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Issuance Date:	June 7, 2024
Pre-Concept Note Information Sessions RSVP:	June 14, 2023
Pre-Concept Note Information Session:	June 25, 2024
Deadline for Questions:	July 1, 2024
Concept Note Submission Closing Dates:	August 9, 2024 5:00pm Pakistan Standard Time

Subject: USAID/Pakistan Inclusive Partnerships for Climate Resilience (IPCR) Activity and Addendum No. 72039124RFA00001 to the Higher Education for Leadership, Innovation, and Exchange (HELIX) New Partnerships Initiative (NPI) Annual Program Statement (APS) No. 7200AA20APS00009

Catalog of Federal Domestic Assistance: 98.001, Foreign Assistance for Programs Overseas

Pursuant to the Foreign Assistance Act of 1961, as amended, the United States Government, as represented by the [U.S. Agency for International Development \(USAID\)](#), the [Bureau for Inclusive Growth, Partnerships, and Innovation](#), and USAID/Pakistan, is announcing the Inclusive Partnerships for Climate Resilience (IPCR) Addendum to the Higher Education for Leadership, Innovation, and Exchange (HELIX), a New Partnerships Initiative (NPI) Annual Program Statement (APS), hereafter known as the HELIX APS.

Through this IPCR Addendum, USAID/Pakistan aims to engage U.S. Higher Education Institutes (U.S. HEIs) and amplify the Agency's work through and with higher education institutes. NPI seeks to support partner countries to achieve sustainable and resilient results and catalyze more effective partnering for impact. This Addendum disseminates information to prospective Applicants so they may develop and submit Concept Notes in response and ultimately to be considered for USAID funding. This Addendum describes and provides:

- The type of activities for which Concept Notes will be considered;
- Available funding, process and requirements for submitting Concept Notes and Full Applications;
- The Merit Review Criteria for evaluating Concept Notes; and
- Refers prospective Applicants to relevant documentation and resources.

USAID/Pakistan anticipates awarding one Fixed Amount Award under this Addendum. Based on the submitted Concept Note(s), USAID/Pakistan will determine whether to request a Full Application from an eligible organization(s). To be competitive under IPCR Addendum to the HELIX APS, Concept Notes and Full Applications must be fully responsive to all directions under the APS except when specifically noted otherwise in this Addendum or in the request for full application.

USAID may not award to an applicant unless the applicant has complied with all applicable Unique Entity Identifier (UEI) and System for Award Management (SAM) requirements detailed in Section C.1. The registration process may take many weeks to complete. Therefore, applicants are encouraged to begin registration early in the process.

USAID will conduct a virtual Pre-Concept Note Information Session for the U.S. HEI prime applicants and interested Pakistani universities on June 25, 2024. Applicants and Pakistani universities are encouraged to attend this information session so that they may fully understand the requirements of this Addendum and network with potential Pakistani university partners. Applicants and Pakistani

universities are requested to acknowledge their attendance by RSVP to Mr. Adnan Khurshid at akhurshid@usaid.gov with a copy to Muhammad Ali Bilal, at mbilal@usaid.gov no later than June 14, 2024. While the eligibility for the awards prime partner is restricted to the U.S. Higher Education Institutions (HEIs), Pakistani universities are encouraged to attend the virtual information session to exchange information, collaborate, and potentially form partnerships with U.S. HEIs. The google link of the virtual information session will be shared by June 21, 2024.

Please send any questions to the point(s) of contact identified in Section D. The deadline for questions is shown above. Responses to questions received prior to the deadline will be furnished to all potential applicants through an amendment to this addendum posted on www.grants.gov.

To be eligible for award, the applicant must provide all information as required in this notice of funding opportunity (NOFO) and meet eligibility standards in Section C of this Addendum. This funding opportunity is posted on www.grants.gov, and may be amended. Potential applicants should regularly check the website to ensure they have the latest information pertaining to this notice of funding opportunity. It is the responsibility of the Applicant to ensure that the entire APS and Addendum Opportunity have been downloaded from www.grants.gov. USAID bears no responsibility for data errors resulting from transmission or conversion process. If you have difficulty registering on www.grants.gov or accessing the APS, please contact the grants.gov Helpdesk at 1-800-518-4726 or via email at support@grants.gov for technical assistance.

Issuance of this Addendum does not constitute an award or commitment on the part of the U.S. Government (USG) to make an award, nor does it commit the USG to pay for costs incurred in the preparation and submission of a Concept Note or Application(s). The actual number of assistance awards, if any, is subject to the availability of funds, as well as the viability of an eventual Full Application received.

Thank you for your interest in USAID programs.

Sincerely,

Bruce Gelband
Agreement Officer
USAID/Pakistan Office of Acquisition & Assistance

U.S. AGENCY FOR INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT

ANNOUNCEMENT: CALL FOR CONCEPT NOTES

USAID/Pakistan Inclusive Partnerships for Climate Resilience (IPCR) Activity

Addendum No: 72039124RFA00001

UNDER THE EXISTING

**Higher Education for Leadership, Innovation, and Exchange (HELIX)
Annual Program Statement**

A New Partnerships Initiative (NPI) Opportunity

No.: 7200AA20APS00009

PLEASE NOTE: This is an addendum to an existing announcement. All interested U.S. Higher Education Institutions (U.S. HEIs) should carefully review both this addendum and the full announcement¹. Important information contained in the full worldwide announcement is not repeated in this addendum.

This activity is authorized in accordance with Part 1 of the Foreign Assistance Act of 1961, as Amended. Through the USAID/Pakistan Inclusive Partnerships for Climate Resilience Activity No.: 72039124RFA00001 Addendum to the Higher Education for Leadership, Innovation, and Exchange (HELIX) Annual Program Statement (APS) - A New Partnerships Initiative (NPI) No.: 7200AA20APS00009, USAID/Pakistan seeks to strengthen the capacity of Pakistani universities to lead gender-inclusive, climate-resilient responses in the water sector.

¹ <https://grants.gov/search-results-detail/326056>

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LIST OF ACRONYMS

APS: Annual Program Statement

ADS: Automated Directives System

CDCS: Country Development Cooperation Strategy

CFR: The Code for Federal Regulations

HEC: Higher Education Commission of Pakistan

HEI: Higher Education Institution

HELIX: Higher Education for Leadership, Innovation, and Exchange

IPCR: Inclusive Partnerships for Climate Resilience

NOFO: Notice of Funding Opportunity

NPI: New Partnerships Initiative

USAID: U.S. Agency for International Development

UEI: Unique Entity Identifier

USG: U.S. Government

SECTION A: PROGRAM DESCRIPTION

The U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) issues this Addendum pursuant to the Foreign Assistance Act (FAA) of 1961, as amended. Any potential resulting award(s) will be subject to 2 CFR 700 and 2 CFR 200 – Uniform Administrative Requirements, Cost Principles, and Audit Requirements for Federal Awards and USAID’s Standard Provisions for U.S Based organizations per ADS 303.

1. Background**a. Pakistan Context**

With approximately 230 million people², 55 percent of whom are under the age of 24, Pakistan has the fifth largest population in the world. Due to social, economic, and political challenges, Pakistan rates in the “low” human development category and ranks 164/193 countries in the Human Development Index³. However, there are bright spots. For example, Pakistan has shown progress since 2020 in the Global Innovation Index, moving from 107th to 88th, with improvements in innovation outputs.

The impacts of climate change will exacerbate the challenges Pakistan faces. Pakistan’s Vision 2025 identified 25 goals to move Pakistan into one of the top 25 economies by 2025. While many of those goals have yet to be realized, addressing challenges caused by climate change features prominently in the strategy. Specifically, the Vision identifies higher education and water as areas of needed improvement and growth.

b. Water and Climate Challenges in Pakistan

A single basin country, Pakistan relies on the Indus River and its tributaries for water needs. Pakistan’s water management sector faces the immediate and dual risks of frequent floods and water scarcity. Recent floods inflicted devastating impacts on the livelihoods, food security, and health of local communities, especially women and marginalized groups. Meanwhile, increasing demands on water resources, primarily for agricultural, domestic, and industrial needs, coupled with pollution, salinization, and mismanagement of water-related resources has reduced the per capita annual water availability⁴.

Climate change is further stressing this water imbalance and jeopardizing economic and social development. While Pakistan invested in the Indus River System to manage riverine floods, it did not invest in the hill torrents in southern Punjab. The hill torrents’ locally generated flash floods inflict devastating impacts on the livelihood, food security and health of local communities who are already politically, economically, socially and geographically disadvantaged.

² <https://www.cia.gov/the-world-factbook/countries/pakistan/>

³ [UNDP’s 2023-2024 Human Development Report](#)

⁴ <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC9464874>

In all projected climate scenarios, there is a clear trend of heightened water demand. This necessitates a shift in water allocation towards non-agricultural purposes, which jeopardizes food security. Regions such as southern Punjab, Sindh, and Balochistan, where groundwater is often unsuitable for consumption, place an additional burden on women who are tasked with fetching water from distant sources. This compounds existing gender inequalities and underscores the urgent need for targeted interventions to ensure equitable access to water resources, particularly for vulnerable communities.

In support of the National Water Policy (2018)⁵, the National Water Conservation Strategy (2023-2027)⁶ provides guidance for federal and provincial government institutions, international development agencies, research institutes, academia, private sector, and civil society organizations on water conservation strategies. The strategy identifies opportunities for government, academia, and the private sector to collaborate on research and innovation to ensure conservation of water resources and equitable resource distribution.

In addition, the National Research Agenda⁷, in support of Vision 2025, identifies water as a priority area for research and development and discusses the integral role that research and innovation in the water sector will have on other relevant sectors, such as agriculture, the environment, and energy.

Despite tremendous potential, Pakistan lacks a scientifically informed, inclusive, gender-sensitive, and systemic approach to deal with the impacts of climate change on water.

c. Higher Education in Pakistan

Pakistan has over 200 public and private universities and 3,000 degree colleges (similar to U.S. community colleges). The Higher Education Commission (HEC), a constitutionally established regulatory body, oversees university funding and accreditation. Higher education enrollment at the undergraduate level has increased recently in Pakistan, from 8 percent in 2018 to 13 percent in 2021. However, women face additional barriers to accessing education and have lower enrollment than their male peers⁸. According to data from the HEC⁹ women account for 36 percent of full-time faculty members; however, only 7.4 percent of those are Ph.D. holders, compared to 23.3 percent of full-time male faculty members.

Pakistani higher education institutions have the potential to lead Pakistan's water and climate-related response by training the next generation of climate leaders, generating the knowledge and innovation to address major challenges, and engaging local communities to inform inclusive climate action and policy. Some Pakistani universities, especially top tier universities, integrate water climate themes into academic programs, applied research, and

⁵ <https://www.fao.org/faolex/results/details/fr/c/LEX-FAOC181229/>

⁶ <https://www.fao.org/faolex/results/details/fr/c/LEX-FAOC220650/>

⁷ <https://www.pcst.org.pk/docs/nra.pdf>

⁸ <https://data.worldbank.org/indicator/SE.TER.ENRR?locations=PK>

⁹ <https://www.hec.gov.pk/english/services/students/PCD/Documents/UniversityFulltimeFaculty.pdf>

institutional practices. However, for many universities climate related studies are a new field. Universities face resource constraints, competing priorities, and expertise gaps.

Academic researchers in Pakistan are increasing their contributions to scholarly journals, including increased publication and citation rates.¹⁰ Nonetheless, research in Pakistan needs to shift from theoretical to applied research that generates actionable, locally-led solutions¹¹ in collaboration with public and private sector actors. HEC mandated all Higher Education Institutes (HEI) establish Offices of Research, Innovation, and Commercialization (ORICs), which led to the establishment of Business Incubation Centers (BICs). Pakistan's HEC supports and encourages HEIs to establish BICs to strengthen the link between academia and industry.¹²

There are eight government-initiated national incubation centers: NIC Islamabad, NIC Karachi, NIC Lahore, NIC Peshawar, NIC Quetta, NIC Hyderabad, NIC Faisalabad, and NIC Aerospace Technologies. At the provincial government level, Punjab has Plan 9, and Durshal is an initiative by the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa government.

As market research for this addendum, USAID gathered 18 Pakistani women's universities on the sidelines of the February 2024 Breaking Barriers through Diversity and Inclusivity Conference to discuss water and gender in Pakistan. Their insights on gaps and opportunities in Pakistan are included in Annex 2: Focus Group Discussion Report of this Addendum.

d. Gender and Social Inclusion and Climate Change

Women and girls, in all their diversity, play a critical leadership role in addressing the climate crisis. Globally, the relationship among women, girls, the environment, and their communities makes women and girls uniquely poised to develop and contribute to locally relevant and effective climate interventions reflective of the entire population. Further, the frequency and intensity of extreme weather events and related disasters disproportionately affect women and girls.

Women and other marginalized communities are at the forefront of the impacts of climate change-induced disasters and water insecurity, but they are left behind in policy and development decisions. Pakistani women are particularly vulnerable to climate impacts because of their exclusion from the mainstream policy and development decisions. Extreme weather events disproportionately affect indigenous communities (Baloch, Pashtuns, Sindhis, and tribes inhabiting Balochistan, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, and Sindh), ethnic minorities (Baltis, Sikhs, Christians, Hindus and others), rural populations, and low-income households.

A lack of scientific data on vulnerabilities and awareness among affected marginalized communities further compounds disparities and inequities. Pakistan's climate adaptation and mitigation strategies consider gender as an "add on" rather than integral consideration to be built into climate policy and implementation. To enhance the climate resilience of women and

¹⁰ <https://pdfs.semanticscholar.org/c98d/05babfe5ccf74ea23dd70e966e4129c66d6a.pdf>

¹¹ <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC8281143/>

¹² <https://www.trade.gov/country-commercial-guides/pakistan-education#>.

other groups vulnerable to climate change, Pakistan must address the lack of awareness, inadequate scientific evidence on women's vulnerability to climate shocks, and non-inclusive decision making.

Despite the disproportionate impacts of climate change on women and other disadvantaged communities, there is little space for their voice to be heard, let alone incorporated in rescue, relief and development decisions. During 2010 floods, women comprised 49 percent of the displaced people, and the maternal mortality rate was as high as 381 per 100,000 live births in flood-affected areas. According to the National Disaster Management Authority (NDMA), the 2022 floods affected around 33 million people, including an estimated 8.2 million women. These floods killed more than 1,700 people, one-third of whom were children. Women's ability to cope with the disasters is also limited due to their financial vulnerability and challenges with land ownership. During disasters, women farmers were not compensated for crop losses and could not avail the government's crop insurance scheme.

2. Activity Goal and Objectives

With climate change exacerbating water and gender challenges, there is an opportunity to leverage higher education institutions to drive locally-led, relevant solutions in their communities through research generation and translation. To achieve this vision, the **goal of the Inclusive Partnerships for Climate Resilience Activity is to support Pakistani universities to conduct gender-inclusive research in water management and translate it into action.** Research to action or research translation¹³ is the process that transforms research findings into a form that is relevant to practitioners or other audiences. By improving both research generation and translation, American and Pakistani higher education institutions have the potential to be central actors in advancing Pakistan's climate resilience and improving gender equality. USAID envisions an approach to achieve this goal that moves beyond training alone and employs a "learn by doing" hands-on approach. This type of approach works to strengthen institutional capacity and to deliver real world skills to researchers that advances applied research and turns it into something useful for decision makers and practitioners. Research can change the world—but only when it is communicated effectively and shared to those who can improve programs and policies.

USAID/Pakistan is seeking Concept Notes for a higher education partnership to achieve two primary objectives:

- **Objective 1:** Strengthen the capacity of Pakistani higher education institutions to conduct demand-driven, locally-relevant, and high quality research and translate research to action to inform effective, inclusive and gender-sensitive policies, programs, and practices in the water sector.

¹³ <https://www.rtachsn.org/resources/research-translation-toolkit/>

- **Objective 2:** Improve and promote women’s leadership and the university’s capacity to enable women faculty members, researchers, and graduate students to lead community responsive research.

3. Policies and Guiding Documents

IPCR is expected to support the overarching goal of the Country Development Cooperation Strategy¹⁴ (CDCS) of USAID/Pakistan, which is to foster a “more resilient, gender-equitable, inclusive, and prosperous Pakistan” through three development objectives:

- I. Broad-Based, Climate-Resilient Economic Growth Advanced
- II. Inclusive Democratic and Accountable Governance Strengthened
- III. Healthier, More Educated Population

By leveraging higher education institutions to support research generation and translation in the water sector, this activity is expected to advance the intermediate results of “Climate change adaptation accelerated” and “Health and education systems strengthened to respond to key priorities.”

USAID/Pakistan encourages applicants to review the USAID Policy Registry, which includes all current development policies, strategies, and vision statements. The Policy Registry aligns with the five global challenges in USAID’s “Policy Framework: Driving Progress Beyond Programs.”¹⁵

While many of the current USAID policies, strategies, and frameworks are relevant to the IPCR activity, USAID/Pakistan highlights the specific USAID, USG, and Government of Pakistan (GoP) policies, strategies, frameworks, and related technical priorities relevant to IPCR below.

- I. **Green Alliance Framework:** The U.S. - Pakistan Green Alliance Framework promotes bilateral cooperation that enables both countries to jointly face the climate, environmental, and economic needs of the present and future. This framework delivers partnerships on agriculture, water, and clean energy.
- II. **National Water Policy¹⁶:** The National Water Policy (NWP) approved in 2018 emphasizes on water management through conservation and provides guidelines for effective planning to manage existing water resources. Pakistan’s critical water situation demands an appropriate water conservation strategy that may help in optimizing water usage; reducing wastage of this precious resource and satisfying all users and demands equitably. The NWP states “Efficiency and conservation will be promoted at all levels”. Accordingly, water conservation

¹⁴ Available online at: <https://www.usaid.gov/pakistan/cdcs>

¹⁵ Available online at: <https://www.usaid.gov/policy/documents/mar-23-2023-usaids-policy-framework>

¹⁶ Available online at: <https://water.muet.edu.pk/wp-content/uploads/2019/03/National-Water-Policy.pdf>

needs to be a central part of all processes of planning, development and management of water resources.

- III. **National Water Conservation Strategy for Pakistan¹⁷:** In line with the recommendations of the National Water Policy, the Ministry of Water Resources has developed the National Water Conservation Strategy (NWCS) for federal and provincial government institutions, international development agencies, research institutes, academia, private sector, and civil society organizations. This strategy takes into account challenges faced by agriculture, domestic and industrial sectors and suggests some necessary conservation measures to create a balance between demand and supply.
- IV. **National Research Agenda¹⁸:** The National Research Agenda has been prepared with the aim to align the national Research and Development (R&D) and innovation activities with the Vision 2025 and to provide a direction to the national R&D efforts so that they adequately support achievement of the goals set in the Vision.
- V. **USAID's Climate Strategy (2022-30)¹⁹:** Targets meaningful participation and active leadership in climate action of indigenous peoples, local communities, women, youth, and other marginalized and/or underrepresented groups. This activity advances the Climate Strategy objective of "supporting higher education institutions, research institutions, and local scientists to advance research, innovations, and the development of an educated and technically skilled workforce needed to drive and maintain systems change."
- VI. **U.S. Global Water Strategy (2022-27)²⁰:** Identifies poor and marginalized people and those living in vulnerable situations, especially women and girls, as the most difficult to reach with services that meet their needs. The Strategy supports efforts to understand and respond to the intersection of marginalization and water security, sanitation, and hygiene.
- VII. **USAID Education Policy²¹:** A central goal of USAID's Education Policy is to strengthen the capacity of higher education institutions to be central actors in development by conducting and applying research, delivering quality education, and engaging communities. USAID's Higher Education Program Framework²²

¹⁷ Available online at:

<https://pcrwr.gov.pk/wp-content/uploads/2023/02/National-Water-Conservation-Strategy-for-Pakistan-2023-27.pdf>

¹⁸ Available online at: <https://www.pcst.org.pk/docs/nra.pdf>

¹⁹ Available online at: <https://www.usaid.gov/policy/climate-strategy>

²⁰ Available online at: <https://www.usaid.gov/water-and-sanitation/us-global-water-strategy>

²¹ Available online at: <https://www.usaid.gov/policy/education>

²² Available online at: <https://www.edu-links.org/resources/higher-education-program-framework>

provides the Agency’s vision for university capacity development, higher education partnerships, and local ownership.

- VIII. **USAID’s 2023 Gender Equality and Women’s Empowerment Policy²³**: This activity advances the Gender Equality and Women’s Empowerment Policy objective to “increase the capability of women and girls to fully exercise their rights, determine their life outcomes, assume leadership roles, and influence decision-making in households, communities, and societies.” This objective includes the increased meaningful participation and active leadership of women and girls in climate research and action.

4. Coordination and Complementarity

USAID is committed to increasing the sustainable impact of our development assistance through partnerships, alliances, and collaboration with stakeholders. Coordination and collaboration with stakeholders, such as the private sector, GoP (national and provincial), and other USAID and donor projects, will inform the program design and implementation. The IPRC award is expected to collaborate with or build upon the following USAID projects:

- **Climate Resilient Water Governance activity (2024-2029, under design)**: The activity aims to build the resilience of communities and water systems to systemically adapt to the impacts of climate change through inclusive governance and management practices. The activity will support host country, private sector, and community initiatives to transform floods into economic opportunities. The activity will capitalize on the opportunistic aspects of climate change by ensuring beneficial use of flood water for economic, social and environmental wellbeing. It will also reduce flood-related risks and devastation. The Inclusive Partnerships for Climate Resilience Activity supports the activity goal to improve resilient water governance and management systems in Pakistan to combat extreme weather events.
- **Higher Education System Strengthening Activity²⁴ (2021-2026)**: The activity brings together American and Pakistani universities to improve higher education management, market-relevant instruction, and student support services. By strengthening the accessibility and relevance of 16 Pakistani universities, the activity increases graduates’ employability and expands equitable access to higher education, especially for women and marginalized groups. Prime implementing partner: The University of Utah.
- **Merit and Needs Based Scholarship Program (2004-2026)**: Through a grant to the Higher Education Commission, USAID awards undergraduate scholarships and stipends to talented, economically disadvantaged Pakistani youth. Students study agriculture, business, engineering, medicine, and social sciences at 30 Pakistani universities, including four women’s universities. Implementing partner: the Higher Education

²³ Available online at: https://www.usaid.gov/sites/default/files/2023-03/2023_Gender%20Policy_508.pdf

²⁴ Activity website is: <https://hessa.utah.edu/>

Commission.

- **Recharge Pakistan Project (2023-2028):** The flagship USAID/GCF/Coca-Cola/World Wildlife Fund-funded Recharge Pakistan Project which will build resilience of communities and natural assets through introduction of green infrastructure and ecosystem-based adaptation approach to tackle floods and droughts in selected basins of Punjab, Sindh and KP provinces.
- **U.S.-Pakistan Center for Advanced Studies in Water (2014-2019):** USAID established the U.S.-Pakistan Center for Advanced Studies in Water at Mehran University of Engineering and Technology (MUET) Jamshoro. The project built and implemented a state-of-the-art and modern applied research center to train the next generation of engineers and water professionals to solve the water security challenges, enhance collaboration between academic and industry, and inform policy formation. The activity funded student and faculty exchanges and conducted water-related research.

5. Programmatic and Geographic Focus

Programmatic Focus

USAID/Pakistan anticipates that the Inclusive Partnerships for Climate Resilience activity will contribute to USAID's Mission objectives through successful achievement of one or more of the following outcomes and focal areas as leverage points in higher education programming:

- **Increase Capability, Contributions, and Quality of *Individuals*:** Individuals, whether faculty, researchers, staff, students, recent graduates, or others, play important roles in improving Pakistan's climate resiliency and ensuring that all people, regardless of gender, have access to water resources. Individuals that are within the local system are best placed to discover and elevate solutions that can lead to sustained development gains, and in the case of IPCR, increase water security in the face of climate change and gender inequality. IPCR envisions that the focus at the individual level will primarily be on higher education faculty and graduate students conducting or contributing to water and climate change related research. It also anticipated that IPCR may engage with HEI administrators, ministry and other regulatory officials, private sector representatives, and with local community members through its university-community linkages. IPCR is expected to include a primary focus on improving gender-responsive research and research translation.
- **Enhance Sustainable and Self-Reliant *Institutions* of Higher Education:** While the number of HEI partners under IPCR, as well as the focus on climate resilience and water may be limited in its scope, the activity can become a model for other sectoral research and innovation needs. Within the focus of supporting HEIs, IPCR will strengthen local ownership and foster partnership across both U.S. and Pakistan HEIs and other organizations. The activity should serve as a model for improved performance of HEIs, specifically focused on the core function of research and

innovation. This may include, but is not limited to, the creation and implementation of gender-sensitive policies and practices; focus on demand driven applied research that develops pathways from research to field application; improved management, administrative, and financial structures; improved understanding of local market and private sector needs; and development of infrastructure for sponsored projects and research; among others.

- **Strengthen Higher Education Systems to Ensure Long-lasting Impact:** IPCR seeks to strengthening the research and innovation of the Pakistani higher education system. USAID/Pakistan recognizes that higher education and its related systems are complex and interrelated. Outcomes on a systems level should strengthen actors, including HEIs, relevant ministries, and actors in the water management sector, to ensure an enabling environment and system-level change in water management approaches.
- **Advance the Higher Education Evidence Base for *Learning*:** USAID/Pakistan expects IPCR to advance learning in support of the USAID Higher Education Learning Agenda²⁵.

Geographic Focus

USAID/Pakistan is not designating a specific geographic focus within the country of Pakistan for this award. Applicants may propose higher education partnerships across provinces. The expected geographic code is 937 to include activities in Pakistan and the United States.

Target Population

The partner is at least one Pakistani higher education institution.

Cost Sharing

USAID has established that Cost Share is required for the successful applicant to be eligible for IPCR. A total 10% of in-kind or/and cash cost share contribution is appropriate in the IPCR activity.

Guiding Principles

Interventions under this activity should incorporate the following guiding principles:

- **Locally-led Development and Sustainability:** To sustain results beyond the life of the activity, the Inclusive Partnerships for Climate Resilience Activity should work with and through Pakistani universities to strengthen their institutional capacity to generate and translate gender-equitable climate resilient research in the water sector. Locally led development is the process in which local actors – encompassing individuals, communities, networks, organizations, private entities, and governments – set their own agendas, develop solutions, and bring the capacity, leadership, and resources to make those solutions a reality. In the case of IPCR much of this focus will be on the local HEIs. USAID recognizes that local leadership and ownership are essential for fostering

²⁵ Available at <https://www.edu-links.org/HELearningAgenda>

sustainable results across our development and humanitarian assistance work. Community engagement fosters local ownership. Local ownership helps ensure the long-term sustainability of initiatives.

- **Equity and Inclusion:** For societies to thrive, marginalized and vulnerable groups (which in the Pakistan context includes women, youth, ethnic minorities, people from rural areas especially workers with no land ownership, and persons with disabilities) need to have equal access to opportunities and resources, such as education and technology. This will further enable them to access economic opportunities, income, land, and markets to help them to fully participate as productive members of society. They must also have equal rights and opportunities as change makers, peace-builders, and leaders.
- **University Partnerships:** Partnerships between U.S. and partner country higher education institutions are a U.S. Congressional priority. This exchange of ideas and expertise supports Pakistani universities to become world-class centers for learning, climate response, and community engagement. Harnessing direct university-to-university linkages builds enduring partnerships and strengthens Pakistani universities' capability to respond to climate challenges. Through a U.S./Pakistani higher partnership, USAID envisions transnational learning to advance innovative approaches to enhance research translation and community engagement in water and social inclusion. Where possible, the Inclusive Partnerships for Climate Resilience Activity should leverage and build upon existing collaborations between U.S. and Pakistani higher education institutions.

6. What is the Process?

USAID outlined the process through which potential Applicants may apply under each potential Addendum of the HELIX APS in Section D of the APS and under Section D of this Addendum.

SECTION B: FEDERAL AWARD INFORMATION

Issuance of this IPCR Addendum does not constitute an award commitment on the part of the U.S. Government, nor do those commit the U.S. Government to pay for any costs incurred in the preparation or submission of questions, comments, suggestions, Concept Notes, and/or Full Application. Applicants submit Concept Notes/Applications at their own risk, and all preparation and submission costs are at their own expense.

1. Estimate of Funds Available and Number of Awards Contemplated

Subject to the availability of funds, USAID/Pakistan anticipates supporting up to one (1) award of up to \$1.5 million. USAID reserves the right to award more awards than this estimate and is not obligated to make any awards. Unless otherwise stated herein, all terms and conditions of the HELIX APS apply.

2. Start Date and Period of Performance for Federal Award

The anticipated start date of this award is October 2024 with an estimated period of performance not to exceed three years.

3. Type of Instrument

Assistance Awards that result from this IPCR Addendum may take the form of a cooperative agreement. The [Shock Responsive Programming and Adaptive Mechanisms](https://usaidlearninglab.org/resources/shock-responsive-programming-and-adaptive-mechanisms)²⁶ guide can inform how to make an award responsive to a context subject to recurrent crises or conflicts.

²⁶ Available at <https://usaidlearninglab.org/resources/shock-responsive-programming-and-adaptive-mechanisms>

SECTION C: ELIGIBILITY INFORMATION

1. Eligible Applicants

In accordance with ADS 303.3.6.5, the eligibility for the IPRC addendum is restricted to U.S. higher education institutions²⁷ as the prime partner to harness their unique expertise and strengthen linkages between American and Pakistani universities. Through this Activity, USAID aims to leverage the unique expertise of U.S. Higher Education Institutions in partnership with Pakistani universities to lead gender-inclusive and climate-resilient water research to action initiatives and to strengthen networks and communities, especially for underserved groups. The pre-Concept Note information session aims to facilitate U.S. HEIs and Pakistani universities understand the requirements of this addendum and may help identify potential partners to implement this activity.

USAID defines “Implementing Partners” as U.S. and non-U.S. non-governmental organizations that can design and implement assistance activities outside the United States. All Implementing Partners must be legally registered entities under applicable law and eligible under the relevant laws to receive funding from a foreign source. Individuals, unregistered, or informal organizations are not eligible to be Implementing Partners. **NPI provides further details on eligibility, depending on the approach to partnership.** Implementing Partners must also have a Unique Entity Identifier (UEI) and maintain current registration in SAM.gov to be eligible to receive United States Government (USG) funding.

All eligible interested organizations are restricted to submitting only one Concept Note as the Prime Applicant. If more than one Concept Note is received with the same Prime Applicant, USAID will seek written clarification from the relevant entity regarding which Concept Note should be considered for review. If clarification is not resolved within five (5) business days, all Concept Notes submitted by the Applicant will be deemed ineligible.

Note: Please note that Applicants can serve as sub-awardees or supporting partners on multiple Concept Notes under an Addendum.

²⁷ USAID’s Education Policy (2018) defines a higher education institution as “an organization that provides educational opportunities that build on secondary education, providing learning activities in specialized fields. It aims at learning at a high level of complexity and specialization. Higher/tertiary education includes what is commonly understood as academic education but also includes advanced vocational or professional education. This may include public or private universities, colleges, community colleges, academically affiliated research institutes, and training institutes, including teacher training institutes.”

SECTION D: APPLICATION AND SUBMISSION INFORMATION

1. Agency Point of Contact

For any questions, correspondence and submissions regarding this IPCR Addendum, please sent an email to Adnan Khurshid, Acquisition and Assistance Specialist at akhurshid@usaid.gov with a copy to Muhammad Ali Bilal, Administrative Agreement Officer at mbilal@usaid.gov following the below timelines.

USAID/Pakistan will furnish promptly to all prospective Applicants, as an amendment to this Addendum, any information concerning this Addendum given to a particular prospective Applicant, if that information is necessary in submitting Applications, or if the lack of it would be prejudicial to any other prospective Applicant.

If an award is made, the Agreement Officer (AO) will appoint an Agreement Officer's Representative (AOR) at that time to provide technical and administrative oversight of the specific award during implementation.

2. Content and Format of Application Submission

- a. **Concept Note:** Applicants are required to follow the attached Annex 1 template for the submission of concept notes, including page restrictions and the instructions in this section.
- b. **Language:** For this Addendum, concept notes must be submitted in English using the APS Concept Note Template (See Annex 1). If USAID requests a full application, the application and all accompanying documentation must also be submitted in English.
- c. **Timelines:**
 - i. **Pre-Concept Note Information Session:** All interested U.S. HEIs and Pakistani Universities are requested to acknowledge their attendance by RSVP no later than the date and time indicated on the cover page. The google link of the virtual information session will be shared by the date and time indicated on the cover page with all interested institutions. The email subject line should be "USAID/Pakistan IPCR Addendum Information Session".
 - ii. **Questions:** Any questions related to the IPCR addendum must be submitted by the date and time indicated on the cover page. The email subject line should be "USAID/Pakistan IPCR Addendum Questions".
 - iii. **Concept Note Submission:** The concept note in response to the IPCR addendum must be submitted by the date and time on the cover page. The email subject line should be "USAID/Pakistan IPCR Addendum Concept Note Submission".
- d. **Concept Note Requirements:** The five-page Concept Note should respond to the Evaluation Criteria (see Section E.3 below). In addition, the Concept Note should address:

- i. **Partnerships:** The Concept Note should propose at least one specific higher education institution in Pakistan with whom the prime applicant (U.S. HEI) proposes to work. During the co-creation, the successful applicant is required/expected to provide a detailed plan or demonstration of how the partnership will achieve the objectives proposed in the application.
- ii. **Theory of Change:** Applicants should propose a contextually relevant theory of change to achieve the goal and objectives envisioned under IPCR. USAID/Pakistan encourages applicants to move beyond a simple if/then theory of change and, instead, articulate outcomes, entry points, interventions, and assumptions that are context specific. Applicants may find this [Theory of Change Workbook](#)²⁸ a useful resource.
- iii. **Research:** Applicants should propose an approach that strengthens research to action in the water sector. This approach should ensure that research is demand-driven and community based. The research to action capacity strengthening should be focused on how academic research can inform policy and practice.
- iv. **Inclusion:** Concept Note/Applications should demonstrate considerations for persons with disabilities, gender equality and women's empowerment, and crisis or conflict-sensitivity²⁹. Within the institutions(s), Applicants should demonstrate an approach that strengthens both institutional and individual capacity, with a focus on women. Illustrative indicators reporting on numbers of beneficiaries reached must report on sex disaggregates and should also include disaggregates to track inclusion of marginalized and underrepresented populations in all contexts. Specific indicators focused on equity and inclusion are encouraged.
- v. **Engagement of Marginalized Communities:** Applicants should demonstrate their capability in reaching underserved populations and communities. The Concept Note must include a brief narrative describing the applicant institution's capability to engage, and historical engagement, with members of marginalized and underrepresented populations³⁰, in keeping with USAID's [Equity Action Plan](#)³¹.

²⁸ See

<https://usaidlearninglab.org/resources/theory-change-workbook-step-step-process-developing-or-strengthening-theories-change>

²⁹ The USAID Education Policy defines conflict sensitivity as the ability of an organization to: 1) understand the context in which the organization operates; 2) understand the two-way interaction between its intervention and that context; and 3) act upon this understanding to minimize negative impacts and maximize positive impacts on conflict.

³⁰ The USAID Education Policy identifies marginalized populations as girls, people affected by or emerging from armed conflict or humanitarian crises, people with disabilities, people in remote or rural areas (including those who lack access to safe water and sanitation), religious or ethnic minorities, indigenous peoples, orphans and children affected by HIV/AIDS, child laborers, married adolescents, and victims of trafficking.

³¹ See https://www.usaid.gov/sites/default/files/2024-02/2024%20EAP_2023.pdf

- vi. Monitoring, Evaluation, and Learning:** Concept Notes should include illustrative indicators used to track progress, quality, and impact (custom or standard indicators³² as applicable), note any technical frameworks that should shape the approach to monitoring, evaluation, or learning, and include at least one illustrative learning priority. Applicants are encouraged to include illustrative learning question(s) as part of Section II of the concept note template. As an NPI mechanism, use of the CBLD-9³³ a standard indicator is required for any activity under the HELIX APS. At the full application stage, additional guidance will be provided. The [Education Reporting Toolkit](#)³⁴ may be a helpful resource.

e. Funding Restrictions

Profit is not allowable for recipients or subrecipients under this award. See 2 CFR 200.331 for assistance in determining whether a sub-tier entity is a subrecipient or contractor. Construction will not be authorized under this award.

U.S. higher education institutions may propose to work with a public or private Pakistani university. Due to legal restrictions, funds provided under an award resulting from this call for concept notes may not pass through to a Pakistani public sector university, nor can a Pakistani public sector university receive a sub-award. However, the prime U.S. higher education institution may still provide technical assistance and other interventions that do not involve financial resource transfers to public sector universities.

³² See <https://www.edu-links.org/resources/compendium-standard-pirs-education-programming> for standard indicators in the education sector .

³³ See <https://www.edu-links.org/resources/cbld9-guidance-education-sector>

³⁴ See <https://www.edu-links.org/indicators>

SECTION E: APPLICATION REVIEW INFORMATION

1. Review of Concept Notes and Full Application

Once a Concept Note has been submitted in response to an IPRC Addendum under the APS, USAID/Pakistan will conduct an initial review of the Concept Note using the criteria outlined in the Merit Review Criteria and Considerations section of the APS and this Addendum.

The purpose of the initial review and related communication is to determine whether USAID wishes to engage in further discussions regarding the proposed approach and activities. The initial review and communication will result in one of three outcomes:

- A decision to forego further consideration of the approach proposed in the Concept Note;
- A decision to provide the Applicant an opportunity to submit a revised Concept Note (this is very rare); OR
- An invitation to engage in more in-depth and specific co-creation discussions aimed at further developing the proposed approach and determining whether to request a Full Application.

2. Co-creation, Collaboration, and Communication

Co-creation is a design approach that USAID and its partners use to design, implement, and oversee innovative, high-impact, and locally-driven development programs. Co-creation takes many forms. For instance, co-creation can bring together applicants and key stakeholders virtually or in-person. Co-creation is an intentional, time-bound approach that allows USAID, applicants, and stakeholders to shape final program designs to meet local priorities. For this activity, USAID/Pakistan envisions holding a virtual co-creation that brings together the apparently successful U.S. Higher Education Institution, the Pakistani partner university, USAID, and other stakeholders to refine the program description and expected outcomes of the final award.

- **Step 1 - Submission of a Concept Note:**

The applicant must use the attached Annex 1 Concept Note Template for preparation and submission of a concept note.

- **Step 2 - Co-Creation:**

After reviewing the Concept Notes, USAID will send an email to all Applicants indicating whether USAID/Pakistan wishes to move forward in the process and continue co-creating and developing the Concept. An interest in continuing with the process is NOT a commitment to an award or even a request for a full application. Those determinations will be made after further co-creation efforts.

After review by USAID/Pakistan, successful applicant(s) will receive instructions from USAID/Pakistan on co-creation under this addendum. Depending on what emerges from the continued co-creation, USAID/Pakistan may request a full application or proceed directly to award negotiations.

The successful applicant will be required to submit a program description, branding and marking plan, vetting related information, and other necessary documents at the time of full application submission.

3. Merit Review Criteria and Considerations

USAID/Pakistan will use the following merit review criteria to assess Concept Note in response to IPRC Addendum. Any Concept Note submitted to this Addendum should propose an approach that satisfies these merit review criteria and exhibits the characteristics set forth below.

Concept Notes will be assessed according to the following merit review criteria on an adjectival system: *Very Good, Satisfactory, and Marginal*. All criteria given below are equally important.

Criterion 1: Alignment with USAID Mission Pakistan Strategic Objectives and Programming Priorities: Extent to which the proposed partnerships, projects, or activities align with USAID policies and strategies, as relevant to the Addendum opportunity, including but not limited to: the U.S. Global Water Strategy, the Education Policy, Youth Policy, Local Capacity Strengthening Policy, Scientific Research Policy, the USAID Climate Strategy, the Indigenous Peoples, Disability and Gender and Women’s Empowerment Policies, and USAID Pakistan’s Country Development Cooperation Strategy.

Criterion 2: Quality and Capabilities of Strategic Partnership Approach and Collaboration for Local Capacity Development of Individuals, Institutions, and/or Systems: Extent to which the proposed partnerships, projects, or activities describe a commitment to equitable collaboration and deep partnership between partners at every stage of the concept development, activity design, and implementation (including, but not limited to, sub-awards to local entities and/or locally established partners); propose appropriate, inclusive, equitable, and effective collaborations with local individuals, institutions, systems, including marginalized groups as defined by the reference to ADS 201 Additional Help³⁵; and demonstrate partner commitment to proposed collaboration(s), including a brief synopsis of how each partner will engage within the partnership.

Criterion 3: Quality, Feasibility, and Sustainability of Proposed Solutions and Impact at Individual, Institutional and/or System-Level: Extent to which the proposed technical solution(s) to achieving objectives/outcomes are technically sound, well-defined, and achievable; likelihood that proposed partnerships, projects, or activities will result in

³⁵ See

https://usaidlearninglab.org/system/files/resource/files/additional_help_for_ads_201_inclusive_development_180726_final_r.pdf

substantially enhanced capacity for individuals, institutions, and/or systems or build the evidence base for higher education and other related systems as relevant to the Addendum; and good practices for data, evidence, and learning are integrated into the proposed approach, including, where possible, the generation of evidence to support adaptive implementation and Agency-wide learning.

Criterion 4: Equity and Inclusion: Extent to which proposed technical solution demonstrates a clear strategy to create improved outcomes using an intersectional lens to prioritize equity along the equity dimensions most relevant to the context, and extent to which a diversity of groups, especially marginalized and underrepresented populations³⁶, are actively invited to contribute and participate at every stage of the concept development, activity design, and implementation.

Criterion 5: Capability to Engage with Underserved Communities: Extent to which the Concept Note demonstrates the applicant's institutional capability (research, communication and outreach capacity), and prior experience of working with underserved and socially disadvantaged communities and populations.

³⁶ The USAID Education Policy identifies marginalized populations as girls, people affected by or emerging from armed conflict or humanitarian crises, people with disabilities, people in remote or rural areas (including those who lack access to safe water and sanitation), religious or ethnic minorities, indigenous peoples, orphans and children affected by HIV/AIDS, child laborers, married adolescents, and victims of trafficking.

SECTION F: FEDERAL AWARD AND ADMINISTRATION INFORMATION

1. Federal Award Notices

The USAID Agreement Officer (AO) is the only individual who may legally commit the U.S. Government to the expenditure of public funds. Applicants are prohibited from charging or incurring costs to the proposed award prior to receipt of either a fully executed award or a specific, written authorization from the AO. USAID will administer awards in accordance with Parts 700 and 200 of Title 2 of the CFR, and Standard Provisions for U.S./non-U.S. organizations.

2. Type of Award

Given the operational and programmatic constraints, Award under this Addendum will (likely) only consist of Fixed-Amount Award, as described below.

Award Type:	Generally used when:	Characterized by:	More Information:
Fixed-Amount Award (FAA): reimburses the recipient for achieving predetermined milestones.	Milestones can be defined; Adequate pricing information is available; Recipient has limited financial and management capacity.	Advantages for both USAID and the recipient (when used appropriately). Milestones with fixed amounts assigned to each. Focus is on outputs and results, limits risk for both parties. USAID pays the grantee when the Agency concurs the milestone is completed. Minimizes administrative burden on USAID and the grantee since payment is not cost reimbursement. Assists in building the institutional capacity of new grantees.	ADS Chapter 303 Grants and Cooperative Agreements to Non-Governmental Organizations

3. Award Reporting Requirements

Reporting requirements for any awards made under this addendum will follow USAID standard reporting requirements.

4. Additional Information on Award Administration

Reporting requirements for any awards made under this addendum will follow USAID standard reporting requirements.

- ADS Chapter 201 Program Cycle Operational Policy:
<https://www.usaid.gov/ads/policy/200/201>

- ADS Chapter 201 Program Cycle Operational Policy:
<https://www.usaid.gov/ads/policy/200/201>
- ADS Chapter 204 Environmental Procedures:
<https://www.usaid.gov/ads/policy/200/204>
- ADS Chapter 205 Integrating Gender Equality and Female Empowerment in USAID's Program Cycle: <https://www.usaid.gov/ads/policy/200/205>
- ADS 252 Visa Compliance for Exchange Visitors:
<https://www.usaid.gov/ads/policy/200/252>
- ADS Chapter 303 Standard Provisions for Non-U.S. Non-governmental Organizations: <https://www.usaid.gov/ads/policy/300/303mab>
- ADS Chapter 303 Standard Provisions for U.S. organizations:
<https://www.usaid.gov/ads/policy/300/303maa>
- ADS Chapter 318 Intellectual Property Rights:
<https://www.usaid.gov/ads/policy/300/318>
- ADS Chapter 579 USAID Development Data:
<https://www.usaid.gov/ads/policy/500/579>
- Grant and Contract Process:
<https://www.usaid.gov/work-usaid/get-grant-or-contract/grant-and-contract-process>
- USAID Graphic Standards Manual and Partner Co-branding Guide:
<https://www.usaid.gov/branding/gsm>

SECTION G: FEDERAL AWARDING AGENCY CONTACT(S)

Only the Agreement Officer is authorized to make commitments on behalf of USAID. The Agreement Officer is listed below:

Bruce Gelband
Agreement Officer
Email: bgelband@usaid.gov

The point of contacts for information about this NOFO are:

Muhammad Ali Bilal
Administrative Agreement Officer
Email: mbilal@usaid.gov
&
Adnan Khurshid
Acquisition & Assistance Specialist
Email: akhurshid@usaid.gov

Mailing Address:
U.S. Agency for International Development Pakistan
Office of Acquisition and Assistance
U.S. Embassy. Diplomatic Enclave, Ramna 5
Islamabad, Pakistan 44000

SECTION H: OTHER INFORMATION

USAID reserves the right to fund any or none of the Concept Notes/Full Applications submitted under this IPCR addendum to the HELIX APS.

Partner Vetting: Prior to award, the potential successful applicant(s) will be notified to fulfill the vetting requirements. The purpose of partner vetting is to mitigate risk that USAID funds and other resources do not, even inadvertently, provide support or benefit to individuals or entities that are terrorist, supporters of terrorists or affiliated with terrorists, and minimize impact on USAID programs and its implementing partners. Information on partner vetting can be found at <https://www.usaid.gov/partner-with-us/partner-vetting>

SECTION I: ANNEXES

1. [HELIX - IPRC - Concept Note Template](#)
2. [Focus Group Discussion Report](#)

[END OF Addendum APS No: 72039124RFA00001]