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## **Partnerships for Enhanced Engagement in Research (PEER) 2017/2018 Solicitation**

**(Update October 24, 2017: Maldives and Timor-Leste Added to Open Call)**

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### **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.

## 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 12, 2018**. 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 23, 2018**. The deadline for submission of full proposals is **April 6, 2018**.

## 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. Beyond the current program cycle, it is expected that solicitations for PEER will be issued annually in the fall, with details to be posted at <http://www.nationalacademies.org/peer>.

For further information, please contact the program staff at [peer@nas.edu](mailto:peer@nas.edu).

## III. U.S. Government-Supported Agency Partners

The PEER program aims to leverage USG scientific investment in R&D to support USAID's development goals in priority countries. For this reason, developing country researchers are required to 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. Applicants to all focus areas must have already identified an eligible USG-supported partner.

The following USG-supported agencies have entered into an agreement with USAID and are participating in the PEER program. With some exceptions, researchers supported by these agencies are considered eligible as USG-supported partners. Additional eligibility requirements apply for each agency; 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. 2017/2018 Focus Areas**

The PEER Program is accepting research proposals 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/ Open Call
2. Multiple Countries/ Family Planning and Reproductive Health
3. Cambodia/ Investigator Development Awards: Multiple Sectors
4. Indonesia/ Multiple Sectors and Biodiversity
5. Laos/ Nutrition and Disabilities Capacity Strengthening
6. Peru/ Impacts of Extractive Industries on Indigenous Peoples in the Peruvian Amazon
7. Haiti/ Education
8. Middle East and North Africa/ Refugee Host Communities Health
9. Tunisia/ Multiple Sectors
10. Zambia/Technological and Social Alternatives to Charcoal Use and Production

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 (please see the country list for the [Open Call](#) for the most comprehensive list or check with program staff at [peer@nas.edu](mailto:peer@nas.edu) to confirm eligibility). When writing pre-proposals, applicants should also consider how their proposed research and/or capacity building activities will contribute to USAID's objectives for development. More information about USAID including the agency's mission statement, structure, and technical and regional programs can be found on the USAID website: <http://www.usaid.gov/>.

Applications that explicitly connect their proposed research to the development goals of their country's USAID Mission will generally be more competitive. Country-specific development objectives are reflected in Country Development and Cooperation Strategy (CDCS) reports that are posted publicly on each USAID Mission's homepage. Each CDCS lays out high-level strategic priorities for each bilateral USAID Mission over a five-year time frame. We encourage PEER applicants to review CDCS reports and other documents specific to USAID Mission priorities and reflect how their proposed research may contribute to these high-level objectives. A link to USAID-approved CDCS reports can be found here: <http://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 country-specific focus areas have specific eligibility requirements and applicants are encouraged to review eligibility criteria under specific focus areas of interest. 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. Applicants in government ministries who conduct research are also eligible, but will be screened for compliance with bilateral agreements on a case-by-case basis. We encourage applicants from government ministries to consult with PEER program staff at [peer@nas.edu](mailto:peer@nas.edu) prior to submitting their pre-proposal.

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 a PEER-eligible country for the focus area to which they are applying.

**To qualify for multi-institutional award status, PEER applicants are required to provide financial support to a researcher or research unit at another institution as part of their proposed project. Applicants who are invited to submit full proposals will be required to specify funds for activities to be implemented by partnering institutions in a separate budget table using the template to be provided.**

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 7), this successful completion date must be prior to **September 1, 2018**.

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.

#### ***PEER Applicant Eligibility Summary***

- National of a PEER-eligible country
- Meets eligibility criteria for focus area to which applying
- Affiliated with and permanently based at an academic institution, non-profit organization, government-managed research laboratory or relevant government ministry in a PEER-eligible country

#### ***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, United States Forest Service (USFS), or United States Geological Survey (USGS). 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.

USG-supported partners may either be intramural researchers or serve as a principal investigator or co-principal investigator of an active USG-funded research award. Active awards may include grants, cooperative agreements, or contracts. **In order to be eligible, the USG-supported partner award must remain active for at least 12 months after the expected start date of the PEER project (which may start no earlier than September 1, 2018) to ensure that both sides have resources available to support their collaboration.**

The pre-proposal application requires a brief letter of support from the USG-supported partner. For USG-supported partners serving as co-PIs of an active USG research award, a written letter of support from the lead PI must also accompany the application at the full proposal stage. For more information on USG co-PIs see the Partner Eligibility section of the [Frequently Asked Questions](#) on the PEER website.

In general, PEER funds may not be used to cover the USG-supported partner's salary, travel, or other expenses. USG-supported partners are encouraged to seek supplemental funds from their funding agencies. However, supplemental funds for USG-supported partners are not guaranteed by the PEER program and must be determined on a case-by-case basis by each participating agency. In exceptional cases in which, after the award is made, travel funding for USG-supported partner is found to be essential to the training objectives of the PEER project, PEER staff may authorize the use of limited amounts of PEER funds for this travel only, not for salary support for the USG-supported partner. Applicants should not count on this option in estimating their project budgets, however.

### ***U.S. Government-Supported Partner Eligibility Summary***

- Primary PI or co-PI of an active research award from USG-supported agency participating in the PEER program or intramural researcher employed by such an agency. The USG-supported partner award or intramural funding must remain active for at least 12 months after the start of the PEER project (which may start no earlier than September 1, 2018). If the USG-supported partner award expires prior to 12 months of overlap with the PEER award, a no-cost extension will need to be obtained before the PEER award can be issued.
- USG-supported partner's expertise aligns with and contributes to the PEER proposal.

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**

PEER can be used to support a wide range of research methodologies, as long as pre-proposals address the priorities outlined in the focus areas. PEER can support multiple types of research including: the development of new technologies or instruments, proof-of concept proposals, formative studies, surveys, operational and implementation research, social science and behavior change research, systems research, and policy studies, among others. PEER also supports research awards from a wide range of academic disciplines including the natural, physical, social, economic, and behavioral sciences as well as engineering. Applicants are encouraged to clearly articulate how their proposed research project will impact their local, regional, or national communities.

Applicants are encouraged to consult the PEER website for a [comprehensive list](#) of projects funded in past cycles. *Proposals focused on basic science topics without clear relevance to USAID development objectives will not be eligible for PEER funding.*

Examples of research related activities that PEER will support include:

- Design and conduct of baseline surveys, modelling and simulation, implementation/operational research
- Primary data collection for undergraduate and graduate students or support for other field visits necessary for data collection by a member of the research team
- Exchanges and data analyses with USG-supported partners

- Dissemination events and stakeholder meetings to translate research results to policy-makers and the community

In addition to research, PEER projects may also be used to support capacity building activities that contribute to research objectives including: education and training support for students, postdoctoral associates, and researchers; international travel; conference and workshop attendance; communications; equipment, materials, and supplies for developing country institutions and research networks.

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 development impact
- 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](mailto:peer@nas.edu) with other eligibility questions.

## VII. Timeline

|                          |                                                                                                                         |
|--------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>October 2, 2017</b>   | PEER solicitation posted on National Academies website                                                                  |
| <b>January 12, 2018</b>  | Pre-proposals due to National Academies                                                                                 |
| <b>February 23, 2018</b> | Selected applicants are invited by National Academies to submit a full proposal, all others are notified of declination |
| <b>April 6, 2018</b>     | Full proposals due to National Academies                                                                                |
| <b>August 2017</b>       | PEER awardees announced                                                                                                 |

## VIII. Budget Information

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.

Most projects are anticipated to run for one to two years. Annual funding installments are dependent on completion of financial and technical reporting requirements. Single institution awards are anticipated to range in size from \$40,000 to \$80,000 (USD) per year for one to two years. A few larger and more complex projects (those involving multiple institutions and/or multiple countries, with one of them serving as the lead) may receive between \$80,000 to \$100,000 (USD) per year for up

to two years. The maximum award amount is \$200,000 over two years. **The maximum project duration is two years (not three years, as in past cycles of PEER). In some cases, projects may request and receive a no-cost extension; however, projects will not be allowed to extend past a total project duration of two years, six months.** Requested funds can only be used to support costs for developing country researchers and institutions.

Applicants whose funding requests do not fit within these parameters are encouraged to contact PEER staff ([peer@nas.edu](mailto:peer@nas.edu)) before preparing their estimated budget figure at the pre-proposal stage.

## **IX. Pre-Proposal Preparation and Submission Instructions**

Pre-proposal applications are required for the PEER program. Pre-proposal submissions will be reviewed to ensure that invited full applications meet the eligibility criteria and focus area requirements articulated in Sections V and VI. The deadline for submission of pre-proposals is **January 12, 2018**.

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 eligibility status
- Alignment with research priorities outlined in corresponding “Focus Area” section
- 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 proposal process. Any such cases discovered by PEER staff or brought to their attention 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 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 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 2 pages of text total), in which the following must be addressed:
  - Project aims and objectives
  - Significance of the research as it relates to a particular focus area and development impact to local, regional or national community
  - A description of how the expertise of the USG-supported partner will complement the proposed project
  - Other potential 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 and intention to apply for a single or multiple institution award. The budget for PEER projects varies depending on the proposed research scope, and the duration of projects may be up to two years. Typical projects fall within the following ranges:
  - Single institution: U.S. \$40,000 - \$80,000/year
  - Multiple institutions: U.S. \$80,000 - \$100,000/year
- 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.

### **X. Focus Area Appendices**

## **FOCUS AREA: Multiple Countries/ Open Call**

### **Eligible Countries:**

#### **ASIA**

Afghanistan  
Bangladesh  
Burma  
Cambodia  
India  
Indonesia  
Kazakhstan  
Kyrgyz Republic  
Laos  
Maldives  
Nepal  
Pakistan  
Philippines  
Sri Lanka  
Tajikistan  
Thailand  
Timor-Leste  
Turkmenistan  
Uzbekistan  
Vietnam

#### **EUROPE AND EURASIA**

Albania  
Armenia  
Azerbaijan  
Bosnia and Herzegovina  
Georgia  
Kosovo  
Macedonia  
Moldova  
Serbia

#### **SUB-SAHARAN AFRICA**

Angola  
Benin  
Botswana  
Ethiopia  
Ghana  
Guinea  
Kenya  
Liberia  
Madagascar  
Malawi  
Mali  
Mozambique  
Namibia  
Nigeria  
Rwanda  
Senegal  
Sierra Leone  
South Africa  
Tanzania  
Uganda  
Zambia

#### **LATIN AMERICA AND CARIBBEAN**

Brazil  
Colombia  
Dominican Republic  
El Salvador  
Guatemala  
Haiti  
Honduras  
Jamaica  
Mexico  
Nicaragua  
Peru

#### **MIDDLE EAST**

Egypt  
Iraq  
Lebanon  
Morocco  
Tunisia  
West Bank/Gaza

### **Additional Criteria for Applicants:**

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

### **Objectives:**

USAID is the U.S. government's lead development agency working to end extreme global poverty and enable resilient democratic societies. Under the PEER Open Call / Multiple Sectors, the PEER program will award a limited number of highly competitive, novel research projects from PIs in PEER-eligible

countries that are of direct relevance to [USAID's development objectives](#). These development objectives are articulated in USAID Regional and Country Development Cooperation Strategies (RDCS and CDCS). Applicants should closely read the appropriate RDCS and/or CDCS and USAID Mission website for the country or countries where the PEER project will take place before submitting a proposal. Additional information on Development Cooperation Strategies can be found at: <https://www.usaid.gov/results-and-data/planning/country-strategies-cdcs>

Research proposals submitted under the Open Call 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.

Consistent with the goals of PEER, applicants should outline how their research findings will lead to development-related policy or programmatic change. All projects must also contribute to USAID higher education objectives by strengthening engagement with junior researchers and undergraduate/graduate students. Proposals that include multi-disciplinary research teams, multi-country collaboration, and/or engagement with policy actors and other development stakeholders are desired but not required. 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.

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

## 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              |                             |
| Nepal       | Guinea             |                             |
| Pakistan    | Kenya              |                             |
| Philippines | Liberia            |                             |
|             | Madagascar         |                             |
|             | 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 interact with patients, human subjects data, or other personally identifiable information will be required to go through a protocol review coordinated by the National Academies and to obtain and maintain a Federal Wide Assurance of their institution's Internal Review Board. This process typically takes 3 months from the announcement of the PEER award. The time needed to obtain IRB compliance and successfully implement the PEER Project should be calculated in the budget and timeline of activities.

### 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:

Under the PEER Family Planning focus area, the PEER program will award funds to a limited number of highly competitive, novel research projects from PIs in PEER-eligible countries that help increase demand and access to high-quality voluntary family planning services, information, and reproductive health care. More specifically, PEER is seeking to support family planning *implementation research* that

develops and tests proven interventions leading to sustainable family planning services AND *behavior change research* that leads to an increased understanding and use of family planning services in priority communities, such as youth and low income populations. Where applicable, research should include and address the roles of men and boys in access to and use of family planning services. 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>.

Implementation research areas may include, but are not limited to:

- 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 family planning services by youth and integrate family planning services into youth development activities
- Interventions that promote integration of family planning services with HIV/AIDS and STI services and into routine health care in rural and poor communities
- Innovations in engaging the private sector in the provision of family planning services; and the development of sustainable financing mechanisms that support equitable access to family planning services

Behavior change research areas may include, but are not limited to:

- Understanding and mitigating social norms that negatively impact uptake and access to and use of family planning services
- Identifying and addressing barriers that underlie non-use of contraception and family planning services among women

Consistent with the goals of PEER, applicants should outline how their research findings will lead to development-related policy or programmatic change. All projects must also contribute to USAID higher education objectives by strengthening engagement with junior researchers and undergraduate/graduate students. Proposals that include multi-disciplinary research teams, multi-country collaboration, and/or engagement with policy actors and other development stakeholders are desired but not required.

Country specific USAID health objectives are articulated in [USAID Regional and Country Development Cooperation Strategies \(RCDS and CDCS\)](#). Applicants should closely read the appropriate RCDS 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.

(Note: the text describing this focus area was revised on October 13, 2017, to add the section on U.S. Partner Eligibility and provide the reference to the USAID Protecting Life in Global Health Assistance policy.)

## Focus Area: Cambodia/ Investigator Development Awards: Multiple Sectors

### Eligible Country:

Cambodia

### Additional Criteria for Applicants:

Please see Section V of the Solicitation for [General Eligibility requirements](#). In addition to the standard list of U.S. Government (USG)-supported partners found [here](#), U.S. researchers supported by one of USAID's [Feed the Future \(FtF\) Innovations Labs](#) are also eligible to serve as USG-supported partners for this focus area only. In addition, for this focus area only, applicants may submit pre-proposals without having a USG-supported partner. If the pre-proposal is selected to proceed to the full proposal phase of the review process, the applicant will have time to find a partner while preparing the full proposal for submission.

Projects submitted under this focus area should be designed to last no more than two years with a combined budget of no more than \$30,000. Applicants based in Cambodia who are interested in carrying out larger projects are also welcome to submit a pre-proposal under the [Multiple Countries/ Open Call](#) or the [Multiple Countries/ Family Planning and Reproductive Health](#) focus areas instead. Each individual applicant can submit no more than one pre-proposal in this cycle, however. There are no limits on the number of pre-proposals that can be submitted from any one institution.

### Objectives:

USAID seeks to support the capacity of Cambodian researchers to design and implement competitive research awards that address critical development issues. PEER will support small awards to Cambodian researchers working in partnership with a USG-supported partner or USAID-supported FtF partner. Research proposals should address one of the topics listed below while also providing opportunities to train and mentor students.

- Social science research on societal barriers to food security and adequate child nutrition
- Research projects that incorporate the use of big data, elements of digitally-enabled precision agriculture, and/or GIS or remote sensing-based products
- Use of information and communications technology (ICT) data on crop yield, nutrition outcomes, agriculture economic data, etc. to inform future program design; design programs for scale; or evaluate program efficacy
- Rapid field analysis to understand the relationship between improving rice field-fisheries systems and enriching fish diversity in the Great Lake (Tonle Sap)
- Rapid analysis to understand overuse of pesticides in agriculture production; and barriers and opportunities to decrease indiscriminate use of pesticides
- A comparative study on the concentration/levels of pesticide trace elements found in fish species inside the Community Fish Refuges (CFRs) and outside CFRs and the extent to which this poses an unintended risk to health of consumers
- Implementation research projects that promote uptake and adoption of known agricultural innovations (such as those produced by [USAID-funded Innovation Labs](#)) through targeted field research and user-centered market analysis

Cambodia's rich biodiversity, forests, and water assets have both national and regional importance and affect global stocks of unique species and valuable resources. As outlined in USAID/Cambodia's [CDCS](#), the environmental costs of deforestation and wildlife trafficking will have direct financial impacts on people and markets. PEER seeks to fund research that analyzes the barriers and opportunities to better wildlife and land management using a community-based approach. Potential research topics include:

- Innovative approaches to promoting greater civil society participation in the administration and monitoring of land, forests, and protected areas, including the promotion of community rights to manage these resources
- Improved approaches to curbing wildlife trade and better monitoring of trafficked goods
- Identification of the past, current, and future benefits of Prey Lang Forest on communities' livelihoods, besides timber
- Assessment of the drivers of illegal poaching of wildlife using snares, particularly in the Eastern Plains protected areas
- Determination of the top reasons why poachers are using snares (for money, for bushmeat, for export, because it's easy?) and identification of the species they are trying to catch
- Development of recommendations on incentives that would convince poachers to stop (for example, more enforcement, better awareness of risks to endangered species, economic incentives, social stigma, or shaming)

## **Focus Area: Indonesia/ Multiple Sectors and Biodiversity**

### **Eligible Country:**

Indonesia

### **Additional Criteria for Applicants:**

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

### **Objectives:**

For the current cycle of PEER, applicants in Indonesia are welcome to submit pre-proposals relevant to either of the following topical themes, one very broad and the other specific:

- PEER is seeking research projects that support the goals and objectives of USAID/Indonesia as outlined in the Mission's Country Development Cooperation Strategy (CDCS, available online at <http://www.usaid.gov/indonesia/cdcs>). Research proposals on a variety of topics will be considered, with those that align with the CDCS given higher priority. Please see [prior PEER awards](#) for a sample of the range of research topics that will be considered.
- In addition to Indonesia-based projects on a variety of development-related topics as noted above, PEER also encourages proposals for research projects with a focus on elucidating and increasing understanding of the causes and consequences of the loss of biodiversity in both marine and terrestrial environments in Indonesia, *with a focus on societal and security implications of this biodiversity loss.*



## Focus Area: Laos/ Nutrition and Disabilities Capacity Strengthening

### Eligible Country:

Laos

### Additional Criteria for Applicants:

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

### Objectives:

UNICEF estimates that Laos loses between two and three percent of its GDP annually, or around \$200 million, as a result of malnutrition-related productivity losses. A productive member of an economically growing society not only needs to have had a strong and nutritious upbringing but also must have access to employment opportunities. Further complicating Laos' development landscape are the disabling injuries caused by landmines and unexploded ordnance. Given the critical intersections of productivity, nutrition, and economic growth, PEER is interested in supporting innovative research projects that work at the intersection of these complex problems. PEER applicants should build on USAID current investments in: [disabilities capacity strengthening](#), increased health services and improved economic empowerment for persons with disabilities, and improving [nutrition](#) through locally available products and exploring the feasibility, acceptability, and affordability of local [complementary fortified foods](#). Applicants should design projects that create a better understanding of barriers, highlight opportunities, test innovations, and create economic growth in Laos. Special focus should be placed on research topics that lead to the creation of job opportunities and the utilization of locally available resources while promoting healthier Laotian people, especially children 6-59 months. Potential research questions include but are not limited to:

- Innovative approaches that increase the health and wellbeing of Persons with Disabilities
- Testing of existing or development of new affordable products and innovations to assist Persons with Disabilities, including low-cost Assistive Technology (AT) or new mobile technology applications
- Research that increases the understanding of stigma and discrimination towards neglected populations (i.e., Persons with Disabilities, victims of human trafficking, those at risk for HIV infection, or immigrant populations) and tests interventions to decrease stigma and promote positive societal integration
- Assessment and exploration of the possibility, safety, efficacy, affordability, and acceptability of local production of fortified complementary foods for children ages six to 23 months; and balanced iron and folic acid supplements for adolescent girls and pregnant and lactating women (with a special focus on targeted fortification or the production of complementary foods fortified with micronutrients and of an adequate macro and micronutrient composition)
- Testing of new micro-enterprise models that increase small-holder agribusinesses or stimulate new food related industries

## **Focus Area: Peru/ Impacts of Extractive Industries on Indigenous Peoples in the Peruvian Amazon**

### **Eligible Country:**

Peru

### **Additional Criteria for Applicants:**

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

### **Objectives:**

Peru is considered one of the world's most biodiverse countries, containing over 10% of the Amazon Basin's forested area. These forests comprise valuable wood species, both commercially and ecologically, and rich deposits of gold and hydrocarbons below the soil. USAID works to conserve biodiversity and ecosystem services in priority areas of the Peruvian Amazon by strengthening forest governance and providing communities and local organizations with the means to protect these invaluable resources from illegal or unsustainable exploitation and to use biodiversity-friendly and climate-resilient methods to achieve economic development.

In alignment with the goals of USAID/Peru and USAID's Regional Amazon Strategy, the PEER Program is interested in supporting collaborative research projects that generate information about the socioeconomic impacts of extractive industries on indigenous and forest-dependent communities in the Peruvian Amazon. In particular, projects that address the following topics are encouraged:

- The cumulative social, environmental, economic, and/or cultural impact of extractive industries on indigenous peoples in the Peruvian Amazon
- Feasible protocols and methodologies to predict, measure, and/or mitigate direct and indirect impacts of extractive industries on indigenous peoples

USAID/Peru is particularly interested in supporting research projects that involve collaborations with a wide range of stakeholders, including private sector partners and civil society organizations, as well as projects that have the potential to inform government policy at the national and/or local level. Women researchers are strongly encouraged to apply.

Additional information about USAID's current and future work in Peru and South America can be found here:

[USAID/Peru Homepage](#)

[Peru CDCS](#)

[Regional Amazon Strategy](#)

## **Focus Area: Haiti/ Education**

### **Eligible Country:**

Haiti

### **Additional Criteria for Applicants:**

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

### **Objectives:**

PEER is seeking to support research that contributes to several topics around education and educational practices in Haiti. USAID/Haiti would like data for decision making around the following topics:

#### **Classroom Instruction and Effective Learning**

The Inter-American Development Bank's 2010 Haiti Country Strategy states that between 70 and 80 percent of teachers lack accreditation and one-quarter have an educational level less than the ninth grade. Evidence-based teaching practices are limited; many teachers have not mastered the competencies they are expected to teach; classroom management and disciplinary techniques are anachronistic; and the curriculum is outdated and often overlooked in practice.

USAID/Haiti is interested in gathering observational data on typical classroom practices and behaviors in the early grades of school (grades 1-3) in Haiti. Some particular research questions of interest to be included in this observational data collection include:

- What pedagogical practices are being used most frequently by teachers in formal and informal classroom settings?
- How much time in the classroom is spent "on task" (i.e., direct instruction, student work, group work, etc.) vs time spent on behavior management and other non-learning activities?
- During a typical school day, how much oral instruction is given in Creole and how much in French?
- What do teachers expect their students to learn in a school year/month/week/day?
- What pre-service training is completed by the teachers observed in the study, including degree(s) held, level of education attained, etc.

PEER award applicants are encouraged to propose further observational data that may be relevant as part of the research on classroom practices and behaviors.

#### **Children and Youth with Disabilities**

There is a need to expand research about children and youth with disabilities (including but not limited to visual, hearing, physical, and cognitive disabilities) in Haiti. USAID/Haiti would like to use data to make decisions on the design of future educational activities to increase educational access to children and youth (4-18 years of age) with disabilities. A desk review/survey is requested on the following:

- A desk review/survey of available organizations working in Haiti to increase access of children and youth with disabilities to quality education, and documentation of the approaches and practices employed by these organizations to increase access to education for children and youth with disabilities.

This desk review/survey could also include an overview of educational policies, resources, and services that support access to quality education in Haiti for children and youth with disabilities.

#### **Effectiveness of School Feeding for Improved Academic Outcomes**

It has been shown in other country contexts that school feeding programs can have a positive outcome on academic outcomes. Ongoing efforts by the Government of Haiti, USAID, the U.S. Department of Agriculture, and others have been made for school feeding programs in Haiti. USAID/Haiti would like to have information on school feeding practices to in order to better understand nutrition and its effect on academic outcomes in the Haitian context. USAID/Haiti and PEER are particularly interested in the following:

- A survey of school feeding programs ongoing in Haiti, with comparative analysis of inputs, processes, and outcomes on student achievement.

Researchers with ideas for projects that can address one or more of the above priority areas are highly encouraged to apply.

## **Focus Area: Middle East and North Africa/ Refugee Host Communities Health**

### **Eligible Countries:**

Egypt, Lebanon, Morocco, Tunisia, and West Bank/Gaza

### **Additional Criteria for Applicants:**

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

### **Objectives:**

USAID seeks to understand displaced populations in the Middle East and North Africa region, particularly to address issues affecting refugees and other internally displaced populations from the ongoing conflicts in Syria, Yemen, and Iraq. We recognize issues affecting displaced populations are multidimensional, therefore PEER is seeking collaborative research proposals focused on refugee populations and refugee host communities on the following topics: water, sanitation and hygiene and disease detection and/or prevention. PEER is particularly interested in research proposals that can test pilot health innovations in conflict impacted countries.

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

#### **Water, Sanitation and Hygiene (WASH) in Refugee Settlements and/or Refugee Host Communities**

- Innovations in WASH delivery methods for disease prevention in refugee settlements and host communities
- WASH-related research to improve health outcomes of refugees
- Improvement of equitable access to water for refugees, 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

#### **Disease Detection and Prevention in Refugee Settlements and/or Refugee Host Communities**

- Development of telemedicine applications for health screening and prevention in refugee and non-refugee communities
- Innovations in infectious disease detection among refugees and/or displaced populations, including tuberculosis, leishmaniasis, and other endemic diseases
- Innovative service delivery methodologies which address emerging TB co-morbidities in refugee populations
- TB transmission and treatment in refugee and migrant communities
- Methods to evaluate, test, and apply policy and programs around infectious disease prevention, detection, and response
- Methods to improve health tracking at refugee Points of Entry into asylum countries

- Methods to improve access to healthcare for refugees and other high risk populations
- Understanding of the resilience of health and provision centers in combat-impacted zones

We are particularly interested in proposals that engage multiple stakeholders and expect that research results will be action oriented and completed in no more than two years. Proposals are strongly encouraged to link the intended or anticipated research findings to a larger community outside of academia, including health-related government ministries, non-governmental organizations, and the private sector. Women researchers are strongly encouraged to apply.

## **Focus Area: Tunisia/ Multiple Sectors**

### **Eligible Country:**

Tunisia

### **Additional Criteria for Applicants:**

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

### **Objectives:**

PEER and USAID/Tunisia are seeking to support projects that lay the foundation for empowering current and new generations, strengthening civil society, and solidifying and expanding science and technology in Tunisia. Principal investigators have the opportunity to apply for PEER funds if their research supports one of the following priority areas as outlined by USAID Tunisia:

1. Health and agricultural sciences;
2. Natural resource management, to include water management, soil conservation, land management, and energy diversification, as well as general sustainable development issues; and
3. The use of geographic information systems (GIS) and other platforms for the collection and mapping of geospatial data to enable science-based policy making.

Applications with a focus on technology transfer, commercialization, and engagement with private sector stakeholders are highly encouraged. PEER projects that will result in the creation of new collaborations between Tunisian and U.S.-based researchers are viewed favorably. USAID/Tunisia is particularly interested in supporting projects that develop and/or utilize innovative approaches to addressing the Mission's development priorities.

Women researchers are strongly encouraged to apply.

## **Focus Area: Zambia/Technological and social alternatives to charcoal use and production**

### **Eligible Countries:**

Zambia

### **Additional Criteria for Applicants:**

Please see Section V of the Solicitation for General Eligibility requirements

### **Objectives:**

Zambia has one of the highest deforestation rates in the world with an estimated 250,000 hectares lost per year. Deforestation is caused by an over-dependence on charcoal as the country's primary source of household fuel, agricultural expansion, and growing populations, both urban and rural. The deforestation problem was recently exacerbated by a severe power crisis that led to extensive load-shedding (power outages), driving charcoal use up among urban households for both heating and cooking. Charcoal and firewood account for more than 70% of the national energy consumption, as only 25% of the population has access to electricity. Deforestation and forest degradation in Zambia is estimated to contribute 3% to total greenhouse gas emissions from deforestation worldwide. Illegal charcoal production is highest where human livelihoods are most insecure and where governance and law enforcement are weakest.

PEER is seeking to support applied environmental research to inform solutions that decrease charcoal-led deforestation. Proposed research projects must explicitly respond to, address, and inform opportunities for Zambia to implement alternatives to charcoal as a key household energy source. Zambia ultimately needs a set of technologies and institutions that reduce demand for wood and associated land use change that operate independently of external support (i.e., are sustainable and scalable). Proposed research projects should lead to development solutions that meet these criteria and have the potential to be sustainable and scalable. Proposed research projects can be either fully developed solutions or serve as a proof-of-concept for solutions or interventions that offer a likely path to sustainability. Possible areas of research include, but are not limited to:

- Examine potential charcoal alternatives and their acceptability, affordability, comparability, scalability, and sustainability.
- Explore viable alternative livelihoods for charcoal producers.
- Determine barriers to market entry for liquified petroleum gas (LPG) and/or other alternative energy sources.
- Comprehensive review of laws, policies, and regulations pertaining to charcoal production, use, and enforcement, including barriers to implementation.
- Charcoal supply and demand analysis, including the use of GIS and geospatial analysis.

Proposals are additionally encouraged to include strategies for regional cooperation in reduction of charcoal use and illegal cross-border trade. USAID/Zambia is particularly interested in supporting research projects that involve collaborations with a wide range of stakeholders, including private sector partners, civil society organizations, and government entities, as well as projects that have the potential to inform government policy at the national and/or local level. The principal investigator should be



based in Zambia, but PEER projects that include co-partners based in other PEER eligible countries in Africa, particularly at universities and research organizations in Malawi, are highly encouraged. Women researchers are strongly encouraged to apply. Applications should build on existing scientific literature and analysis.

Applicants are encouraged to read USAID/Zambia's development priorities as outlined in their [Country Development Cooperation Strategy](#) (PDF).