

Feed the Future Innovation Lab for Horticulture
South Asia Regional Request for Applications Questions and Answers

Guidance: Questions and Answers from both email correspondences and webinars will be posted on this document on a rolling basis. The deadline for Questions is December 20th.

Webinar Presentation Slides: [South Asia RFA Webinar Slides](#)

Webinar Recordings:

1. [Webinar 1 Recording Link](#)
2. [Webinar 2 Recording Link](#) - Passcode is: Ei=u*jt0

Instructional Video on Budget, Budget Justification, Costshare and UEI: [Budget Informational Video](#)

[Budget Template Updated](#)

Clarifying language for RFA: Under Section: Application Preparation and Submission Instructions

Existing Language in RFAs: *If you are not able to access Piestar, then 1) technical application can be submitted as a PDF document, 2) a budget justification as a PDF document, and 3) an excel document for the budget with annual and cumulative totals for the prescribed categories. These documents should be emailed to horticulture@ucdavis.edu.*

Clarifying Language: *If you are not able to access Piestar, then 1) technical application can be submitted as a PDF document, 2) **budget justification, documentation of cost-share, and Supporting Budget Letters combined as a separate PDF document**, and 3) an excel document for the budget with annual and cumulative totals for the prescribed categories. These documents should be emailed to horticulture@ucdavis.edu*

NOTE: *Due to the holidays and time constraints for submission of applications to the RFAs for South Asia, West Africa, and East Africa, letters of support in the application package can be unofficial letters of support at the time of submission. Applications are due **January 10, 2023 5:00pm PST**.*

Official letters of support, signed by authorized staff at an organization, will need to be submitted prior to the close of the application review period, January 22, 2023.

Official letters of support sent after the close date for applications can be emailed to the Innovation Lab for Horticulture – horticulture@ucdavis.edu. Please include in the email the name of the Lead Principal Investigator to assist in the proper categorization of the letter of support.

Cost share waiver information: *If you are requesting a waiver of the cost share requirement, please include an explanation or justification for the waiver in your application in a separate letter or within the budget justification document. Requesting and potentially receiving a waiver of the cost share requirement will not be considered during the review process of applications in determining awarding funds.*

If a waiver has been requested and the application chosen for funding, a discussion will take place to determine the terms of the waiver

Question: Is this a solicitation for expression of interest or a request for proposals or applications to be submitted.

Answer:

This is a request for applications/proposals to be submitted, not a solicitation for expressions of interest.

Question:

Can an international NGO with local or regionally-based offices apply?

Answer:

Locally and regionally-based organizations should be lead applicants for the research application. However, these locally and regionally-based organizations can establish collaborations with international organizations to conduct research. These partnerships should be detailed in the application. For example, an international NGO or other entity based in the country is not eligible to apply as the lead applicant, but can be named as a collaborating partner. **Under special circumstances where financial administration will be difficult for the lead applicant, we are open to other fiscal options.**

Question:

Can applicants apply to conduct research to multiple countries?

Answer:

Organization needs to be based in Nepal or Bangladesh, but can conduct research in either country or both.

Question:

Can additional co-funding be provided to the project?

Answer:

Yes, applicants can supplement with co-funding.

Question:

Are there a set number of beneficiaries that need to be targeted?

Answer:

These are research focused projects, rather than a focus on a specific indicator, applications will be reviewed based on the broader, overall impact of the research.

Question:

How many subthemes can applicants apply to?

Answer:

You can select one or more, and the budget should reflect that if you are pursuing more than one subtheme.

Question:

Are there specific crops that need to be addressed in the research?

Answer:

Mainly edible fruit and vegetable crops.

Question:

How many researchers can be in a team?

Answer:

This is up to the applicant as long as the size of the team matches the resources needed for the research. The number of personnel or size of teams will be part of the budget justification.

Question:

Can we have a private sector partner?

Answer:

Yes. You are encouraged to have collaborations and they can be in the private sector

Question:

Can the Lead PI be based outside of the country?

Answer:

The lead PI needs to be in Nepal and/or Bangladesh.

Question:

Can we apply to conduct research in any region in Nepal?

Answer:

USAID does set Zones of Influence, but if the research needs to be outside these Zones of Influence, this should be justified in some way in the application and if awarded we can seek permission to conduct research in those regions.

Question:

Can we be a reviewer and an applicant?

Answer:

Yes, but please state this in your conflict of interest section of the reviewer application. And you will not be assigned any of the subthemes to review that you are applying to as an applicant.

Question:

Can I include non-horticulturist personnel as a team member?

Answer:

Yes. We encourage transdisciplinary expertise in applications.

Question:

Can we make teams from different universities?

Answer:

Yes.

Question:

How many graduate students can we have?

Answer:

This depends on the budget and how you justify the amount of graduate students that you have for the project.

Question:

Are the fruit and vegetable crops that can be researched in some way limited?

Answer:

In deciding the crops that you use, you should filter the selection through the lens of the priority and archetype.

Question:

Can basic research be conducted?

Answer:

Yes, basic research can be done, as long as it addresses/provides a solution to the priority and impacts the archetype.

Question:

Can we include academic departments outside of Nepal and Bangladesh?

Answer:

Yes, but the lead PI needs to be from Nepal or Bangladesh.

Question:

Can in-country PhD's be supported by funding from the project?

Answer:

Yes

Question:

Is there a specific type of organization that can apply?

Answer:

Any type of organization can apply as long as they work in Nepal and Bangladesh and that lead PI will be in Nepal and/or Bangladesh.

Question:

Can I include a private company for commercialization of research results as a Public Private Partnership?

Answer:

Yes

Question:

Can an organization collaborate with separate organizations on different proposals?

Answer:

Yes, organizations do not need to be exclusive to one proposal.

Question:

As an agribusiness company (both for profit and social works) are we eligible for the call or not? Private entity is eligible as I can see in the RFP.

Answer:

Any agribusiness company is eligible for the call.

Question:

Applicant's organization has a DUN number. Does the applicant need SAM registration before the submission?

Answer:

In order to receive funding, awarded applicants to this RFA must have a UEI number in order to receive funding. If your organization does not have a UEI number or only has a DUNS number, please initiate the application process to receive a UEI as soon as possible. It is possible to apply for a UEI number without requesting full SAMs registration. This approach is the fastest from what we understand.

Question:

Do you have a proposal template?

Answer:

We have shared the template for budget and M&E in RFA. The technical proposal should follow the outline provided in the RFA under title Sections of Application.

Question:

Can the same person be PI in one proposal and Co-PI in another?

Answer:

Yes

Question:

Can I include one or more US collaborators?

Answer:

Yes, but again, the lead PI will need to be from a local/regionally-based organization.

Question:

And how collaborators are defined for FtF projects?

Answer:

For collaborators in terms of FTF/application these would be subawardees on the project.

Question:

Could you please let me know the USAID set zones in Bangladesh?

Answer:

The Zones of Influence are highlighted on the map on this webpage:

<https://www.feedthefuture.gov/country/bangladesh/>. But research can be done outside of those Zones of Influence as long as applicants provide a strong justification for why the research should occur in other areas.

Question:

Is the total budget 1.2 million or is each applicant meant to submit a budget of \$1.2 million per project?

Answer:

The total for all projects in the area will be \$1.2 million to address all of the subthemes. From the RFA “The selected research projects will be funded at \$250,000 up to \$750,000 depending on the scope of work, over a period of up to 3 ½ years. A total of approximately \$1.2 million will be awarded, through which we aim to fund 2-4 projects. We encourage applications for a single subtheme, and collaborative projects that cover multiple sub-themes.”

Question:

Do we need to take any classes for the LASER PULSE?

Answer:

Yes. The two classes that are required to be taken by Lead PI:

Training 1: Embedded Research Translation

<https://laserpulse.org/course/laser-pulse-introduction-to-embedded-research-translation-training/>

Training 2: Gender Analysis in Research and Application

<https://laserpulse.org/course/gender-analysis-in-research-and-application/>

Question:

Do we need to collaborate with an academic/educational institution?

Answer:

No, just as long as there is the capacity to conduct research in the organization. Previous experience with publications are not necessary, just experience and resources to conduct research.

Question:

Is it possible to submit as an individual?

Answer:

Organizational collaboration is needed for application.

Question:

Can an institute submit an application in instances where individuals are not allowed to submit to the RFA?

Answer:

Yes, please have PIs that will be likely leading the research be listed and likely Lead PI take the LASER PULSE training.

Question:

Is it necessary to be a PI from the target country or can there be multiple PIs from US institutes and Host country institutes that can jointly apply for the grant ?

Answer:

The Lead PI and Lead Implementing organization need to be local or regionally based. Subawardees or collaborators can be from outside the region or country. The other PIs would be considered Co PIs with the Lead PI being locally based.

Question:

Do we have to collaborate with researchers in both Bangladesh and Nepal?

Answer:

No, the application can have research focus in one country or both countries.

Question:

What is the stance or preference of donor organization on these 2 things

1. Researcher planning to research multiple research areas of a single commodity. for example technology adoption, production and marketing of a single crop vs choosing one research area only
2. Is it acceptable to research on similar food group from different ecological region of Nepal as climate here is diverse even in small research area. Or should we try to choose the zones with similar agri-climatic condition

Answer:

There is not a set preference. It depends on the justification of the research approach and the case made for why it is focusing on one area or another in order to address the priority, subthemes, goals and benefit the archetype. The RFA does mention research in different agri-climatic conditions. Please review the Priorities, Subthemes and Research Goals.

Question:

Is the LASER PULSE course certificate is only mandatory for the lead PI or it is also needed for the co-PIs/collaborators along with lead PI

Answer:

For the Lead PI only.

Question:

Is a UEI needed prior to application?

Answer:

No, but this will be needed to receive funding.

Question:

Are the page limits firm set constraints?

Answer:

The page lengths are suggested lengths, but it is encouraged to meet these recommendations of lengths. Concise language is appreciated for the external reviewers.

Question:

Can equipment be purchased in the award?

Answer:

Equipment can be purchased and equipment costing over \$5000 needs to be highlighted or categorized in the budget and each piece of equipment over \$5000 needs to be justified in the budget justification.

Question:

Can applicants be reimbursed for time spent drafting the application?

Answer:

Sorry, no.

Question:

How much budget can we apply for? And how much should we allocate for PIs and other team members?

Answer:

Budget anywhere between \$250,000 to \$750,000 can be applied. There is no particular instruction but should be justifiable, based on similar provisions.

Question:

Shall we get the copies of presentation?

Answer:

There is a link to this presentation in the Q&A document

https://horticulture@ucdavis.edu/sites/g/files/dgvnsk1816/files/inline-files/PPT%20for%20South%20Asia%20region%20Informational%20Webinars%20RFA%20Updated_0.pdf

Question:

Is it essential to make a contract with an educational institution?

Answer:

No, you can apply from research-based organization or any organization having research experience.

Question: I registered for a laser account, but I have not received the activation link in my Gmail for the past three hours. I requested again for the activation link. But not yet received. I cannot access the two recommended trainings. What should I do?

Answer: Please check your spam email folder. People have been finding the email from LASER PULSE in the spam folder. If you continue to have challenges please email laserpulse@purdue.edu.

Question: Will the Subrecipient Commitment Form and Mini Audit Form needed when submitting the proposal?

Answer: The subrecipient form and mini audit are not needed for submission.

Question:

Do sub-grantees need to contribute to the cost-sharing obligations

Answer:

Applicant just will need to account for 25% cost share if not trying for an exemption of all or part. How that 25% is distributed that is flexible, as it can be the lead applicant organization or their sub grantees.

Question:

Should all the names of the PI, Co-PIs and collaborators (with the salaries) be stated on one excel page or should the names be separated according to institutions and put on separate excel pages (but same file)?

Answer:

They can all be on the same excel page, but should listed as separate line items in the salary/benefits sections.

Question:

Under which heading will survey expenses (involving supervisors, enumerators, translators etc) be put? Can they be stated as lump sums and breakdowns and explanations given?

Answer:

This would go under "Other Expenses" toward the bottom of the budget. It can be in lump sums as long as adequate explanation is provided in the budget justification.

Question:

Can some of the monies awarded by HIL be used to purchase a project vehicle and are there restrictions as to the amount that can be spent on such?

Answer:

A special process is needed including prior approval for vehicle purchases over \$5,000 USD. If this is the case for your project, it is worth noting that at the end of the project, USAID has the option to request that the vehicle is transferred to another USAID project run by a different organization.

Question:

The project needed to include health insurance. Where can health insurance cost be added? Can we add a separate section with the health insurance subtitle? Or is there another way to best add the cost?

Answer:

The health insurance can be added in the benefits section. You can override the formulas and enter a dollar amount in this section if that better fits your needs.

Question:

The research project that we plan to propose has a business model validation component that requires procurement of equipment that costs >\$5k .
What is the process/steps needed to include such equipment in our proposal?

Answer:

Please include the equipment in the Other direct expenses section of your budget and provide a full explanation in the budget justification. If your proposal moves forward, there is a special process required which includes prior approvals from multiple entities. If your proposal is chosen, we will follow up with the next steps for those items.