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Partnerships for Enhanced Engagement in Research (PEER) 2018/2019 Solicitation

I. Program Synopsis

The United States Agency for International Development (USAID) is the U.S. Government's (USG) preeminent foreign assistance agency. The agency is dedicated to helping nations meet the needs of their citizens by providing healthcare, education, and economic opportunity to end extreme poverty and promote democratic, resilient societies. The U.S. Global Development Lab (The Lab) at USAID is bringing together a diverse set of partners to discover, test, and scale breakthrough solutions to address critical challenges in international development (http://www.usaid.gov/GlobalDevLab). A key element of this strategy is the support of scientific and technological research through the Partnerships for Enhanced Engagement in Research (PEER) program. PEER is a competitive awards program that invites scientists in developing countries to apply for funds to support research and capacity-building activities on topics of importance to USAID and conducted in partnership with USG-funded and selected private sector partners. The program is supported by USAID but implemented by the U.S. National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine (referred to as the National Academies). Through PEER, the Lab leverages investments by other USG-supported agencies and private sector companies in scientific research and training in order to enhance the development priorities of USAID. USG-funded partners must be investigators who will contribute to the scientific merit and impact of PEER projects through expertise, skills, methodologies, laboratory access, and synergies with ongoing projects.

Key Changes for Cycle 8

(Returning applicants and others familiar with PEER in the past are strongly encouraged to read these points carefully, as PEER Cycle 8 has significantly modified application requirements and funding structures.)

- Projects must be designed to be implemented in one year, with budgets between $30,000 to $80,000 (USD) (except for projects under the Peru focus area, which can be up to $100,000).
- Projects must be aimed at using scientific data to achieve policy or programmatic impacts within that period. Research results must also be action oriented with less of an emphasis on trainings and convenings and more of an emphasis on research to measurable action, or interventions.
- Applicants must have a USG-supported partner. Eligible partners must have active funding through one of PEER's USG partner agencies as of the pre-proposal submission deadline (January 14, 2019) or be employed as of that date by one of PEER's USG partner agencies. Overlap of the partner's funding with the planned duration of the PEER project is not required. See the Find a USG Partner webpage for help in finding an eligible USG partner.
- It is recommended that up to 10% of the total proposed PEER budget be assigned to support the costs of travel by the USG partner or other U.S.-based project participants. It has been shown that in-person collaboration, usually at the beginning of a project, can strengthen the research methodology and technical activities of projects while improving communication and expectations between partners.
- Funds from PEER budgets can not be requested to cover the salaries of USG-supported partners or other U.S.-based colleagues.
- In addition to the PI and his or her research team and the USG-supported partner, all projects must also include at least one of the following: a social scientist, economist, communications specialist, or expert in another field outside the core research team's area of specialization who can help the project incorporate new perspectives and achieve maximum impacts.
- There are six focus areas in this year's call for proposals: (1) Multiple Countries/ Last Mile Awards, which will support researchers in a wide range of topics who are at the end of, or taking advantage of a catalytic moment to gather the last, most critical data or test important approaches that can show development wins in one year; (2) Multiple Countries / Family Planning and Reproductive Health; (3) Multiple Countries / Water, Sanitation, and Hygiene Health in North Africa; (4) Iraq / Water Research and Conservation to Keep People Healthy and Increase Employment; (5) Peru / Strengthening Natural Resource Management in Peru; and (6) Tunisia / Economic Growth, ICT, and Small and Medium Enterprises. Projects in all focus areas must still fit within the overall scope of Cycle 8, which aims to support one-year projects by multidisciplinary teams working to achieve immediate policy and programmatic impacts.
- Projects involving work with human subjects or personally identifiable medical records must have a Federal Wide Assurance at the time they submit their pre-proposals, along with Institutional Review Board approval of their proposed work plans. (See Family Planning/ Reproductive Health focus area appendix below for further details.)

Please review the following pages carefully for the complete details on guidelines and eligibility criteria.

Solicitation Process

PEER proposal submission has two phases:

- **Phase 1**: A brief pre-proposal is required for all applicants. The deadline for submission of pre-proposals is **January 14, 2019**. Details for pre-proposal submission are provided in Section IX.
- **Phase 2:** If invited to submit a full proposal, applicants will be notified by the National Academies by **February 25, 2019**. The deadline for submission of full proposals is **April 12, 2019.**

II. Role of the National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine

PEER is implemented by the National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine, which will manage the proposal review process and disburse and monitor awards. Details on all previous and currently funded PEER projects are posted at http://www.nationalacademies.org/peer. For further information, please contact the program staff at peer@nas.edu.

III. U.S. Government-Supported Agency Partners

Interested developing-country researchers are required to identify and partner with a USG-funded researcher in order to apply for a PEER award. Through these partnerships, PEER applicants benefit from the skills, laboratory access, and other resources of their USG-supported partner. Both the PEER applicant and the USG-supported researcher benefit from one another's expertise and partner on truly collaborative research. **In a significant change from previous cycles of PEER, the USG-supported partner must have active USG funding at the time the pre-proposal is submitted, but there is no requirement that the funding remain active during the period of the proposed project. Another major change for PEER Cycle 8 is that up to 10% of the total project budget requested may be devoted to supporting the travel expenses of USG-supported partners and their colleagues and students involved in the project.**

The following USG-supported agencies have entered into an agreement with USAID and are participating in the PEER program. Researchers supported by these agencies are considered eligible as USG-supported partners. Please see Section V for additional information on USG-supported partner criteria and for resources on identifying potential partners. Further information on USG-supported agencies participating in the PEER program can also be found on each agency's homepage.

- **Agricultural Research Service:** The USDA Agricultural Research Service conducts research to develop and transfer solutions to agricultural problems of high national priority and provide information access and dissemination to: ensure high-quality, safe food and other agricultural products; assess the nutritional needs of Americans; sustain a competitive agricultural economy; enhance the natural resource base and the environment; and provide economic opportunities for rural citizens, communities, and society as a whole. http://www.ars.usda.gov/main/main.htm

- **National Aeronautics and Space Administration:** NASA's vision is "to reach for new heights and reveal the unknown so that what we do and learn will benefit all humankind." Within the Earth Science Division, NASA aims to "advance knowledge of Earth as a system to meet the challenges of environmental change and to improve life on our planet". http://www.nasa.gov/

- **National Institute of Food and Agriculture:** The USDA NIFA strategy for global engagement centers on developing carefully considered partnerships that can advance U.S. research in agriculturally related fields. The agency administers federal funding to address agricultural issues. http://nifa.usda.gov/

- **National Institutes of Health:** NIH's mission is to seek fundamental knowledge about the nature and behavior of living systems and the application of that knowledge to enhance health, lengthen life, and reduce illness and disability. http://www.nih.gov/

- **National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration**: NOAA is a scientific agency within the U.S Department of Commerce focused on conditions of Earth's oceans and atmosphere. Through its six line offices and more than a dozen staff offices, NOAA serves as a leader in environmental intelligence and applied scientific research. Using a global network of observations, models, forecasts, and assessments, NOAA puts environmental information in the hands of people who need it. http://www.noaa.gov/

- **National Science Foundation:** NSF is an independent federal agency created by Congress in 1950 "to promote the progress of science; to advance the national health, prosperity, and welfare; to secure the national defense." NSF is the only federal agency whose mission includes support for all fields of fundamental science and engineering. http://www.nsf.gov/

- **Smithsonian Institution:** The Smithsonian's mission is to increase the diffusion of knowledge through a focus on discovery, creativity, excellence diversity, integrity, and service. Smithsonian science examines some of the world's most complex—and time-sensitive—problems. Whether they are protecting imperiled natural resources, assessing the consequences of climate change or keeping aircraft safe from bird strikes, Smithsonian scientists apply what they learn to improve the quality—and quantity—of life on Earth. More than 500 Smithsonian staff scientists, augmented by an equal number of fellows and hundreds of international collaborators, conduct research in field stations and laboratories on all seven continents and serve as national and international experts in a wide scope of disciplines including anthropology, astronomy, biology, geology, and paleontology. As a trust instrumentality of the United States, the Smithsonian Institution is pleased to participate in this program with agency partners. http://www.si.edu/

- **United States Forest Service:** The Forest Service is a multi-faceted agency that protects and manages 154 national forests and grasslands in 44 U.S. states and Puerto Rico and is the world's largest forestry research organization. Forest Service experts provide technical and financial help to U.S. state and local government agencies, businesses, and private landowners to help protect and manage non-federal forest and associated range and watershed lands. The Forest Service also has a dedicated International Programs office, which promotes sustainable forest management and biodiversity conservation internationally. By linking the skills of the field-based staff of the USDA Forest Service with partners overseas, the agency can address the most critical forestry issues and concerns. http://www.fs.fed.us/

- **United States Geological Survey:** The USGS serves the Nation by providing reliable scientific information to describe and understand the Earth; minimize loss of life and property from natural disasters; manage water, biological, energy, and mineral resources; and enhance and protect our quality of life. http://www.usgs.gov/

IV. 2018/2019 Focus Areas

The PEER Program is accepting research proposals only in the following focus areas. PEER-eligible countries are listed for each focus area; applicants should review eligible country criteria carefully. More information for each focus area can be found by using the links below or reviewing the Focus Area appendices in Section X.

1. Multiple Countries/ Last Mile Awards, supporting projects that are close to finished and need the last, most critical data to test important approaches, implementation methods, and interventions that can show development wins in one year
2. Multiple Countries / Family Planning and Reproductive Health
3. Multiple Countries / Water, Sanitation, and Hygiene Health in North Africa
4. Iraq / Water Research and Conservation to Keep People Healthy and Increase Employment
5. Peru / Strengthening Natural Resource Management in Peru
6. Tunisia / Economic Growth, ICT, and Small and Medium Enterprises

PEER funding will be awarded to projects related to the focus areas specified above. Regional collaborations are encouraged, provided that they fit within the scope of one of the focus areas for this cycle and the primary PI is based in an eligible country for the focus area under which the proposal is submitted. Co-PIs may be involved in such regional collaborative projects, provided that the co-PIs are based in a country eligible for PEER.

Applicants must identify how their proposed project contributes to the USAID development objectives for their country. To learn about USAID priorities in your country, please consult the Country

Development Cooperation Strategy (CDCS) of your country here: https://www.usaid.gov/results-and-data/planning/country-strategies-cdcs A directory of USAID Missions and links to home pages can be found here: http://www.usaid.gov/mission-directory.

V. General Eligibility Information

The information included in this section is relevant to applicants to the PEER program in general. The focus areas have specific eligibility requirements, so applicants should review those focus areas pages at the end of this document. Additional information can also be found in the Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs).

PEER Applicants

Applicants who submit pre-proposals to PEER must be based at an academic institution, non-profit organization, or government-managed research laboratory, center, or institute in a PEER-eligible country. (For Pakistan only, applicants can only be based at an NGO. Researchers based at Pakistani universities and government-managed research institutes are not eligible.)

PEER applicants must hold a career-track position or equivalent at their respective institution or organization. Applicants should be living and working in the country from which they are applying and should be nationals (citizens or permanent residents) of the PEER-eligible country for the focus area to which they are applying.

Researchers from non-eligible countries and employees of for-profit firms in PEER-eligible countries may participate in projects using their own resources but are not permitted to serve as PIs, as PEER awards will not be issued to such organizations. All institutions will be vetted to determine compliance with USAID policies for receipt of funds. PEER awards will be issued to institutions or organizations, not to individuals. Female applicants are encouraged to apply.

PIs of currently active PEER awards are not eligible to apply to serve as PIs or co-PIs in future cycles of PEER until their first funded project has been successfully completed. For the current cycle of the program (Cycle 8), this successful completion date must be prior to **September 1, 2019.**

Prior PEER awardees who re-apply for PEER funding must justify how their proposal is distinct from their prior PEER award and/or how the proposed work builds on previous PEER work to address new research questions.

U.S. Government-Supported Partners

PEER applicants are required to partner with a USG-supported researcher from one of the following agencies: Agricultural Research Service (ARS), National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA), National Institute of Food and Agriculture (NIFA), National Institutes of Health (NIH), National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA), National Science Foundation (NSF), Smithsonian Institution (SI), United States Forest Service (USFS), or United States Geological Survey (USGS). USG-supported partners may either be intramural researchers (employees of one of the listed agencies) or serve as a principal investigator or co-principal investigator of an active USG-funded research award. The role of the USG-supported partner is to provide complementary expertise and skills to the PEER project, but the USG-supported partner's research experience does not need to directly overlap. While partnerships are generally based on topical or disciplinary similarities, many PEER partnerships also provide access to specific methodologies or instrumentation otherwise unavailable to the PEER applicant. Proposals should demonstrate the benefits of the PEER research partnership to the USG-supported partner as well as the PEER PI.

PEER pre-proposals are not accepted from U.S.-based researchers.

In order to be eligible, the USG-supported partner's funding award or agency employment status

must be active at the time of the pre-proposal submission deadline, January 14, 2019.

The pre-proposal application requires a brief letter of support from the USG-supported partner. For more information on USG co-PIs see the Partner Eligibility section of the [Frequently Asked Questions](#) on the PEER website.

New for Cycle 8: Although PEER funds may not be used to cover salary for the USG-supported partner or other members of his or her project team (colleagues, students, technicians, etc.), applicants to PEER Cycle 8 are allowed and encouraged to request limited support to travel expenses for the partner and team members. This requested support cannot exceed 10% of the total budget for the PEER project. These funds generally will be managed by the PEER PI's institution and not awarded directly to the U.S. institution.

To learn more about which researchers are eligible to participate as USG-supported partners and to find instructions for requesting a partner, applicants are encouraged to explore the website section "[Find a USG-Supported Partner](#)."

VI. Types of Research Activities Supported by PEER

The type of projects that can be supported in PEER Cycle 8 have narrowed significantly from the types of projects supported in previous cycles. For all focus areas this year (Last Mile Awards and Family Planning and Reproductive Health), the program is supporting only projects designed to achieve substantial impacts in a period of one year, with the possibility of no more than a six-month no-cost extension. *Proposals focused on basic scientific research, data gathering, general research training, or infrastructural capacity building without clear relevance to the PEER Cycle 8 call or to USAID development objectives will not be eligible for PEER funding and will not be reviewed.*

Following are some points highlighting key changes in the types of projects PEER will support in Cycle 8. These points apply to all of the focus areas for 2018/2019.

- In addition to the PI and any other core researchers, projects must involve a multi-sectoral team, including at least one social scientist, economist, communications specialist, or expert in another field who would bring a broader perspective to the proposed work. Ideal proposals will involve such individuals in writing the pre-proposal to outline those interventions in detail. All pre-proposals must include a letter of support from this additional project participant confirming his or her willingness to be involved.
- Applicants must propose a diverse set of stakeholders to approach with interventions/research results including researchers, policy specialists, NGO representatives, government officials, etc., a clear plan of using data for action on policy or programmatic matters, and a plan for stakeholder engagement, including communication strategies. How will these engagements accelerate stakeholders towards action?
- Training and convening should only be a small part of these awards. Proposals should explain how participants will use data to affect real change in decision-making barrier in one year. Some ways research results can be used for action would be by working with the local community or the media and applying targeted communications strategies. We expect training, convening, and capacity building to move beyond simply meeting with officials to present findings.
- Proposals must clearly articulate the need or demand motivating this particular project. Have government officials, international organizations, the community, or other stakeholders expressed interest in finding solutions for specific problems for which evidence-based input would be useful? If not, applicants must outline why and how they will create and/or leverage opportunities to create demand in under one year. Although documentation of this need/demand is not required at the pre-proposal stage, it is strongly encouraged. Applicants invited to submit full proposals will need to submit such documentation with their full proposals.
- Proposals should include a plan for leveraging the resources of the USG-supported partner, monetarily or otherwise, keeping in mind that up to 10% of the project budget can be requested to support travel costs for the partner and/or relevant U.S.-based colleagues. Requesting travel funds for the USG-supported partner is not required.

Examples of research related activities that PEER Cycle 8 will support include, but are not limited to the following:

- Testing a proven idea or implementing a known successful intervention in a new country context. Applicants must have already shown success on a small scale and be ready to test it out on a larger scale.
- Implementing proven results through behavior change studies and initiation
- Using social/behavioral science to develop a plan for getting people to use proven a treatment or approach.
- Rapidly generating data for an impending decision by local or regional actors (at a critical inflection point like the opening of new lands, policy changes, changes of power, etc.).
- Generating critical baseline data or building on government goals or expressed interest for specific data.
- Aligning with a larger USG effort with development impacts requiring local context, knowledge, and connections.
- Building a coalition to learn how and why a policy or practice worked or did not work and proposing lessons learned or policy recommendations.
- Identifying social barriers to the uptake of interventions or policy changes, etc. discovered by societal outreach and education around improved interventions, science literacy, and science policy literacy.
- Funding citizen science projects and other crowd-engagement research that support Public Access and Open Data approaches.
- Using publicly available data to do secondary analysis and show community impact or policy options.
- Partnering with local NGOs to train communities, perform outreach, or engage residents around science research education and science literacy.
- Building on NGO initiatives with clear government interest and potential support at the local level.

There are some categories of research that PEER will **NOT** support:

- Implementation projects that lack a strong research component
- Dissertation or master's work of the PEER Principal Investigator (however, justified costs for students supported under the award are allowable)
- Training programs, workshops, or conferences that are not tied to the proposed research project
- Randomized control trials (RCTs) for biomedical interventions such as vaccines, drugs, etc.
- Research conducted principally in the United States
- Research led by the USG-supported partner
- Projects that are not likely to yield any impact in low- and middle-income countries
- Basic research not directly linked to potential impacts outlined above
- Approaches that present unacceptable ethical or safety risks

Please review the Frequently Asked Questions section of the program web site for additional details or e-mail peer@nas.edu with other eligibility questions.

VII. Timeline

October 15, 2018	PEER solicitation posted on National Academies website
January 14, 2019	Pre-proposals due to National Academies
February 25, 2019	Selected applicants are invited by National Academies to submit a full proposal, all others are notified of declination
April 12, 2019	Full proposals due to National Academies
August 2019	PEER awardees announced

VIII. Budget Information

Projects are anticipated to run for one year and range in size from $30,000 to $80,000 (USD) (except for projects under the Peru / Strengthening Natural Resource Management in Peru focus area, which can be up to $100,000), regardless of whether they will support a single institutions or multiple institutions. **In preparing their project proposals, applicants should plan for a duration of one year. Although, there is a possibility that no-cost extensions may be made for a maximum of six months, all projects funded during this cycle will need to be completed by April 30, 2021.**

Only a total estimated budget figure is required at the pre-proposal stage. Detailed budget requests and further justification will be requested from applicants invited to submit a full proposal. Total estimated budget numbers should be developed commensurate with the support needed to achieve the project goals. A budget template is available on the PEER website to help applicants better estimate anticipated total budget costs.

Funds requested in PEER project budgets may be used to support the following types of costs: salaries, research and training support for researchers and students, international travel, conference and workshop organization and attendance, communications, equipment, materials, and supplies for developing country institutions and research networks. In addition, **for the first time since PEER was launched, up to 10% of the budgets for applications to PEER Cycle 8 can be requested to support the travel of the USG-supported partner and/or colleagues or students to participate in project activities. However, it is not required to ask for funding for the USG-supported partner.** Funds cannot be used to pay salaries or honoraria for USG-supported partners or other U.S.-based participants.

Although applicants at this pre-proposal stage are not required to submit a Data Universal Numbering System (DUNS) number for their institutions that would receive PEER funds, applicants invited to submit full proposals (due in April 2019) will be required to provide a DUNS number at the time of submission. Therefore, they should check with the financial staff at their institution to see if it already as a DUNS number active. If not, they should ask an authorized financial official to apply for one free of charge at http://fedgov.dnb.com/webform so they will be prepared in case they receive a full proposal invitation.

IX. Pre-Proposal Preparation and Submission Instructions

Pre-proposal applications are required for the PEER program, and they will be reviewed to ensure that they meet the eligibility criteria and focus area requirements articulated in Sections V and VI. The deadline for submission of pre-proposals is **January 14, 2019**.

When drafting a pre-proposal, applicants should convey the development impact of their proposed research for the focus area to which they are applying. Successful pre-proposals will include a clear

statement of the project goals and explanations of how these goals will be achieved. Successful pre-proposals will also highlight the collaborative nature of the USG-funded partner and how the partnership will contribute to successful completion of the project.

Pre-Proposal Review Criteria

The pre-proposal review process will be managed by the National Academies. Pre-proposals will be evaluated by USAID and the National Academies based on the following criteria:

- PEER applicant compliance with eligibility requirements
- Participation of USG-supported partner, including verification of active research award or USG partner agency employment status
- Alignment with research priorities and other requirements outlined in corresponding Focus Area webpage
- Development impact of proposed research
- If a prior PEER awardee, applicant must demonstrate how the proposed work is distinct from their prior PEER award, and/or how the proposed work significantly builds off the previous PEER award to achieve broader development impact

Applicants are required to submit a pre-proposal form through the PEER online system, completed in English. Paper and e-mail submissions are not accepted. Applicants are encouraged to check the Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs) section of the program website for additional details. After the pre-proposals are reviewed, applicants will receive notification from National Academies program staff that indicates one of the following:

- Pre-proposal has been deemed eligible and relevant, with an invitation to submit a full proposal
- Minor issues with eligibility and relevance, with an invitation to submit with issues addressed
- Pre-proposal deemed ineligible or insufficiently relevant to USAID objectives and not eligible for full proposal invitation

Policy on Fraudulent or Plagiarized Data and Documents in Award Submissions

Applicants to PEER are advised that the program has a zero-tolerance policy regarding the submission of fraudulent or plagiarized data and documents as part of award pre-proposals and full proposals. Highly rated full proposals are checked using plagiarism detection software, but in addition, any such cases discovered by PEER staff or brought to their attention at any stage of the review process by program sponsors, review panelists, partners, or members of the public will be investigated immediately. If the presence of fraudulent or plagiarized materials in a submission is verified, the following actions will be taken:

- The pre-proposal or full proposal will be removed from further consideration for funding.
- The applicant will be notified of the findings of the investigation and will be placed on a debarment list prohibiting him or her from submitting any future pre-proposals or full proposals to PEER.
- An appropriate official at the applicant's institution will be advised of the case and provided with copies of the fraudulent or plagiarized materials for use in any further investigations or actions in accordance with that institution's policies.
- The USAID Agreement Officer's Representative assigned to PEER will be notified so that information may be forwarded to the USAID Office of Inspector General to assist them in determining the applicant's eligibility for any future support from USAID directly or through other implementing partners.

Pre-Proposal Template

The pre-proposal submission template, which may be accessed by clicking the "Ready to Apply" button on the [PEER website](), includes the following sections:

a. PEER applicant information
b. USG-supported partner information, including the partner's USG-funded award title, number, funding agency, program officer and contact information
c. Project description (approximately 3 pages of text total), in which the following must be addressed:
   - Project aims and objectives
   - Significance of the research as it relates to the focus area selected by the applicant
   - Need or demand motivating this project (Have government officials, international organizations, the community, or other stakeholders expressed interest in finding solutions for specific problems for which evidence-based input would be useful? If not, applicants must outline why and how they will create and/or leverage opportunities to create demand in under one year.)
   - Plans for using data for action on policy or programmatic matters and for stakeholder engagement, including communication strategies (How will these engagements accelerate stakeholders towards action?)
   - Expertise of the USG-supported partner and how it will contribute to achieving impacts from the project
   - Identification of at least one project collaborator who is a social scientist, economist, communications specialist, or other expert from a field different from the PI's own and explanation of how this collaborator's expertise will contribute to achieving impacts from the project. A letter of support from this collaborator must be attached in the Appendices section.
   - Other partners with whom the applicant will collaborate on the project (for example, government agencies, USAID Missions, co-PIs, research networks, laboratories, and other implementing partners) and the nature of the planned collaborations.
d. Estimated total budget figure, within the range of $30,000 to $80,000 (USD). Projects submitted under the [Peru / Strengthening Natural Resource Management in Peru]() focus area <u>only</u> can request up to $100,000.
e. Appendices:
   - A brief CV of no more than two pages for the PEER applicant. Please use the attached [standard format for CVs](). The CV should provide citations for no more than 5-10 recent and relevant publications.
   - A brief letter of support written by the USG-supported partner explaining his or her intention to collaborate on the proposed PEER project and how the PEER partnership will contribute to the partner's USG-supported research. The letter should also include the partner's USG-funded award title, number, funding agency, program officer and contact information for his or her active USG award.
   - A brief letter of support from the additional project participant (social scientist, economist, communications specialist, or other expert from a field different from the PI's own), indicating interest and describing his or her planned role and responsibilities.
   - An expression of interest from a government official, international organization, NGO, industry official, community leader, or other stakeholder describing their need or demand that would be addressed by the proposed project (optional but strongly suggested for all proposals)
   - A statement from the Institutional Review Board with authority over the project, confirming that the board has a Federal Wide Assurance and has approved the project work plan (required <u>only</u> for projects involving human research subjects or the use of personally identifiable medical data)

X. Focus Area Appendices

FOCUS AREA: Multiple Countries / Last Mile Awards

Eligible Countries:

ASIA	SUB-SAHARAN AFRICA	LATIN AMERICA AND CARIBBEAN
Afghanistan	Benin	Brazil
Bangladesh	Burkina Faso	Colombia
India	Cameroon	Dominican Republic
Indonesia	Ethiopia	El Salvador
Nepal	Ghana	Guatemala
Pakistan*	Kenya	Haiti
Philippines	Liberia	Peru
Sri Lanka	Madagascar	
Timor-Leste	Malawi	**MIDDLE EAST**
Vietnam	Mali	
	Mozambique	Egypt
	Niger	Iraq
	Nigeria	Morocco
	Rwanda	Tunisia
	Senegal	
	Sierra Leone	
	South Africa	
	Tanzania	
	Uganda	
	Zambia	

Additional Criteria for Applicants:

Please see Section V of the Solicitation for General Eligibility requirements.

*For Pakistan, only applicants based at non-governmental organizations (NGOs) are eligible. PEER cannot accept proposals from applicants based at Pakistani universities or government-run research institutes.

Objectives:

Research proposals submitted under the Last Mile Awards focus area can address a variety of topics, including: biodiversity, agriculture, environment, climate change, clean energy, disaster mitigation, food security, water/sanitation, urbanization, democracy and governance, and education. Proposals on selected health-related topics may be appropriate for submission under the focus area Multiple Countries/Family Planning and Reproductive Health.

Regardless of the topic, proposals should meet an expressed need or demand by one or more stakeholders invested in research results to inform development challenges. These results could include but are not limited to information, recommendations, technologies, or other expected project outputs. Projects must involve a consortium that included not only members of the core topical research team but also at least one social scientist, economist, communications specialist, or other participant whose expertise would be helpful in achieving policy and programmatic impacts.

Consistent with the goals of PEER, applicants should outline how their research findings will lead to development-related policy or programmatic change. In addition, because USAID seeks to scale innovative development solutions to end extreme poverty through the Global Development Lab, projects that develop or test new solutions, study barriers to scaling innovation, or research how a proven intervention can be adapted to a new setting are of particular interest.

Country specific USAID objectives are articulated in USAID Regional and Country Development Cooperation Strategies (RCDS and CDCS). Applicants should closely read the appropriate RDCS and/or CDCS, and USAID Mission website in the country or countries where the PEER project will take place before submitting a proposal.

For further information on the Global Development Lab, please visit: http://www.usaid.gov/GlobalDevLab.

Duration of Project:

Projects should be designed to be implemented in no more than one year with budgets between $30,000 and $80,000 USD. Any proposal received for a project greater than 12 months in length will not be considered for funding. Awarded projects may be eligible for a no-cost extension of up to 6 months after the original 12-month project period.

Applicants are strongly encouraged to articulate exactly how their data or intervention impacts a larger community outside academia. Projects that require IRB and FWA must already have them. Women researchers are strongly encouraged to apply.

FOCUS AREA: Multiple Countries / Family Planning and Reproductive Health

Eligible Countries:

ASIA	SUB-SAHARAN AFRICA	LATIN AMERICA AND CARIBBEAN
Afghanistan	Benin	Haiti
Bangladesh	Ethiopia	
India	Ghana	**MIDDLE EAST**
Nepal	Kenya	
Pakistan*	Liberia	Egypt
Philippines	Madagascar	Yemen
	Malawi	
	Mali	
	Mozambique	
	Nigeria	
	Rwanda	
	Senegal	
	Tanzania	
	Uganda	
	Zambia	

Additional Criteria for Applicants:

Please see Section V of the Solicitation for General Eligibility requirements. PEER does not support clinical trials research. All projects that involve interaction with patients, human subjects data, or other personally identifiable information will be required will be required to go through a protocol review coordinated by the National Academies. They will also be required to have and maintain a Federal Wide Assurance (FWA), which is a number issued to institutions by the Office of Human Research Protections (OHRP) at the U.S. Department of Health & Human Services (DHHS), whereby an institution commits to DHHS that it will comply with certain standards for research involving human subjects. Further details are available through the following link. In addition, such projects must also have Institutional Review Board (IRB) approval of their proposed activities to confirm that they comply with the legal and ethical standards for human subjects research in the country where the project is being carried out. **Because the process of obtaining the FWA and IRB approval can be lengthy, applicants must already have these approvals at the time they submit their pre-proposals.**

*For Pakistan, only applicants based at non-governmental organizations (NGOs) are eligible. PEER cannot accept proposals from applicants based at Pakistani universities or government-run research institutes.

U.S. Partner Eligibility:

In addition to the standard eligibility requirements of U.S. Government-Supported Partner described in Section V of the Solicitation for General Eligibility requirements, applicants are also encouraged to partner with U.S. university recipients (including prime awardees and sub-awardees) of USAID family planning and reproductive health funding. More information about current USAID funded programs and partners can be found in the User's Guide to USAID/Washington Health Programs (pgs. 133-163).

Objectives:

As the world's largest bilateral donor of family planning assistance , USAID is committed to helping countries meet the family planning and reproductive health needs of their people. Voluntarism and informed choice are guiding principles of our program. Under the PEER Family Planning and Reproductive Health focus area, the PEER program will award funds to a limited number of highly competitive, novel research projects from eligible countries (listed above) that help increase the demand for, inform decision-making related to, and improve access to high-quality voluntary family planning information, contraceptives, and services. More specifically, PEER is seeking to support research that strengthens the evidence base in family planning and reproductive health that can be used to inform policy makers, program administrators, and communities. This can include implementation research topics and methodologies. Where applicable, research should include and address the roles of men and boys in access to and voluntary use of family planning services.

Applicants should propose the use of appropriate and rigorous methods to respond to a question of interest to stakeholders in the country or region. PEER will support primary and secondary data analysis and research questions may be explored utilizing quantitative, qualitative, or mixed methods research design. Applications proposing secondary data analyses may use data from Demographic and Health Surveys (DHS), Service Provision Assessments (SPA), or other readily available datasets resulting in publication-quality research papers that can inform and influence policies and programs.

Family Planning and Reproductive Health research areas may include, but are not limited to:

- Voluntary uptake and scale up of proven family planning interventions
- Activities that foster expansion and institutionalization of family planning interventions and services
- Methods or innovations that increase access to and use of voluntary family planning services and integrate those services with other health and development activities
- Interventions that promote integration of family planning with HIV/AIDS and STI programs and into routine health care in rural and urban poor communities
- Innovations in engaging the private sector in the provision of family planning
- Innovative financing mechanisms to expand access and increase affordability
- Understanding and addressing social norms that impact uptake and access to and use of family planning services
- Identifying and addressing barriers that underlie non-use of family planning services and methods among women
- Generate or synthesize evidence that contributes to a better understanding of the conditions that contribute to greater efficiencies for quality family planning programs
- Generate or synthesize evidence that advances understanding of social norms and informs appropriate design and implementation of cost-effective interventions that support self-efficacy and agency for women to access and use contraception

More information about USAID's Family Planning and Reproductive Health programming can be found at: https://www.usaid.gov/what-we-do/global-health/family-planning.

Consistent with the goals of PEER, applicants should outline how their research findings will lead to development-related policy or programmatic change. Proposals that include multi-disciplinary research teams, multi-country collaboration, and/or engagement with policy actors and other development stakeholders such as NGOs are desired. Once selected, awardees will need to submit proof of institutional or country ethics review and approval or exemption.

Country-specific USAID health objectives are articulated in USAID Regional and Country Development Cooperation Strategies (RCDS and CDCS). Applicants should closely read the appropriate RDCS and/or CDCS, and USAID Mission website in the country or countries where the PEER project will take place before submitting a proposal. Proposed research projects must also adhere to requirements of the USAID Protecting Life in Global Health Assistance policy.

Duration of Project:

Projects should be designed to be implemented in no more than one year with budgets between $30,000 and $80,000 USD. Any proposal received for a project greater than 12 months in length will not be considered for funding. Awarded projects may be eligible for a no-cost extension of up to 6 months after the original 12-month project period.

Applicants are strongly encouraged to articulate exactly how their data or intervention impacts a larger community outside academia. Projects that require IRB and FWA must already have them. Women researchers are strongly encouraged to apply.

FOCUS AREA: Multiple Countries / Water, Sanitation, and Hygiene (WASH) Health in North Africa

Eligible Countries:

Egypt, Morocco, and Tunisia

Additional Criteria for Applicants:

Please see Section V of the Solicitation for [General Eligibility requirements](#).

Objectives:

USAID seeks innovative research and solutions related to populations in North Africa region, particularly to address issues relating to: health, water, sanitation-and-hygiene, and disease detection and/or prevention. The total project time is one year to allow for quick implementation of results. PEER will support local researchers who are at the end of or taking advantage of a catalytic moment to gather the last, most critical data or test important approaches that can show development wins in one year. Such projects represent an excellent opportunity to test or demonstrate new ways of meeting country priorities while building local S&T capacity.

Some illustrative examples of the types of research projects that could be funded under this call for proposals are:

- Innovations in WASH delivery methods for disease prevention
- WASH-related research to improve health outcomes
- Improvement of equitable access to water for communities, including access for households, schools, health facilities, and other locations essential for healthy societies
- Innovative financing for water and sanitation sector development, including for wastewater treatment
- Activities that build the scientific, technological, and management capacity necessary for science-based decision-making in water supply, conservation and management, and in sanitation
- Innovations in infectious disease detection among refugees and/or displaced populations, including tuberculosis, cholera, and other endemic diseases

Strong applications will have a cross-disciplinary team (e.g., including a social scientist, communications specialist, economist, etc.) and a clearly articulated beneficiary or stakeholder (e.g., policymakers, NGOs, government ministries, etc.), influencers, and a plan of engagement, including a communications strategy. Research results must also be action oriented with less of an emphasis on trainings and convenings and more of an emphasis on research to measurable action, or interventions.

Duration of Project:

Projects should be designed to be implemented in no more than one year with budgets between $30,000 and $80,000 USD. Any proposal received for a project greater than 12 months in length will not be considered for funding. Awarded projects may be eligible for a no-cost extension of up to 6 months after the original 12-month project period.

Applicants are strongly encouraged to articulate exactly how their data or intervention impacts a larger community outside academia. Projects that require IRB and FWA must already have them. Women researchers are strongly encouraged to apply.

Focus Area: Iraq / Water Research and Conservation to Keep People Healthy and Increase Employment

Eligible Country:

Iraq

Additional Criteria for Applicants:

Please see Section V of the Solicitation for <u>General Eligibility requirements</u>.

Objectives:

PEER and USAID/Iraq seek to understand how best to keep the population healthy and employed with less water. Specifically, we are looking to support projects that:

- Research and communicate inexpensive ways to keep pollution and waste out of Iraq's rivers
- Research and implement use of drought- and saline-resistant agricultural products and water-efficient farming methods
- Research potential applications of technology to track surface water resources
- Research potential for solar-powered water filtration systems in Iraq
- Use technology to accelerate training of water maintenance personnel

PEER will support local researchers who are at the end of or taking advantage of a catalytic moment to gather the last, most critical data or test important approaches that can show development wins in one year. Such projects represent an excellent opportunity to test or demonstrate new ways of meeting country priorities while building local S&T capacity.

Strong applications will have a cross-disciplinary team (e.g., including a social scientist, communications specialist, economist, etc.) and a clearly articulated beneficiary or stakeholder (e.g., policymakers, NGOs, government ministries, etc.), influencers, and a plan of engagement, including a communications strategy. Research results must also be action oriented with less of an emphasis on trainings and convenings and more of an emphasis on research to measurable action, or interventions.

Duration of Project:

Projects should be designed to be implemented in no more than one year with budgets between $30,000 and $80,000 USD. Any proposal received for a project greater than 12 months in length will not be considered for funding. Awarded projects may be eligible for a no-cost extension of up to 6 months after the original 12-month project period.

Applicants are strongly encouraged to articulate exactly how their data or intervention impacts a larger community outside academia. Projects that require IRB and FWA must already have them. Women researchers are strongly encouraged to apply.

FOCUS AREA: Peru / Strengthening Natural Resource Management in Peru

USAID environment programs in Peru contribute to the responsible use and conservation of essential natural resources of regional and global significance located within Peru's borders, including the Amazon Basin, which harbors biodiversity and captures carbon, and the Andean tropical glaciers and mountain ecosystems, which are critical assets in the region's water cycle.

In alignment with USAID/Peru's Country Development Strategy and USAID's Amazon Vision, the PEER Program is interested in supporting collaborative research projects that generate evidence-based, practical, and scalable policy recommendations to strengthen Peru's capacity to manage natural resources in the Amazon and secure highland water supplies.

In particular, projects that address the following topics are encouraged:

- Implementation and enforcement of forestry regulations and norms
- Effective detection, compliance, enforcement, and prosecution of environmental crimes.
- Reduction in greenhouse gas emission from land use change
- Feasible protocols and methodologies to predict, measure, and/or mitigate direct and indirect impacts of extractive industries and/or large scale infrastructure on biodiversity
- Enhancement of climate resilience and reduction of water risks such as drought, floods, and water pollution

USAID/Peru is particularly interested in supporting research projects that (1) can achieve measurable and scalable results; (2) involve collaborations with a wide range of local stakeholders, including private sector partners and civil society organizations; and (3) have the potential to inform government policy at the national and/or local level.

Additional information about USAID's current and future work in Peru and South America can be found here:
https://www.usaid.gov/peru/
https://www.usaid.gov/business-forecast

Duration of Project:

Projects should be designed to be implemented in no more than one year with budgets between $30,000 and $100,000 USD. (For this focus area only, applicants may request up to $100,000 for a one-year project.) Any proposal received for a project greater than 12 months in length will not be considered for funding. Awarded projects may be eligible for a no-cost extension of up to 6 months after the original 12-month project period.

Applicants are strongly encouraged to articulate exactly how their data or intervention impacts a larger community outside academia. Projects that require IRB and FWA must already have them. Women researchers are strongly encouraged to apply.

FOCUS AREA: Tunisia / Economic Growth, ICT, and Small and Medium Enterprises

Eligible Countries

Tunisia

Additional Criteria for Applicants:

Please see Section V of the Solicitation for [General Eligibility requirements](#).

Objectives:

PEER and USAID/Tunisia are seeking applicants with projects that will help grow the economy of Tunisia and lay a foundation to empower current and new generations. We are looking for research products and tools that will be ready to go in one year to help establish Tunisia as a regional leader.

The following are USAID/Tunisia's three priority areas, with examples of the types of research projects and products that would help bring Tunisian society into the position of a regional hub:

1. Information and Communication Technologies (ICT)
    a. Mapping of current talents and capabilities in the ICT sector using geospatial tools
    b. Research on how Tunisia could become a regional ICT hub and creation of an action plan to get there
2. Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs)
    a. Description of the Tunisian SME ecosystem using novel tools
    b. Partnerships and methods to improve delivery of "last mile" services to the consumer or end user
    c. Identification of the impacts of ICT and entrepreneurship on the transformation of SMEs
3. Economic Growth
    a. Applied and product research
    b. Scaling up of technology that will catapult Tunisia into a tech leader
    c. Last-mile research for products that will help drive the economic growth of different sectors
    d. Data science and research to discover the gaps in skills versus available jobs in the country

Strong applications will have a cross-disciplinary team (e.g., including a social scientist, communications specialist, economist, etc.) and a clearly articulated beneficiary or stakeholder (e.g., policymakers, NGOs, government ministries, etc.), influencers, and a plan of engagement, including a communications strategy. Research results must also be action oriented with less of an emphasis on trainings and convenings and more of an emphasis on research to measurable action, or interventions.

Duration of Project:

Projects should be designed to be implemented in no more than one year with budgets between $30,000 and $80,000 USD. Any proposal received for a project greater than 12 months in length will not be considered for funding. Awarded projects may be eligible for a no-cost extension of up to 6 months after the original 12-month project period.

Applicants are strongly encouraged to articulate exactly how their data or intervention impacts a larger community outside academia. Projects that require IRB and FWA must already have them. Women researchers are strongly encouraged to apply.