in the RFA, which includes approval of annual implementation plans, approval of key personnel, approval of performance management plan, involvement in choosing the members of the technical advisory committee, concurrence with sub awards and contracts and review and approval of program descriptions for associate awards. As stated in the RFA, all written questions are due to me by Tuesday, March 18th and if your question is not answered during this webinar please re-submit it in writing to my e-mail address and USAID will answer all questions sent via e-mail.

Julie Maccartee: Great. Thank you, Jerry and Christine. Well we have seen a lot of questions come in already. Thank you all very much for asking these very good questions about the RFA. We are collecting them. Actually we are going to be moving to a new screen momentarily and we'll be copying and pasting some questions from the questions pod into a notes pod that you will be able to see. But we are actually at this point going to take a short audio break in order to organize and prepare answers to some of the questions that have come in. So we'll be kind of talking behind the scenes, questions and answers ready and then we'll be able to come back and answer them in a bit more fluid fashion than if we took them kind of one by one ad hoc starting right now. So we're going to count down for a moment and actually put you all on hold in a sense and we will be checking in about ten minutes or so and coming back with the audio to answer the first wave of questions. So please continue to enter your questions and we'll be back momentarily.

All right, thank you everyone very much for your patience. We've gotten so many good questions coming in that we've had a lot to confer on in the back end. So we are going to go ahead and answer a first wave of questions. This is not every question that's been submitted but we're going to start with an initial wave and then probably take another short break and prepare answers to another set of questions that have come in. So I'll go ahead and pass it over to Jerry and Christine to answer these questions.

Christine Dwulet: Thank you. This is Christine. I'd like to address the first question listed. "Please clarify the entity types and countries of origin that are eligible to partner and share partner resource through the project as sub-recipients or contractors. The RFA states all types of U.S. and non-US entities are eligible as collaborating partners. For example, sub-recipients and/or contractors at various tiers provided they are not excluded from U.S. government acquisition and assistance awards. However this appears to contradict the authorized geographic code 937 on page 28." We would just like to acknowledge this question. The response requires a lot of detail and it will be addressed in the coming amendment.

Jerry Glover: Okay, this is Jerry. I will answer the next two questions. "Does the lab director need to be currently employed at the M.E.?" The answer is no. "Do the regional coordinators need to be employers of the M.E.?" They do not need to currently be employed by the M.E. but eventually they would be paid by the M.E.

Christine Dwulet: "Can you please clarify the difference between associate awards and mission buy-ins?" Mission buy-ins will be supporting the leader award where associate awards will be independent grants or cooperative agreements that are managed by missions.

Jerry Glover: This is Jerry. I'll answer the question, "Is it expected for the M.E. to be a consortium of universities?" It is expected that the M.E. be led by a single institution but it could be supported by a consortium of universities.

"What is the commitment USAID expects of the M.E. partners and potential partners at this time?" Well number one, we don't expect legal commitments from any of the partners given the nature of the RFA and the potential for other institutions to be partnering with those same partners in their own applications. However, the more information that can be provided on the nature of the relationship, how firm the commitments are does help give us a clear understanding of what the consortium of other partners will look like over time. But again, we understand that these kinds of commitments can't necessarily be made during the application process. We do expect though there to be some description of the process going forward in firming up those commitment, identifying the correct partner and so on.

The question, "Does the geospatial consortium need to be bid out competitively or can the budget be allocated to consortium partners without competitive process?" We do not expect the geospatial consortium to be bid out competitively. In fact the way that the structure is currently written we don't expect an RFA to be released on that. This goes into the next question, "Can you please clear up the relationship between the M.E. and the geospatial and farming systems research consortium?" So the M.E. will have management oversight of the geospatial consortium and it will necessarily be a member of it.

It may not be the director of it and it – we expect that to be formed pretty early on to identify opportunities and issues that need to be addressed in all the three regions. Just a little bit more on that. We do expect the members of the consortium to be identified in the application process. In the future, if gaps within the consortium are identified, additional members could be added later. "Are we required to identify the lead institution of the geospatial consortium?" Yes.

Julie Maccartee: All right, thank you Jerry and Christine for answering that first wave of questions. A question did come in also, "Will this presentation be available online?" We are actually creating an audio transcript of this presentation and therefore we'll be able to capture all of these questions that were asked as well as Christine's and Jerry's responses to those questions and we'll be including that information I believe in the amendments. So you'll be able to find that on Grants.gov along with the original link to the RFA which is actually down in the links box in the bottom left of your screen. So we'll make everything that we can from this webinar available especially the answers to these questions that we're answering right now.

All right, we've seen a few more questions come in and we want to make sure that we address as many of them as we can in this format today. So we are going to take another short break. We'll try and keep it as short as we can but please feel free to go for about ten minutes or so, again, to check our e-mail or whatever else we need to do today and then we will return with the answer to another wave of questions. Thank you all.

Hi everyone. Thanks again for your patience. We're coming back now to answer another wave of questions about the RFA. This will be our format for the rest of our time here. We'll be kind of taking a bit of time to triage the questions, ten minutes or so in a chunk and then come back and answer a wave of questions. As I had mentioned before we'll be creating a transcript of these questions and the answers and everything official will be posted on Grants.gov. So that is your main resource, the Grants.gov for everything that comes out of this webinar, all of the official responses. All right, so I'll pass it back over for another few answers to the questions you see at the top of your screen in the center of the notes pod.

Jerry Glover: I'll answer the question, "Is the geospatial consortium to be formed independently by members or are individual applications accepted by USAID?" The managing entity will be responsible for proposing the consortium numbers and structure – USAID will not accept individual applications for the consortium. As we've said before the M.E. will be responsible for oversight of the consortium. It does not need to be the director of the consortium but it does need to be a member of the consortium.

"Are there any limitation on number of countries selected in each of the regions?" No, however there should be some consideration to overextending one's self in each of the regions. I think we would have to ask ourselves if we saw an applicant covering all eight countries in one region if there were sufficient resources to do that and why wasn't there some type of screening process to identify higher priority countries. So from the BIFAD recommendations that we cite in the RFA, that review and evaluation suggested that programs could better focus resources on fewer countries –they suggested three to five. It's could differ a bit in this program because it includes three regions; but say three to five countries in each region or across a couple of regions. Anyway, applicants will have to find the best way to balance breadth versus depth within each country. We do expect that issues across the region as a whole be covered, for example, through mapping and stock taking but specific activities within each country will require more resources be focused in a smaller region.

"Is the technical advisory committee mentioned on page 17 an external or internal group?" That is an external group. In other words, P.I.s on the projects should not be part of that advisory group.

"Gender and nutrition are to be integrated throughout the proposal but what about directly or indirectly reducing poverty?" Reducing poverty is an overarching goal of the Feed the Future initiative. So of course that is one of our stated objectives of these types of programs. Gender and nutrition efforts are a bit different in this but are certainly related. So I guess the answer is yes, we would want to see how poverty could be addressed by the innovation lab overall and within each of its components via sustainable intensification.

"Does the appropriate scale mechanization consortium manage the proposal process separate from the lead M.E. and/or drive the program direction?" I will say that the managing entity will issue the RFA, oversee a competitive process, and select the awardee. The direction of the program will be based on the successful applicant to that RFA submitted by the M.E.

"Which partnership should be presented and described in the proposal? Language in the RFA seems to advise against describing partners and yet figure one on page ten directs applicants to describe partners' roles and responsibilities for the geospatial and farming systems research consortium." Partnerships and roles and responsibilities need to be described to the extent possible. The director of that consortium needs to be identified. Exclusive commitments with partners cannot be made due to the fact that it's likely multiple institutions will be approached. Although, it is likely that an institution will be approached by multiple others to get them to commit. So we understand this is a bit of a fluid process at this point but we do expect, as fully as possible, for the partners' roles and responsibilities to be fleshed out.

"It was mentioned earlier that the regional coordinators would be paid by the M.E. institution. Does that mean that they must be employees of the M.E. institution or could they be consultants or employees or a partner organization?" The regional coordinators must report directly to the M.E. So in that sense they would be employed by the M.E. Their activities and whatever types of contracts would pay for their efforts would be managed by the M.E. institution.

"Is the $1.75 million for knowledge sharing and communication to be borne by the $25 million core budget or solely by the $5 million M.E. budget?" It should be borne by the $25 million core budget. So we expect knowledge sharing and communication to be integrated within each area of the program so that it's not separated out and it needs to be well integrated across the program.

Christine Dwulet: This is Christine. The next question, "You've mentioned an answer or two that you'll address in an amendment. When will the amendments be released?" USAID anticipates posting Amendment 1 to Grants.gov on or before March 14th.

Julie Maccartee: Thank you Jerry and Christine. All right, we have a few more questions that have come in on the back end. So we're going to take another break to look through them and see what we'll be able to answer. If you have follow-up questions to anything you've heard so far please feel free to continue to enter those into the questions pod on the left and we'll do our best to keep answering. Oh and Jerry, passing over to him. He has another comment.

Jerry Glover: Right. It was also asked regarding the regional coordinators, whether they need to be U.S. citizens or green card holders. They do not need to be U.S. citizens and they do not necessarily need to be green card holders.

Julie Maccartee: Thank you Jerry. All right, I think we will take one more of our ten minute pauses. Thank you all for rolling with this format that we're using today. So please feel free to take a break yourself and we'll come back to answer another wave of questions.

Hi everyone, we are back and ready to answer another wave of questions. Thank you all for submitting them. Just to let you all know the questions are slowing down a bit as we can see them in the back end. If we don't continue to receive questions we'll probably end this webinar a bit early. So if you're holding out on us and have another question to ask please do submit it now. All right, I'll pass it over to Jerry and Christine for the questions that you see at the top of the notes pad right now.

Jerry Glover: "Would there be some flexibility in the total core annual budget per year given the fact that the mechanization consortium and the collaborative research awards will start later or should we stick to the $5 million per year core funding?" There will be some ability certainly in the allocations I said earlier with some justification for allocating it differently however you should stick to the essential $5 million per year core funding figure for developing your budget with the $25 million ceiling.

"Can a university consortium apply for the innovation lab and if so does a single university have to be the lead applicant?" A single university does indeed have to be the lead applicant identified as the managing entity.

"The East Africa focus region has eight potential countries. On page seven of the RFA there is a mention of specific activities in the Dedza District of Malawi. Is Malawi of greater importance for the agreement than the seven other countries?" No, it's not and again, making the decision about which countries or country to initially focus specific activities and the country in which you will post the regional coordinator there are several factors that will justify the reasoning on that. For future activities, research activities supported by the M.E. you could branch into other countries in later years.

One of the reasons we are allowing for some time for the RFAs to be issued by the M.E. is that we expect that it will take some time to understand the opportunities and constraints in each region. So again, just going through all the factors of balancing resources, not getting spread too thin but identifying where some big impacts can be made, where other donor activities are going on. We don't want too many focused in one region but you can also leverage those in some cases. So all those factors have to be taken into consideration in deciding in which country the regional coordinator will be posted and which countries will be the focus of research activities.

I would like to go back to the previous question for a little bit more clarification. "Can a university consortium apply for the innovation lab?" Just to clarify yes, they can apply but a single university has to be identified as the lead applicant and as the managing entity.

"Can the lead institution of the appropriate scale mechanization consortium be a non-U.S. or a non-U.S. university? Does it have to be a U.S. university?" Yes and in fact in the RFA we specify that it needs to be a Title 12 U.S. university. I will let Christine answer the next question.

Christine Dwulet: "How much matching should an institution commit in order to be viewed as a good value? See page 27." There's no mandatory level of cost sharing for this program however USAID does encourage cost sharing and any proposed cost sharing will be assessed as part of determining which applications offer the greatest value.

Jerry Glover: This is Jerry again. "The geospatial consortium asks for significant linkage with IFPRI. Can you please elaborate on that as it is specifically mentioned? IFPRI, it gives them significant power to drive the whole process and consortium. Will they be open to all competitors? If they form an exclusive commitment to one M.E. it puts others at a disadvantage."

On page 47 of the RFA we specifically address that and saying that, "Applicants should describe how the applicant if selected for an award identify and engage relevant projects and partners during the program launch phase. This does not preclude applicants from identifying former members of the consortium and demonstrating their commitment to participate in the program if the applicant is selected for an award but applicants must not preclude such organizations from also agreeing to partner with other applicants if they are selected for an award resulting from this RFA. Any attempt by an applicant to secure an exclusive commitment from a partner or a program will be viewed unfavorably by USAID." Let me further add IFPRI doesn't necessarily have to be a partner but it should be described how the consortium would engage with organizations, institutions like IFPRI doing very relevant work. So if IFPRI is not part of the consortium that does not exclude you from being the awardee. However, it's necessary to outline how organizations and institutions such as IFPRI would be engaged.

"Most or all of the 2013 innovation labs have a different management model than the old CRSPs also known as the Collaborative Research Supportive Programs. In other words, for those there was not an M.E. This announcement seems to be a hybrid of the old and the new." Based on some of the reviews of the CRSPs and current innovation labs we felt that this model took advantage of the ability of the managing entity to award sub-awards competitively but also have greater flexibility in making decisions that aren't based on competitive awards. So it is a hybrid as you point out and it just seemed that this gave greater flexibility and allowed for more partners to be involved in the process both in a competitive and in a non-competitive manner.

Julie Maccartee: Thank you Jerry. It looks like four or five more questions have come in just while we were answering this set. So we'll go ahead and take another one of our patented ten minute breaks and see what we can do to address any further questions that have come in. Please continue to submit and we will probably wrap this up a bit earlier once we try to answer this next wave of questions. So now is the time. Again, we'll be posting a full transcript of the questions and answers, kind of the official version on Grants.gov I believe by the end of next week. So we'll take another quick break and get back to you.

Hi everyone. We're back with the answers to another wave of questions about sustainable intensification RFA. So we see that we've captured most of the questions on the back end. We haven't seen any new ones come in in the past five minutes or so. Once we finish answering these questions we'll still leave the webinar open for about ten minutes in case some additional questions come in and at that point we'll go ahead and close out and as we mentioned post a transcript of the questions and answers on Grants.gov by the end of next week. If you have any questions that come up later on you are always welcome to e-mail them to Christine Dwulet and we'll put her e-mail at the top of this notes pod again as we close out. So I'll pass it on over to Jerry and Christine.

Jerry Glover: Okay, I'll answer the first question. "How important will it be to identify potential partners for RFP response dealing with proposed consortia and dealing with proposed regional emphasis?" For the geospatial consortium it will be necessary to identify potential partners and to identify the lead institution for that consortium. Of course for the appropriate scale mechanization consortium that will be an RFA issued by the M.E. after a certain amount of time. So we don't expect you to identify beforehand the partners for that award that will be issued by the M.E. Of course similarly for the sub-awards coming out of each regional activity we don't expect you to know beforehand who those potential partners will be. I'll let Christine answer the next question.

Christine Dwulet: "How should the lump sum items of the budget by handled? By single line item? Are we expected to estimate the number of sub-awards for each?" This is another question that we'd like to acknowledge but we're going to hold off on answering it on this one so we can give you more detail.

The next question, "Could you share and Excel version of the chart on page 54? This needs to be included in our application, right?" Yes, it does need to be captured in your application but no we will not be providing an Excel version of the chart.

Jerry Glover: "The M.E. cannot ask for exclusive commitment but IFPRI can have exclusive commitment or differentiate among M.E.s?" Yes, it's true. If IFPRI does not agree to work with you that will not count against you. It's just we included IFPRI as we did other organizations because of some of the relevant work that they do that might be good to include if possible, if useful, if relevant. So that will not count against you if IFPRI chooses not to work with the applicant. I'll let Christine take the next one.

Christine Dwulet: "Who will be responsible for evaluating proposals received? Will it be primarily USAID or will outside experts also be involved? Thank you." Applications received will be evaluated by a technical evaluation committee comprised of technical experts in the agricultural and sustainable intensification fields.

Jerry Glover: "Africa Rising is very active and has similar goals and consortiums in two of the three regions with similar structure and activities mentioned in this RFA. How do you view this RFA address issues differently?" Well indeed in some of the regions Africa Rising has complementary or overlapping activities. They don't necessarily cover the same level of specificity that this program is expected to, issues such as mechanization, the geospatial mapping and so on. So one of the tasks of the applicant will be to assess to the extent possible during the application process where this new innovation lab led by U.S. universities will compliment, overlap with or work in other areas where Africa Rising, a CGIAR led activity or program will not. So there has to be some balance between those two programs that have some overlapping objectives and interest.

Another way to look at it is we hope that this sustainable intensification innovation lab will be able to provide guidance to activities such as Africa Rising as well as USAID missions in the countries and the regions that we're targeting as well as more globally to the development community as a whole. So it's really a part of this application process to assess the current landscape of relevant activities, figure out where the openings and opportunities are for an innovation lab, taking advantage of the strengths of the U.S. universities and their partners and then targeting the regions and identifying the specific themes to take on in it.

Julie Maccartee: Thank you Jerry and Christine. Well we've seen a couple of questions come in on the back end during that portion. So for the next ten minutes or so we'll be coming in and out a few times, going back and forth seeing what we can answer. But if you feel your questions have been answered please do feel free to take off. We really appreciate you attending or appreciate your questions. We hope this has been helpful to you. As we mentioned if you have further questions you can contact Christine Dwulet. We'll put her e-mail address up there on top of the notes pod one more time before we take off. Her contact information is also on Grants.gov in the RFA. So thank you all very much for attending. We'll hang out for another ten minutes or so but again, if you feel that this is time for you to drop off please do. We'll mute for a moment while we confer on some questions. But thank you all.

Hi everyone. We are back. As you can see we have posted four additional questions that have come in at the top of the notes pod there in the middle of your screen. So we'll go ahead and answer those ones as well. Passing it over to Jerry.

Jerry Glover: So the first question, "Can we commission research part of the funds specifically for the mission buy in?" The answer is yes. The innovation lab can commission research or compete research based on mission preferences and discussions around each buy in.

"How much latitude does the M.E. have for using project resources for additional staff support?" Staff support for the M.E. should be taken out of the M.E. budget, however, if additional projects such as buy ins, mission buy ins and associate awards require additional staff support some resources could be used for additional staff support.

"Does the draft RFA that we submit for the ASMC, the Appropriate Scale Mechanization Consortium get included in the appendix?" Yes. Another way to put it, it does not count against the page limit of the application. It does go in as an appendix.

"Can in-country institutions be part of the technical advisory committee?" Yes, their participation is welcome.

Julie Maccartee: All right. See, we have not seen any additional questions come in other than a request to repost the organizations to partner with back on the screen. Someone would like to see that slide that was up. So I suppose we can go ahead and switch back to that for a moment. We haven't seen any other questions come in. So we'll still wait for about five more minutes in case anything else comes in but we really appreciate your attendance, your questions and your feedback.

Jerry Glover: This is Jerry. If the slide you're referring is the one showing the institutions leading our other Sustainable Intensification programs, this wasn't so much a slide of recommended partners. It was just simply to show what other current activities are included in our program on sustainable intensification. It's really just to show you the current context or background in which this new innovation lab will be placed. In fact we have two that are ending in September of 2014-- one is the sustainable agriculture and natural resource management innovation lab. This new sustainable intensification innovation lab in part replaces that innovation lab.

The other one that will be re-competed is the integrated pest management innovation lab which under the Virginia Tech award is also ending in September of 2014. Again, if the question about recommended partners refer to this slide this is not necessarily a slide of recommended partners. It's just to give you a bit of background about the program for sustainable intensification.

Julie Maccartee: Questions should be submitted to Christine Dwulet and not to Jerry Glover. Everything should be going through Christine from this point forward. We have one more question that just came in that's been posted at the top. So Jerry will go ahead and answer that one.

Jerry Glover: So the question is, "Can you explain the hosting of the regional coordinators on site? How should that be done?" Frankly that will be the responsibility of the managing entity to work that out. So we don't have a specific way that that would need to be done.

Julie Maccartee: All right. Thank you all very much. That concludes our question and answer session. We appreciate once again your attendance and please keep an eye on Grants.gov for an amendment. Thank you.

[End of Audio]

End of Amendment 01