U.S. AGENCY FOR INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT
ANNOUNCEMENT

CALL FOR CONCEPT NOTES

Accelerating Local Potential

UNDER EXISTING
SCIENCE, TECHNOLOGY, INNOVATION, and PARTNERSHIP ANNUAL PROGRAM STATEMENT
APS No.: 7200AA18APS00003

PLEASE NOTE: This is an Addendum to an existing announcement. All interested organizations should carefully review both this addendum AND the full announcement, which can be found here: https://www.grants.gov/web/grants/view-opportunity.html?oppId=301213. Important information contained in the full worldwide announcement is not repeated in this specific Addendum.

This program is authorized in accordance with Part 1 of the Foreign Assistance Act of 1961, as amended.

Through this Addendum to the FY2018-FY2019 Science, Technology, Innovation, and Partnership (STIP) Annual Program Statement (APS) No. 7200AA18APS00003, the U.S. Agency for International Development's Global Development Lab (USAID/LAB) seeks to capitalize on the expertise, ingenuity, and passion of the global research community to accelerate institutional capacity for science, technology, and innovation within higher education institutions (HEIs) in low- and middle-income countries (LMICs) that have a USAID presence[1]. For purposes of the STIP APS, higher education institutions are defined as follows, consistent with guidance provided by USAID/E3/Education: "A tertiary education institution is an organization that provides educational opportunities that build on secondary education, providing learning activities in specialized fields...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, research institutes, training institutes [including teacher training institutes], etc."

Subject to the availability of funding, USAID/LAB anticipates supporting up to six new Cooperative Agreements of $0.5-$1 million each over the course of 2-3 years. USAID reserves the right to award

[1] For a list of LMICs where USAID works, please visit https://www.usaid.gov/where-we-work.

more or fewer awards OR none at all. Unless otherwise stated herein, all terms and conditions of the FY2018-FY2019 STIP APS apply (https://www.grants.gov/web/grants/view-opportunity.html?oppId=301213).

I. Background

USAID's Global Development Lab (Lab) has a long history of engaging the global research community in combating development challenges. For example, the Higher Education Solutions Network (HESN) harnesses the expertise and enthusiasm within top research institutions to solve pressing development challenges through science, technology, innovation, and research. Additionally, the Partnerships for Enhanced Engagement in Research (PEER) program supports collaborations between U.S. researchers and researchers in low- and middle-income countries (LMICs), with the goal of elevating LMIC research capacity while generating scientific evidence that is critical to improving development outcomes. Similarly, the USAID Research and Innovation Fellowships program connects U.S. graduate researchers with LMIC host organizations to conduct collaborative research projects supporting the host's technical needs. Recently, the Lab also began engaging with multinational private sector research laboratories to tap into cutting edge technology and scalable approaches that may aid in bringing LMIC-created R&D to market. These programs and others highlight the Lab's focus on leveraging science, technology, innovation, and partnership (STIP) to address some of the world's most pressing global challenges. **In this Addendum under the STIP APS, USAID/LAB aims to accelerate LMIC capacity for high-level science, technology, and innovation by supporting partnerships between U.S. HEIs, LMIC HEIs, and other relevant public or private sector partners.**

II. Solicitation

In addition to conducting cutting-edge scientific research, globally-recognized research universities provide top-notch higher education and serve as intellectual hubs, providing knowledge, support, and innovative solutions to local communities and governments. Unfortunately, even well-established LMIC universities often lack the essential resources, capabilities, or partnerships needed to achieve this. A major challenge in developing and sustaining top research universities is effectively identifying and addressing key barriers to success[2]. For example, some institutions may have academic curricula that are poorly aligned to local needs, while others may lack the effective relationships with their communities, governments, or local implementers that allow for uptake of research outputs. Additionally, many LMIC Universities are well-poised to compete on a global research stage if critical barriers are adequately addressed. This funding opportunity aims to overcome these and other key barriers by fostering strategic and catalytic collaborations between U.S. and LMIC universities to build the institutional capacity for science, technology, and innovation. Traditional partnerships between LMIC researchers and U.S. researchers are effective at building individual professional and technical competence, but are less successful in addressing institutional barriers preventing LMIC HEIs from

[2] Altbach, Philip G. [editor]; Salmi, Jamil [editor]. 2012. The road to academic excellence: the making of world-class research universities

becoming globally recognized sources of scientific knowledge and innovation. Here, USAID/LAB is seeking to support innovative and catalytic partnerships between whole departments, universities, or consortia of academic institutions in LMICs and in the U.S. These institutional partnerships should go beyond traditional "capacity building" such as training, construction or equipment purchases and faculty/student exchange models, to accelerate sustainable human and institutional capacity within LMIC institutions. Ideal LMIC partners will have an existing foundational capacity for STIP and will use this opportunity to make exponential gains toward becoming a global leader in scientific research, innovation, and/or education. Example activities/ objectives include, but are not limited to: activities designed to elicit university or country policy changes that would allow LMIC research programs to function more effectively; developing and implementing strategies for improving effective translation of local research and local university derived innovations to action; working to identify, leverage, and manage new or existing financial and other resources to accelerate research potential; establishing innovative university curricula and training programs to meet local science and technology needs and develop a more STIP-competent workforce; facilitating effective partnerships with local implementers, governments, and private sector players; establishing regional centers of excellence, innovation hubs, digital/data centers, etc.

In publishing this Addendum, **USAID/LAB is soliciting joint Concept Notes from a LMIC HEI and a U.S. HEI proposing ways to partner to bolster LMIC HEI human and institutional capacity for science, technology, or innovation.** HEI partners must also engage with other local actors (i.e. NGOs, Government Ministries, private businesses, etc.) to support outcomes and bolster impact. By capitalizing on the expertise and ingenuity of the U.S. and global higher education communities, the Lab aims to promote sustainable global partnerships, elevate LMIC scientific capacity, and advance the role of science, technology, and innovation in global development. The long-term goal of this addendum is to propel LMIC HEIs toward becoming global leaders in scientific education and research, and to increase their presence as a source of innovation and knowledge for local government officials, policy makers, and other development players.

III. Eligibility

Eligibility for this Addendum is restricted to partnerships between one or more higher education institutions (HEI) in the U.S. and one or more HEIs from a low or middle income country (LMIC) with an affiliated USAID Mission; either institution may serve as the Prime awardee. Consortia applications that include non-HEI organizations are allowed and encouraged, however, only HEIs are eligible to a serve as the Prime for this award. Consistent with guidance from USAID/E3/Education, a higher education institution is defined as an organization that provides educational opportunities that build on secondary education, providing learning activities in specialized fields; this may include public or private universities, colleges, research institutes, training institutes, etc.; either institution may serve as the Prime awardee. For the purpose of this Addendum, suitable LMIC HEI partners are those with a

clear path to substantially and sustainably improving their institutional capacity for science, technology, or innovation within the 2-3 years of this award.

Because USAID seeks to increase the capacity of part or all of the LMIC HEI, while leveraging an all-of-university approach from the US-based HEI, **all HEIs are restricted to submitting one Concept Note as the lead LMIC or U.S. applicant**. If more than one application is received with the same lead LMIC or US HEI, or that has the same proposed project director, USAID will seek written clarification from the relevant office(s) of sponsored programs regarding which Concept Note should be considered for review. If clarification is not resolved within 2 business days, both applications will be deemed ineligible. Alternatively, a signed letter from an authorizing official within the university's office of sponsored programing can be submitted with Concept Notes by the submission date to clarify and verify that the applicant has the sole official support from the university. The verified concept note will be accepted for evaluation and all other concept notes submitted by that HEI will be deemed ineligible for non-compliance with the conditions of this Addendum. They will be notified accordingly via email. Please note, HEIs can serve as sub-awardees or supporting partners on multiple applications.

IV. Additional Considerations

Prior to submitting a Concept Note, applicants should ensure that proposals are in line with associated USAID Mission Region or Country Development Cooperation Strategy. Successful Concept Notes will also align closely with the broader priorities of USAID, the U.S. Global Development Lab, and the Center for Development Research.

The Lab is especially interested in promoting new partnerships or projects, as well as existing partnerships that have not been funded by USAID previously. Furthermore, USAID strongly encourages applications from minority-serving institutions in the U.S., as well as HEIs in Sub-Saharan Africa.

V. Application

The U.S. Global Development Lab will be responsible for the review of Concept Notes, Full Applications, and management of any awards issued under this addendum. Information provided in Section II of the Concept Note Template should address the objectives and criteria presented herein.

Concept Note Submission

All Concept Notes must be prepared and submitted in English using the provided template (see Appendix 1) on www.grants.gov. Since the goal of this Addendum is to support innovative, demand-driven programs, USAID/LAB strongly encourages Concept Notes be authored and submitted by the LMIC partner. Concept Notes are due to USAID/LAB by **5pm EDT on April 6, 2018**. After a Concept Note is received, USAID/LAB reserves the right to request supplementary information or pose

clarifying questions to any applicant. Requesting supplementary information or posing clarifying questions to one applicant does not obligate USAID/LAB to do so with all applicants nor does it guarantee invitation to submit a Full Application.

Concept Note Evaluation

Concept Notes will be evaluated by USAID for feasibility and alignment with the evaluation criteria detailed below in section VI. Contingent on the availability of funds, USAID/LAB currently plans to invite a subset of the most highly-qualified Concept Note applicants to engage in a round of co-creation with USAID prior to submission of full applications. Selections will be made after all Concept Notes have been evaluated according to the criteria outlined below, while also taking into account geographical location, sectoral range, and project type, with the goal of creating a diverse portfolio of awards if/ when possible. The aim of the co-creation phase is to further define project objectives, design activities, align timelines, finalize budgets, etc. Through discussions, both the applicant(s) and USAID may identify additional resources, partners, or strategies necessary to successfully implement the project. This process may involve potentially extensive discussions with USAID/LAB, USAID Mission staff, or other experts, within or outside of USAID. It is anticipated that co-creation will happen virtually, through video conference, and phone call. By applying to this Addendum, applicants give USAID the right to share Concept Notes with appropriate external partners for the purposes of evaluation or co-creation. All parties privy to the contents of submitted Concept Notes, whether within or outside of USAID, will be required to keep contents in confidence. Additional information about the co-creation process can be found in the Co-Creation, Collaboration, and Communication section of the umbrella STIP APS.

Based on historical experience, only a small subset of applicants will be invited to participate in co-creation (between 3 and 8 anticipated). However if additional Concept Notes meet our minimum review threshold, they will be placed in an eligible pool of applicants for the life of the STIP APS for potential future engagement and discussion if/when additional funds or opportunities become available. USAID anticipates notifying authors of Concept Notes within 60 days of submission if USAID wishes to engage in further discussions/co-creation, maintain the application in the pool for potential future engagement, or if USAID will not pursue further collaboration under this Addendum based on the submitted Concept Note.

Note: Communication with USAID during the Concept Note/co-creation phase should NOT be interpreted as a commitment to funding or guaranteed request for a Full Application. Any expenses incurred by applicants during this time are solely the responsibility of the applicants.

If USAID remains interested in moving forward with the proposed projects or activities following the co-creation phase, USAID will request a Full Application from the applicants, inclusive of all modifications, expansions, discussions, etc. resulting from the co-creation phase.

Full Application

USAID will only accept Full Applications from applicants invited to move forward in the application process. Full Applications will expand upon the concept note template and extensive details about projects and activities proposed in the Concept Note, incorporating any feedback or changes from USAID and other partners discussed during the co-creation phase. Additional information regarding the Full Application will be provided at the time of its request. **Note: USAID's request for a Full Application should not be interpreted as a commitment to funding.**

Award

Contingent on the availability of funding, USAID/LAB anticipates supporting up to six new Cooperative Agreements of approximately $0.5-$1 million total for each partnership, spent over two to three years. USAID reserves the right to award more or fewer awards than this estimate and is not obligated to make any awards.

VI. Evaluation Criteria

In concurrence with the evaluation criteria outlined in the umbrella STIP APS (see Concept Note/Full Application Evaluation Criteria and Considerations section); Concept Notes and subsequent Full Applications to the Accelerating Local Potential Addendum will be assessed according to the following review criteria, with Criterion 3 and the subcriteria therein being weighted most heavily:

Criterion 1: Alignment with M/B/IO Strategic Objectives and Programming Priorities

- Extent to which the proposed partnerships, projects, or activities align with the mission and strategic objectives of the Global Development Lab and Center for Development Research.
- Extent to which the proposed partnerships, projects, or activities align with the corresponding USAID Mission's Country Development Cooperation Strategy and other collaborating Bureau or Independent Office missions and strategic objectives, where applicable.

Criterion 2: Partner Engagement

Sub-Criterion 2.1: Higher Education Institution Engagement and Collaboration

- Extent to which proposed HEI partnership(s), are appropriate and additive to the success of proposed projects or activities.
- Extent to which application describes a commitment to equitable collaboration and deep partnership between U.S. and LMIC HEI partners at every stage of the project.

Sub-Criterion 2.2: Engagement of and Collaboration with Other Partners

- Extent to which application proposes appropriate and effective collaborations with local communities and/or other partners (i.e. outside of the Prime U.S. and LMIC HEIs). *Note: collaboration with external partners is a requirement of the umbrella STIP APS.*

- Extent to which application demonstrates partner commitment to proposed collaboration(s).

Sub-Criterion 2.3: Communication Plan

- Extent to which application outlines a plan for ensuring regular and effective communication between U.S. HEI, LMIC HEI, and any other proposed partners, including rationale behind distribution of funds between core institutions.

Criterion 3: Potential for Impact

Criterion 3 and its sub-criteria will be weighted more heavily than criteria 1, 2, or 4.

Sub-Criterion 3.1: Feasibility and Anticipated Outcome

- Extent to which the proposed objectives are well-defined and achievable.
- Likelihood that proposed partnerships, projects, or activities will result in substantially enhanced institutional capacity for science, technology, and/or innovation within the 2-3 years of this award.

Sub-Criterion 3.2: Long-Term Impact and Sustainability

- Extent to which application demonstrates LMIC HEI institutional commitment to the proposed activities and their intended outcomes, including willingness to support any anticipated financial, policy, or operational changes to promote sustainability.
- Extent to which proposed partnerships, projects, and/or activities are based on the articulated needs of the LMIC HEI and/or the local community.
- Extent to which the anticipated results (and proposed partnerships, projects, or activities, where appropriate) are likely to be sustained beyond the life of this award.

Criterion 4: Project Management

Sub-Criterion 4.1: Personnel

- Extent to which the proposed personnel (from U.S. and LMIC partners) have the skills and resources necessary for successful implementation of the proposed activities.
- Extent to which proposed projects include a plan for engaging female students, faculty, researchers, and other partners at every stage of program design and implementation.

Sub-Criterion 4.2: Monitoring, Evaluation & Learning (MEL)

- Extent to which application has outlined an appropriate monitoring and evaluation plan, inclusive of data collection strategy and illustrative indicators for all project objectives.
- Extent to which application indicates a plan for modifying program and/or activity implementation based on key learnings.

Note: This Addendum serves primarily to outline the goals and priorities of USAID/LAB in making an award under the STIP APS. More comprehensive information regarding the application and review processes (including Concept Note submission, Co-Creation, Full Application, and Evaluation stages) can be found in the umbrella STIP APS, located here. Applicants are advised to refer extensively to both documents in preparing Concept Notes.

V. Questions and Further Assistance

Questions regarding the substance and objectives of this Accelerating Local Potential Addendum should be directed to Emmanuella Delva at edelva@usaid.gov with copy to LABCDR_Feedback@usaid.gov, by **no later than 5:00 pm EDT on March 15, 2018.**

Questions regarding the substance and terms of the FY 2018 STIP APS umbrella should be directed to LABCDR_Feedback@usaid.gov and the subject line "Question - STIP APS Umbrella".

[END OF ACCELERATING LOCAL POTENTIAL ADDENDUM TO APS 7200AA18APS00003]