Feed the Future Innovation Lab for Food Safety (FSIL)

RFA for Long-Term Research Subawards - Responses to Written Questions

Below are responses to questions regarding the FSIL Request for Applications (RFA) for long-term research subawards that were submitted by the deadline of 5pm EDT on April 14, 2020. Questions received after the deadline were not included or considered. Some questions have been abbreviated or slightly revised to protect the privacy of the submitting individuals and institutions.

1. Are departments of Purdue eligible to apply?
2. Are Purdue and Cornell Universities eligible partners?

Response to questions 1-2: Yes, Purdue and Cornell Universities are eligible.

3. Is this call applicable for Colombian laboratories?

Response: All types of U.S. and non-U.S. entities are eligible as collaborating partners, provided that they are not excluded from U.S. Government acquisition and assistance awards. Please review the Eligibility section for additional requirements. As a reminder, all project activities must be proposed in a single target country (Bangladesh, Cambodia, Kenya, and Senegal).

4. Given Purdue and Cornell are implementing this USAID program, are we acceptable as an NGO or do we also need to run our work through a University?

Response: NGOs may be included in concept notes and proposals assuming they are not excluded from U.S. Government acquisition and assistance rewards, but the lead institution must be a U.S. academic institution.

5. Does the FSIL anticipate funding four projects in total, or four projects per country?

Response: Four projects in total, if each project were to request the maximum of $700,000.

6. Would Trinidad and Tobago (T&T) be acceptable locations for this study?

Response: No, the target countries for this solicitation are Bangladesh, Cambodia, Kenya, and Senegal.

7. Within Kenya, Bangladesh, Senegal, and Cambodia, do the proposals have to focus geographically on the Feed the Future Zones of Influence? Would you consider concept notes that are within your target countries, but outside the ZOI?

Response: While not a requirement; applicants are strongly encouraged to focus geographically on the Feed the Future zones of influence.
8. Kindly confirm whether a sub-grantee may participate in multiple consortia or should keep their application participation limited to one per organization.

9. Can an institution and/or a researcher submit more than one application/concept note/proposal?

10. I would like to submit two concept notes as PI, focused on Kenya and Senegal, respectively. Both proposals are different and would be developed, of course, with different local partners. Would that be acceptable? Is there any restriction in the number of concept notes a PI or institution can submit?

   **Response to questions 8-10:** There are no restrictions on the number of concept notes that a PI or institution can submit.

11. Is it possible to have a call with the FSIL management team to discuss our ideas?

   **Response:** The FSIL management team will not engage in discussions about the RFA (apart from this Q&A process) in order to maintain a fair process. This restriction applies to current QuickStart teams as well.

12. We note on the advertisement for the funding opportunity there is a reference to nutritious food systems, but after the opening page, the focus seems to be on food safety. Are applications based on nutrition welcome?

   **Response:** The FSIL focus is food safety research. Food safety is a critical component of a nutritious food system, as foods can be nutritious yet unsafe resulting in diminished food security. Applications that are looking at ways to make nutritious food safe (i.e. research on how to improve food safety for nutritious crops like fruits and vegetables and animal source foods) are encouraged.

13. For the Kenya Technical Strategy, the Hypothesis “Improved food safety in the local and regional food processing industries will simultaneously reduce foodborne disease risks and enhance nutrition and economic outcomes” appears to suggest a focus on food safety in the processing industries. Does this imply that a concept for research in Kenya under the FSIL RFA will need to focus on food safety with regards to the processing industry and processed foods, and not other points in the food system?

   **Response:** Applicants are strongly encouraged to align with the stated FSIL country priorities, and this is one of the review criteria. However, applications that include other concepts for research will be accepted and considered.

14. Will the Lab consider projects focusing on arsenic contamination in food?

   **Response:** The FSIL will consider projects focusing on arsenic contamination, as arsenic can be a foodborne chemical hazard.

15. Could you please let me know if antibiotic use and antibiotic resistance is part of the priorities of the FSIL’s subawards?

   **Response:** The FSIL is focused on strategies to reduce and prevent foodborne illness. There would need to be a clear rationale for the work on the linkages among antibiotic use, antibiotic resistance, and foodborne illnesses.
16. My research is focused on “use of mobile phone technology among rural farmers in support of supply chain integration -Kenya”. I am writing to find out if my research could be funded beyond dissertation level in an effort to find an ICT model.

   **Response:** Subawards will not be established with individuals. If your proposed research aligns with FSIL priorities, it could be a component of a concept note provided it meets the eligibility requirements.

17. Our organization is a member of the CGIAR consortium and is designated by USAID as a Category 1 Public International Organization (PIO) under ADS 308 (which sets forth USAID’s mandatory policies and required procedures on assistance awards to PIOs). As a PIO, we would like to confirm that should we be successful, the applicable funding mechanism to receive the award could be the Project / General Contribution type subject to ADS 308 rules, in which funds are channeled through the CGIAR System (Trust Fund Contribution USAID – IBRD as Trustee of CGIAR Trust Fund). We also would like to verify that should we participate as a sub-awardee under a prime applicant, in accordance with ADS 303.3.21 (d) “for sub-awards to PIOs”, it would be subject to the terms and conditions contained in the “Standard Provisions for Cost-Type Awards to PIOs in ADS 308”.

   **Response:** Per ADS 303, your organization would be subject to ADS 308 as a subawardee. In that case, the lead U.S. academic institution should be prepared to administer a subaward to your organization accordingly. To confirm, your organization is not eligible to serve as the lead institution, as it is not a U.S. academic institution.

18. Regarding the inclusion of a host-country partner, does said partner need to be incorporated and registered in this country, or is an agreement with the government in question, which provides full rights for the partner to operate in the country sufficient to be considered for this role (i.e. a Host Country Agreement)?

   **Response:** Either scenario is acceptable. A partner that has an agreement with the government in question that provides full rights for the partner to operate in the country is eligible to serve as the host-country partner.

19. Could you please clarify this: "...the FSIL management entity reserves the right to balance review panel scores with FSIL research portfolio needs."

   **Response:** The FSIL management entity must select and manage a balanced portfolio of research and capacity development activities that addresses all areas of inquiry in the Global Food Security Strategy as well as all programmatic objectives. Final selection of subawards for funding will also be subject to USAID input and approval.

20. Is there any style that we will have to follow for citations/referencing?

   **Response:** There is no required style for citations/references.