DEVELOPMENT INNOVATION ACCELERATOR

Frequently Asked Questions

GENERAL

- *What is Development Innovation Accelerator?*

- *What is a Broad Agency Announcement (BAA)?*

- *What areas are covered by the Accelerator BAA?*

- *What is the purpose of the Lab's Accelerator?*

- *How does the Accelerator work?*

- *Who can apply to an Accelerator Addendum?*

- *What does the Accelerator workflow look like?*

USAID DEVELOPMENT PROFESSIONALS

- *What makes the Accelerator's approach different from USAID's other development approaches?*

- *Is the Accelerator going to cover the entire Agency or just the Lab?*

- *When should the Contracting/Agreement Officer be involved in the process?*

- *Is there competition in the BAA process?*

- *Can you use traditional tools instead of the Accelerator for the same purpose?*

- *Who is in the Accelerator STIP Review Board?*

- *Will each Accelerator Addendum have a different Review Board?*

- *Will the Missions be involved in the review of proposals related to their own country?*

- *Is the proposal review and selection different for the Missions and the Lab?*

- *How long does it take to get an agreement or partnership signed under the Accelerator BAA?*

- *Can the Missions use the Lab's Accelerator or should they issue their own BAA?*

- *Do we need to have a Project Appraisal Document (PAD) in place to issue our own BAA or an addendum to the Accelerator BAA? Does the PAD need to be amended before or after the managementapproval stage?*

- *Are the Contracting Officers trained on using the Accelerator BAA?*

- *What are the comparative similarities and differences between the GDA/APS and the Accelerator BAA?*

- *Why did USAID introduce this new BAA mechanism for STIP? What advantages did this offer compared to existing procurement mechanisms? Are there new requirements or restrictions that implementing partners need to be aware of?*

- *The Agency Notice indicates that bureaus, offices, and Missions will be able to work with the Lab to issue an Accelerator Addendum specific to their own efforts. Does USAID plan to institutionalize BAA more broadly or only for efforts connected to the Lab?*

USAID ACQUISITION & ASSISTANCE OFFICERS

- *Are Mission Addenda posted by the Lab?*

- *Should Missions post only to Grants.gov or FBO?*

- *Is there a TEC review? How do you select the partner?*

- *Will there be more than one award?*

PARTNERS

- *The list of eligible organizations posted on www.grants.gov seems very broad. Are there particular partnerships that USAID is seeking to foster?*

- *Since there is no specific project timeframe or funding level, do organizations propose these with agreement to be established with USAID as part of the consultative co-creating/co-designing collaborative process? Are there particular timeframes for results, e.g., one year versus three years that might make a proposal more appealing for funding?*

- *Will the process start any time with the submission of an expression of interest? Is there a tentative timetable for review and feedback of ideas presented in the expression of interest?*

- *Besides cost sharing, matching or leveraging, what "other exchange of resource arrangements" have been used successfully or should be tested?*

- *If my expression of interest is chosen to move forward to the concept note stage, is this a commitment of funding from USAID?*

- *What aspects of intellectual property have been problematic for the Lab's initial efforts in scaling up innovations and how have these been addressed in the BAA? The intellectual property section is very user-friendly to USAID and does not reflect a real partnership arrangement. It may discourage organizations from participating. What potential alternative arrangements would USAID entertain?*

- *Are there particular intellectual property sharing models such as time-limited license grants that USAID may be open in exploring?*

- *How much funding can organizations expect from USAID for the Accelerator proposals?*

- *Will the Accelerator take over other USAID mechanisms, such as the Grand Challenges?*

- *Is the Accelerator BAA the only one or one of many BAAs that will come out?*

- *Can the same organization apply to more than one Addendum?*

- *How do the BAA Addenda emerge?*

- *What's the funding stream to the Accelerator?*

- *During the competitive stage, what if USAID likes three statements of interest? Does that mean USAID will proceed with one concept (combining the three) or three separate concepts?*

- *How long will it take to get through all the stages of the Accelerator workflow? A year?*

- *How can a small organization with limited resources participate in a long development phase?*

- *Will the co-creation stage be funded by USAID? Where will this stage take place?*

- *How can a small organization put forward a brilliant idea?*

- *What sort of ideas would be considered "brilliant ideas"?*

- *What happens if during the course of the engagement and before award USAID decides no longer to support the program?*

- *Development problems require long term solutions. Can this result in a relationship that is longer than the five-year maximum?*

- *If my concept note is approved by the STIP Review Board, would that be a commitment of future years of funding?*

- *I have a brilliant idea, but that doesn't fit any of the Lab's nine focus areas. Can I still contact USAID?*

What is Development Innovation Accelerator?

The Development Innovation Accelerator (DIA or Accelerator) is a specific Broad Agency Announcement (BAA), focused on **Science, Technology, Innovation and Partnership (STIP)**, that was issued by the U.S. Global Development Lab on May 14, 2014. It describes the Agency's research interest and expresses to the public an opportunity to co-create, co-design, collaborate and co-invest in the nine focus areas of interest to the Lab.

What is a Broad Agency Announcement (BAA)?

The Broad Agency Announcement (BAA) is a method to communicate to the market the Agency's general interest in research regarding a development problem. Because a BAA is not an instrument but a method to communicate, this approach gives USAID tremendous flexibility in crafting the final relationship with the partner. It is a method to reach out a potential partner and, literally shoulder to shoulder, co-create and co-design a development solution based only on an initial idea. The Accelerator BAA may lead to a contract, grant, cooperative agreement, public-private partnership, Development Innovation Agreement, Inter-Agency Agreement, Government to Government Agreement, Donor to Donor Agreement, Memorandum of Understanding, or even a specific, hand-crafted agreement of a new type that is appropriate to the particular relationship. When using the BAA, the procurement instrument or relationship type does not have to be determined until the development problem and solution set are fully understood. It allows us to leverage the procurement process to support the development solution, rather than to jam the development solution into a particular procurement process.

What areas are covered by the Accelerator BAA?

The focus areas of the Accelerator BAA coincide with the nine initial areas of interest of the U.S. Global Development Lab that reflect development and foreign policy priorities:

1. *Food, Security and Nutrition*
2. *Modernizing Food Assistance*
3. *Ending Preventable Child and Maternal Deaths*
4. *Energy Access*
5. *Water Solutions*
6. *Child Literacy*
7. *Financial Inclusion*
8. *Rights, Participation and Accountability*
9. *Humanitarian Response*

What is the purpose of the Lab's Accelerator?

The primary goal of the Accelerator is to create a space for collaboration that will discover breakthrough solutions to the most intractable development problems by harnessing STIP (science, technology, innovation, and partnership) in the Lab's nine focus areas. The BAA construct of the Accelerator allows USAID to (1) reach out to potential partners with recognized expertise in relevant areas, (2) co-create, co-design, co-invest, and collaborate with partners, and (3) meet federally mandated competition requirements.

How does the Accelerator work?

The Accelerator consists of an umbrella BAA with individual Critical Development Challenge Addenda (Addenda) underneath. The umbrella BAA provides the basic information and general administrative requirements, while the individual Addenda provide the specific area of research interest and solicit public participation. Therefore, interested parties respond to the individual Addendum, rather than to the umbrella BAA. Each Addendum will describe the particular research area of interest, the evaluation criteria, and administrative information such as the requirements for concept papers, statements of interest, and response deadlines. The amount of resources made available under individual Addenda will vary depending on the nature of the specific Addendum, on the concepts received, and the availability of funds. USAID anticipates issuing many Addenda that do not provide funding, leaving the conversation about resourcing until later in the process when the development solution is well understood. This helps keep the development concept design focused on exploring the best possible development solution rather than consuming a predetermined resource amount or source. At no time during this process is there a guarantee of funding and USAID reserves the right to make the determination to fund or not fund at any time up to the point of finalizing an agreement.

Who can apply to an Accelerator Addendum?

The Accelerator can be used by the Lab, Missions, Bureaus or any offices within USAID to engage public, private, for-profit, and non-profit organizations, as well as institutions of higher education, public international organizations, non-governmental organizations, U.S. and non-U.S. government organizations, and international donor organizations.

What does the Accelerator workflow look like?

After posting the general Accelerator BAA, USAID puts out an Addendum announcing a specific area of interest. The Addendum includes the content of the statement of interest (2-3 pages), timeframe, criteria for co-development. Subsequent steps are as follows:

1. USAID project office evaluates the statements of interest against the criteria in the Addendum and selects organizations to co-create a development solution.
2. USAID and the selected organization(s) work together to develop a concept paper that includes the development problem, the solution, the technical approach, areas of comparative advantage and general resourcing (about 7 pages).
3. USAID and selected organization(s) present the concept paper to the Lab's Accelerator STIP Review Board, which will make a recommendation to proceed to co-development if the concept has merit based on the criteria set forth in the Accelerator BAA itself (e.g. STIP merit, scalability.)
4. USAID Contracting-Agreement Officer works with the co-developers to determine the instrument-relationship type for the project.
5. USAID senior management reviews the project to revalidate the linkage of the proposed project with USAID's or field mission's strategy and evaluates resourcing constraints.
6. USAID project office and the selected partner(s) co-develop the project plan and resourcing in sufficient detail to establish a formal relationship (contract, grant, MOU, or other instrument).
7. USAID project office completes any pre-obligation requirements while the Contracting Officer assesses the partner(s)' capabilities for project implementation.
8. Once a consensus is reached and resources have been established in detail, the parties will conclude the agreement. Implementation begins.

This is a general scheme that illustrates what we anticipate to be a typical pattern for Accelerator Addenda. The BAA construct of the Accelerator allows for many variations, depending on the development problem and the course of the relationship.

USAID DEVELOPMENT PROFESSIONALS

What makes DIA's approach different from USAID's other development approaches?

This is a radically different approach for USAID partnerships - it begins before the concept stage and maintains constant engagement with the partner throughout the design process while still meeting the requirements for competition. This new tool allows USAID to reach out to a more diverse pool of partners – businesses, NGOs, individuals, universities, etc. – to discuss/discover and make use of the best solutions to accelerate development and maximize impact. Likewise, the Accelerator is less burdensome and more direct approach to engage with USAID on a great idea. The discussion of the development challenge and best solution comes to the forefront; procurement and relationship details come later. The Accelerator is not a replacement for other development approaches – it fills a gap that we have realized exists for some time. The Accelerator is most appropriate when it is unclear at the outset the best type of relationship required to approach a development problem, including number and type of partners, type of relationship, or even whether a relationship should be formed. When USAID uses the Accelerator, all parties must understand that all aspects of the development solution must be developed through mutual understanding and a focus on the development solution.

Is the Accelerator going to cover the entire Agency or just the Lab?

While the Accelerator is managed by the Lab, it will be used to cover the entire Agency. Bureaus and field missions can coordinate with the Lab to issue their own Addenda to meet their specific development needs.

When should the Contracting/Agreement Officer be involved in the process?

Involve your CO/AO at the very beginning of the process, before you develop your Accelerator Addendum. The CO/AO should remain closely involved throughout the process and provide business advice to the co-development team throughout the process.

Is there competition in the BAA process?

Yes. There are two steps that fulfill the Agency's competition requirements: 1) at the initial statement of interest stage, and 2) at the BAA STIP Review Board evaluation stage. All projects must pass these two stages before a full concept is co-developed for a final award. The regulatory requirement is spelled out at Federal Acquisition Regulation part 6.102(d), *Other competitive procedures*, paragraph (2). The BAA is a standard technique in the Federal Government, though it has not been used often in USAID. The BAA itself is covered in Federal Acquisition Regulation part 35.016.

Can you use traditional tools instead of the Accelerator for the same purpose?

Yes. Please consult with your CO/AO for other alternatives. Your CO/AO is welcome to contact the Lab if they would like assistance in this area. Missions may also establish their own BAAs outside the Accelerator.

Who is in the Accelerator STIP Review Board?

It is a permanent board that consists of a mix of science and development experts from the Lab and USAID's bureaus.

Will each Accelerator Addendum have a different Review Board?

No. There will be one permanent board, but we'll have alternate members when primary members are not available. However, if Missions create their own BAAs outside the Accelerator, they will have their own Science/Peer Review Boards.

Will the Missions be involved in the review of proposals related to their own country?

Not as part of the Accelerator STIP Review Board, but certainly as part of the management review. However, the Mission may be involved at the initial selection stage in cases when the statements of interest are in response to the Mission's Addendum to the BAA, issued by the Lab.

Is the proposal review and selection different for the Missions and the Lab?

No, the process is the same. The involvement of the Mission depends on the Mission's interest and the development solution.

How long does it take to get an agreement/partnership signed under the Accelerator BAA?

The process depends entirely on the ability of the USAID project office and partner(s) to co-develop a solution that meets the development problem. The Mission can participate in establishing a timetable (if appropriate to the development problem). In theory, an approved concept paper could result in a partnership in as little as three months, but the reality of co-development and collaboration processes is that they take time. However, the results are generally an order of magnitude better than creating programs without consultation.

Can the Missions use the Lab's Accelerator or should they issue their own BAA?

The Missions can use either option.

Do we need to have a Project Appraisal Document (PAD) in place to issue our own BAA or an addendum to the Accelerator BAA? Does the PAD need to be amended before or after the management approval stage?

No, you do not need an approved PAD in place, or even an approved Country Development Cooperation Strategy (CDCS), for that matter, to issue a BAA or Addendum. A BAA addresses a research area of interest, not a proposed project, so it is unlikely that it would be covered sufficiently by the CDCS or a PAD at this stage of the process. However, during the STIP Review Board, alignment to the CDCS, PAD, or other applicable strategy documents will be considered, and further co-development of a green-lighted concept may be contingent upon processing amendment to the CDCS or PAD as appropriate. Because not all projects under the BAA will necessarily result in a requirement for USAID funding or other significant USAID resources, a relationship to the CDCS or appropriate PAD may not be relevant. A BAA is more about exploring new ideas rather than satisfying a particular Government requirement. However, if a resulting relationship obligates USAID funding, it should be strategically aligned.

Are the Contracting Officers trained on using the Accelerator BAA?

The Lab provides continuous guidance and consultation to Contracting Officers across the Agency to better inform them about the Lab's new tool and its possible uses. The Lab is available to provide assistance when needed.

What are the comparative similarities and differences between the GDA/APS and the Accelerator BAA?

– Both are announcements, not in themselves procurement instruments. Both are managed by the Lab.

– Both use addenda to make the announcements, expressing specific areas of interest where USAID intends to pursue a co-creation relationship.

– Both may lead to partnerships based on various procurement instruments: a grant, cooperative agreement, fixed obligation grant, collaboration agreement or other assistance award. The GDA approach has some parameters (a public-private partnership must form the anchor relationship) but several techniques can be used to codify the relationship. The Accelerator may result in any type of award, or none at all, and the collaboration partnership does not necessarily have to form the basis of that award.

– A successful application to the GDA APS will result in an award of a Public-Private Partnership arrangement. The Accelerator approach could result in any type of relationship, including a Public-Private Partnership. If, at the outset, a Public-Private Partnership is desired, then the GDA APS (or a standalone GDA) is the best approach.

– GDA APS requires significant and specific private sector engagement (the 1:1 match). The Accelerator does not. A GDA must mobilize and leverage private sector assets, expertise, contributions and resources to achieve at least a 1:1 basis before any sort of award can be contemplated. The Accelerator leaves decisions regarding relationship and resourcing to a later stage after the development solution has been collaboratively and completely identified.

– Ideas proposed against the Accelerator must relate to the specific area of interest specified by the particular Addendum, which in turn must be related to the nine focus areas of the Lab (as shown in the umbrella BAA). Ideas proposed under the GDA APS can be related to any priority or objective that a Mission, Bureaus or other USAID office is seeking to achieve.

– Both allow USAID to have robust, extensive, and highly specific (co-creation) discussions with the partner. In case of the GDA, however, USAID can have that level of discussion with an entity that will be seeking to receive an award from USAID only after they submit a concept paper under the GDA APS.

Why did USAID introduce this new BAA mechanism for STIP? What advantages did this offer compared to existing procurement mechanisms? Are there new requirements or restrictions that implementing partners need to be aware of?

USAID was seeking a method to engage partners at the concept development stage. What we are attempting to do is a new way of doing business that includes co-creating, cooperation, co-development and co-investment. The Accelerator allows us that opportunity. Implementing partners will be pleased to know that this type of approach is extremely flexible, and therefore both USAID and the implementing partner have the ability to change direction quickly during co-development.

The Agency Notice indicates that bureaus, offices, and Missions will be able to work with the Lab to issue an Accelerator Addendum specific to their own efforts. Does USAID plan to institutionalize BAA more broadly or only for efforts connected to the Lab?

We absolutely intend to use co-development and co-creation techniques more broadly where these techniques provide significant advantage over our more traditional procurement techniques. The Accelerator is one approach to co-creation and co-development that we hope to expand more broadly while exploring other techniques as well.

USAID ACQUISITION & ASSISTANCE OFFICERS

Are Mission Addenda posted by the Lab?

Mission-sponsored Addenda to the Accelerator BAA will be posted by the Lab, managed by the Lab Contracting /Agreements Officer and evaluated by the Lab's STIP Review Board. If passed by the Review Board, the Mission, in coordination with the Lab's CO/AO, may choose to complete the co-development process at the Mission and award any resulting instrument through the Mission's CO/AO. If a Mission chooses to issue their own BAA instead of working through the Accelerator, however, they will manage the entire process internally. In these cases the Lab would be happy to assist the process as requested by the Mission.

Should Missions post only to Grants.gov or FBO?

Posting your BAA on both Grants.gov and FBO captures a wide audience – which is what the Lab is looking to do with their potential projects. In addition, posting to both allows flexibility in the ultimate instrument type. If, for instance, a BAA is posted only on FedBizOps, then it should not result in an assistance type agreement.

Is there a TEC review? How do you select the partner?

Not exactly, but it's similar to a TEC review. After the concept has been finalized by the USAID/partner technical team, the concept is reviewed by a STIP Review Board. The concept papers are evaluated against the evaluation criteria in the BAA and the BAA Addendum, but not against each other or a work statement (because there isn't one). In general, the Board will select concepts that have the potential for breakthrough impact at a global scale, are supported by evidence and analysis, and have an achievable resourcing strategy (to include availability of USAID funding, if applicable). The STIP Review Board does not score concept papers either (again, there is no SOW or comparison to other concept papers in this process, so nothing to score against). The STIP Review Board documents their recommendation based on whether the concept meets the criteria in the BAA and Addendum. The STIP Review Board may even approve concepts when adequate USAID funds are not available, because funding for a program may be possible through alternative resourcing techniques. Approval by the STIP Review Board to proceed to the co-development stage does not constitute a commitment or obligation on the part of USAID to fund a project.

Will there be more than one award?

Yes, there will more than likely be more than one award. We anticipate the Accelerator will have many Addenda that will invite organizations to participate in co-creation and co-development. Each one of these Addenda could result in one or many awards. However, any Addendum might not result in an award; the primary purpose of the Accelerator is to provide a space where USAID can co-create with partners to develop breakthrough solutions. Its primary purpose is not to make awards or to obligate funds, although that may be the outcome of a co-development effort.

PARTNERS

The list of eligible organizations posted on www.grants.gov seems very broad including both U.S. and non-U.S. organizations, and international donors. Are there particular partnerships that USAID is seeking to foster?

The list of eligible organizations is intended to be as broad as possible. USAID is not seeking particular partnerships; however, we do want to be more inclusive and provide easy access to organizations that

have not worked with USAID in the past. We also hope our traditional partners participate in the BAA as well.

Since there is no specific project timeframe or funding level, do organizations propose these with agreement to be established with USAID as part of the consultative co-creating/co-designing collaborative process? Are there particular timeframes for results, e.g., one year versus three years that might make a proposal more appealing for funding?

No, organizations don't propose timeframes or funding levels – at least not in the usual sense. Part of co-development means that we work together to arrive at the right timeframe and resourcing plan for a jointly designed development solution. The purpose of co-creation and co-development is to approach the development problem from a technical perspective first, then arrive at appropriate arrangements to implement the solution. It is possible that the ideal solution may take a much longer period of time, or through creative cooperation a faster solution may emerge. We don't want to box in what sort of solutions may emerge from the discussion by restricting it to a timeframe or a resourcing level.

There is a good reason for this approach. If USAID announces that it has $1 million to apply to a problem, the response from the design teams will be to develop a $1 million solution. We may step right past the $100,000 brilliant idea or we may not truly address the full scope of what might really be a $10 million requirement. We can all find example of where we under-resourced or over-resourced a solution because we designed to budget rather than the real need. In our traditional project development cycle we have review points built in to our USAID processes to address this issue. But, when conceiving innovative breakthrough solutions that, by their very nature, are unimagined excursions to uncharted territory, designing to budget will not work. We need to design to solution and constrain to resources much later in the process, after the ideal solution is well understood.

Will the process start any time with the submission of an expression of interest (2-7 pages)? Is there a tentative timetable for review and feedback of ideas presented in the expression of interest?

Each Addendum has its own approach to partnership depending on the nature of the specific area of interest, availability of USAID staff, and priorities within the Lab. Therefore an Addendum might have a rolling continuous process, a single closing date, or series of closing dates based on successive application windows. The Addendum might request a strict two-page expression of interest, a less structured expression of interest, or even a full concept paper. Look to the specific Addendum that you are interested in to find the information about how that engagement will work and how to apply.

The length of time it takes to review expressions of interest and select the best potential partners depends on the complexity of the development area of research interest, the number of interested applicants, and the available USAID staff dedicated to managing that addendum. We strive to respond to all expressions of interest within two to three weeks of a closing date.

Besides cost sharing, matching or leveraging, what "other exchange of resource arrangements" have been used successfully or should be tested?

There are other, non-monetary types of arrangements that can be considered during the development planning stage, such as access to or inclusion in other USAID programs around the globe, intellectual property rights, engaging host governments on specific policy issues. Our intent is to leave these questions open to co-creators to use non-traditional resources. That said, a solution that generates its own resources to be fully sustainable would be very exciting.

If my expression of interest is chosen to move forward to the concept note stage, is this a commitment of funding from USAID?

No, it isn't. Participants should be aware that an approved project may not receive USAID funding. This does not necessarily mean that the project cannot move forward: we expect to pursue innovation in resourcing as well as development. For example, a concept paper proposing a new approach to water purification may be approved to proceed, but not approved for USAID funding because it could be combined with an existing program funded by another donor country, or it may have commercial potential and USAID can assist in coordinating commercial capital to fund the startup, or even perhaps the target host country would fund the program (which may be enabled by USAID on-budget support to that country through another mechanism). Just because USAID determines that an approved program will not be funded does not mean that program cannot proceed; it may use an alternative resourcing model. In general, projects will be expected to fully consider all resourcing models, including developing new and innovative models.

What aspects of intellectual property have been problematic for the Lab's initial efforts in scaling up innovations and how have these been addressed in the BAA? The intellectual property section is very user-friendly to USAID and does not reflect a real partnership arrangement. It may discourage organizations from participating. What potential alternative arrangements would USAID entertain?

The intellectual property issue referenced by this question is applicable only to Addendum 1 of the Accelerator and should not be applied to any other Addendum or the Accelerator in general. Technical offices, when they craft their Addenda, look at the issues that may apply to the specific development area of interest. In the case of Addendum 1, the issue is scaling a proven solution rapidly. This being the first Addendum, we expect a large number of responses and so did not, under this Addendum, want to be encumbered by intellectual property issues at the initial stages as we select interested parties to collaborate. You'll note that there is an opportunity to discuss intellectual property protection later in the process. In general, the U.S. Government is friendly to intellectual property and even the commercial use of intellectual property developed with public funds. Please look to the individual Addenda to determine if intellectual property will be addressed in a manner out of the ordinary for that specific Addendum. Otherwise, you should be seeing a more conventional (and amenable) approach.

Are there particular intellectual property sharing models such as time-limited license grants that USAID may be open in exploring?

Yes. Depending on the development context and solution, we are open to a variety of intellectual property sharing models.

How much funding can organizations expect from USAID for the Accelerator proposals?

The purpose of the Accelerator is not to begin with the resourcing in mind, but rather to begin with the development problem in mind. Therefore the resulting relationship may or may not include an exchange of monetary resources or resourcing arrangements. The levels of resources are constrained by the availability of funds to support the project. Funding may come from USAID's field missions, from USAID/Washington (the Lab), other U.S. Government agencies, donor countries or external resources. Specific resource availability may be addressed in the individual Addenda depending on the goals of the Addenda.

Will the Accelerator take over other USAID mechanisms, such as the Grand Challenges?

No, the Accelerator will not take over other mechanisms. Other instruments and mechanisms have specific purposes and approaches that are well suited for particular relationships. The Accelerator is

well suited for situations where the best relationship to manage the development solution (indeed, even the solution itself) is not well understood at the outset. Since the Accelerator may lead to any type of agreement or relationship with the partner, the Accelerator may embrace other approaches like the Grand Challenges. It would not be out of the realm of possibility, for instance, that USAID and a co-development partner decide that a Grand Challenge is the best way to approach a development solution, and so they may use the Grand Challenge vehicle in their approach. The co-development partner would not, in this case, participate in the Grand Challenge but would instead become a co-sponsor with USAID.

Is the Accelerator BAA the only one or one of many BAAs that will come out?

For STIP under the Lab, this is the only BAA. It uses Addenda, so it is a pretty broad approach that covers our needs for the time being (given that we anticipate many more Addenda under this BAA). However, a BAA is not a unique approach to the Lab. We would encourage any Mission or Bureau to issue their own BAAs where appropriate.

Can the same organization apply to more than one Addendum?

Sure. Each Addendum to the Accelerator will describe the particular research area of interest, the evaluation criteria, and administrative information such as the requirements for statements of interest and response deadlines. Interested organizations can apply to any Addendum for which they are eligible. In addition, if the Addendum allows rolling or multiple application windows, an organization may apply multiple times to the same Addendum. Also, and Addendum may call for specific ideas to approach a research area of interest, and an organization may have two or more unrelated ideas. In this case it may be appropriate to submit more than one statement of interest to the Addendum. It should be noted, though, that this is not a lottery – more applications do not mean a better chance of being selected for partnership. An organization that submits a large number of ideas may not appear suitably invested into any one particular idea.

How do the BAA Addenda emerge?

Addenda are developed directly by the Lab or a USAID Bureau/Field Mission based on a specific development need or area of interest. USAID may also issue an Addendum on behalf of another (external) organization that seeks to bring USAID and other interested parties together around a particular development goal. Generally, ideas for an Addendum are generated internally, based on the Lab strategy and USAID objectives. However, external organizations can suggest topics for Addenda (see the umbrella BAA, Section VI.B.).

What's the funding stream to the Accelerator?

There is no funding stream to the Accelerator. If a concept has merit (as determined by the Accelerator Science/Peer Review Board) and meets USAID priorities (as determined by the Management review), then funding may be allocated if required. USAID is not obligated to fund any activity under the Accelerator.

During the competitive stage, what if USAID likes three statements of interest? Does that mean USAID will proceed with one concept (combining the three) or three separate concepts?

It depends on what the USAID technical team (Lab, Bureau or Field Mission) is trying to accomplish and the personnel resources available to collaborate on the problem. They may select only the best statement of interest, select all three and co-develop with each, or invite all three to sit together around the table and collaborate.

How long will it take to get through all the stages of the Accelerator workflow? A year?

It depends on how fast the parties come to a consensus during the co-development of the concept paper and the actual project plan. This process could go very quickly, perhaps as little as three months, or longer if the problem is complex and a solution does not readily emerge.

How can a small organization with limited resources participate in a long development phase?

If a small organization provides a brilliant new idea or approach and it is in USAID's interests to sustain a relationship with that organization in order to fully develop the solution, then it may be possible to find resourcing for that organization. This resourcing might or might-not come from USAID funding – we hope everyone can remain open to all alternatives. We expect this would be a rare and unusual event used as a last resort to preserve a truly brilliant idea. If a small organization, or any organization for that matter, is simply providing consulting services or conventional assistance in the development of a solution, then we would more likely open up a competitive process for the service rather than establish a sole-source relationship with one organization.

Will the co-creation stage be funded by USAID? Where will this stage take place?

Not generally. If we fund the co-creation stage, then it's not really co-creation, its consulting services. We would choose consulting services using our traditional competitive approaches. The co-creating might be performed near the Lab in Washington DC, at the Mission in a host country, or at the partner's facility. It depends on what works best for the co-creation team.

How can a small organization put forward a brilliant idea?

You may send in your idea in response to a specific Addendum. If no Addendum fits your idea, then you may send it in under the Accelerator's umbrella BAA (page 7, paragraph VI.B.) as a suggestion for a new Accelerator Addendum. If the Lab releases an Addendum in response to your idea, then you may respond to that Addendum. As a note, the Accelerator is not a specific requirements solicitation. It is broad in nature, targeted to solicit ideas under a general area of interest. So if you propose an Addendum because your organization has just developed a new Meganilometer to assess a baby's full nutritional health for pennies a unit, we would issue a broad Addendum calling for innovative and cost effective solutions to assessing babies' health. We would not release an Addendum calling for Meganilometers or alternatives to Meganilometers.

What sort of ideas would be considered "brilliant ideas"?

As stated in the Accelerator umbrella BAA (page 5, paragraph IV.B), we are looking for breakthrough innovations, not incremental improvements. The idea needs to be a game-changer, a revolutionary paradigm shift, a leap ahead in technology, a new potential to substantially change the lives of tens of millions of people. So a great idea, like one that substantially improves a crop yield, may not be radical enough for Lab collaboration. All of USAID's Missions and Bureaus are engaged in making dramatic improvements in Development, and great ideas that follow a known evolutionary trajectory would probably be better suited to one of our regular engagement techniques.

What happens if during the course of the engagement and before award USAID decides no longer to support the program?

Like any other USAID program, an engagement under the Accelerator is subject to semi-annual review and annual funding availability. If a project does not appear to be meeting the potential envisioned for it, it is subject to early termination in accordance with the termination clause in the applicable instrument that formalized the relationship.

Development problems require long term solutions. Can this result in a relationship that is longer than the five-year maximum?

The five-year maximum refers to relationships governed by contracts, grants and cooperative Agreements. These types of relationships can be extended using non-competitive processes to extend the period to much longer timeframes. However, other types of collaboration may not be governed by performance period limitations. So often it is theoretically possible to extend the relationship for a great deal of time to accomplish the development solution. However, it would seem unlikely that the Lab would maintain a single relationship for an extraordinarily long period of time under the Accelerator. We envision, per page 5 of the Accelerator umbrella BAA (paragraphs IV.C through H), that a project will evolve through four stages – Initial, Pilot, Transition and Scale – each with its own set of criteria. Depending on the nature of the solution set, most of the time these phases require very different resourcing techniques, partnerships, and implementing strategies. It would seem a rare solution that could be managed by one relationship through all these stages.

If my concept note is approved by the STIP Review Board, would that be a commitment of future years of funding?

No. If a funding relationship emerges from the co-development, it will generally encompass only the particular phase of the project – Initial, Pilot, Transition or Scale. Internal Lab management processes require that a project needs to prove itself at each stage before it passes to the next stage. The appropriate type of relationship necessary to manage a successive stage depends on the nature of the project, the type of relationship that was used to implement the project, the incorporation of learning from the previous stage, and the potential for further innovation. A follow on project could be a reprise of the current partners, or it could be revitalized through another Addendum. If the project was funded by USAID funds and was implemented through a traditional mechanism (contract, grant or cooperative agreement) then sole-source rules may apply to any follow-on instrument with the same partner, or a new partner may be selected through a competitive process. Partnerships that include substantial co-investment, however, often do not fall under the competition requirements and may be more easily sustained relationships in the long-run.

I have a brilliant idea, but that doesn't fit any of the Lab's nine focus areas. Can I still contact USAID?

Yes, absolutely. Cornerstone partners can contact USAID through their cornerstone liaisons for guidance. If you are seeking USAID funding support though, you should submit your idea through a funding mechanism solicitation, such as the Global Development Alliance Annual Program Statement, one of the open Grand Challenges, or any other of the numerous USAID solicitations or Annual Program Statements where your idea responds to a USAID requirement. If your idea does not fall into any of these categories, then you may send us your concept through the unsolicited proposal/unsolicited application process.