



USAID
FROM THE AMERICAN PEOPLE

Subject: Funding Opportunity BAA-LAB-STIP-2015

Amendment Number: Two (2)

Issuance Date of Amendment Number Two (2): Wednesday, October 07, 2015

Closing Date: Friday, October 9, 2015

Subject: Amendment Two (2) to the Strengthening Health Information Systems toward Interoperability in the West Africa Region Addendum 01 to the USAID Development Innovation Accelerator Broad Agency Announcement for Science, Technology, Innovation and Partnership

Dear Prospective Applicants:

The purpose of this Amendment Two (2) to the USAID Development Innovation Accelerator Broad Agency Announcement for Science, Technology, Innovation and Partnership is to provide answers to frequently asked questions.

The Addendum No. 1 as described above is hereby amended as follows:

Provide answers to frequently asked questions that pertain to Strengthening Health Information Systems toward Interoperability in the West Africa Region to Addendum No 1.

All other terms and conditions of the Development Innovation Accelerator Broad Agency Announcement for Science, Technology, Innovation and Partnership remain unchanged.

Frequently Asked Questions

**Strengthening Health Information Systems toward
Interoperability in the West Africa Region
Addendum 01
Science, Technology, Innovation and Partnership
Broad Agency Announcement (BAA)**

What is the Science, Technology, Innovation, and Partnership (STIP) BAA?

See The United States Agency for International Development Broad Agency Announcement (BAA) for Science, Technology, Innovation and Partnership (STIP), **Section I. Overview**

Why did USAID announce the *Strengthening Health Information Systems toward Interoperability in the West Africa Region Addendum to the STIP BAA*?

See Strengthening Health Information Systems toward Interoperability in the West Africa Region

Addendum 01 Science, Technology, Innovation and Partnership Broad Agency Announcement (BAA), **Section I. Background**

Logistical questions:

All information on this award process provided in response to emailed questions are available below. USAID is not permitted to provide detailed support or editing to your specific expression of interest, as this would provide a competitive advantage.

1. When is the deadline for Expressions of Interest (EOI)?

Please submit your Expression of Interest in English to LabEbolaBAADIA@usaid.gov no later than *11:59pm EDT on Friday, October 9, 2015*.

2. How quickly will applicants hear back from USAID?

Expressions of Interest will be reviewed on a rolling basis and responses will be provided no later than 21 days after the close of the BAA on October 9, 2015.

3. What are the restrictions for EOIs?

See Strengthening Health Information Systems toward Interoperability in the West Africa Region Addendum 01 Science, Technology, Innovation and Partnership Broad Agency Announcement (BAA), **Submission Instructions**

4. May an applicant submit more than one expression of interest for discrete projects in different countries?

Please limit your EOIs to one per organization. If you have multiple concepts, you can include them as separate sections within the same submission.

5. May an applicant submit an expression of interest that covers more than one country in West Africa?

USAID welcomes solutions or examples of successful work from anywhere in the world; however, USAID asks that expressions of interest provide a clear link to how concepts tie to the Ebola recovery efforts in West Africa (be it regionally or specifically in one of the affected countries, or both).

The work resulting from this award will be applied in the region of West Africa. Given the technical nature of the work, this award does not necessarily require that participants travel to the region, though that is a possibility, depending on the specifics of the work plan developed by selected organizations following the convening in November.

6. The EOI requirements include a monitoring and evaluation component. What does that entail?

Your EOI needs to include a basic monitoring and evaluation plan which should:

- Provide a basic overview of performance indicators that capture change at each level, and include baseline and realistic milestones and targets that are reflective of your results framework and include your theory of change and development hypothesis
- Describe how performance data will be collected, stored and analyzed, including: data sources, data collection systems, processes and tools, roles and responsibilities, and data quality assurance. Reflect on the practicality of the monitoring plan and consider alternative, more efficient approaches to collect data that do not compromise quality or rigor.
- Describe which evaluation designs (e.g. experimental, quasi-experimental or nonexperimental), methods (e.g. randomization, matching, regression discontinuity, before and after), and questions you would deploy as part of your project.

7. Will you accept applications from consortia?

USAID welcome submissions from consortia. While there are no rules prohibiting you from submitting as both a consortium and as an individual organization, USAID would strongly prefer that you eliminate duplication as much as possible and choose only one. However, if the proposals, skill sets, and resources available to the consortium versus the organization are vastly different, please feel free to apply separately. (see also the response to #4, regarding multiple submissions of expressions of interest per organization)

8. Are organizations required to bring a partner (as a consortia, MOU, or other formal partnership) at the time of the EOI deadline?

Partnership is not required as part of the expressions-of-interest phase, and USAID is more interested in seeing you use the 2000 word limit for an explanation of your ideas, skills and capacity, and design around the questions asked in the Addendum.

While partnering on concept development is possible given the length and nature of the co-design process, it is discouraged until at or after the November 2015 workshop to allow for optimal creativity and flexibility in the codesign process.

9. Do organizations need to socialize their proposals with Ministries of Health or other partners in the field before submitting?

No. USAID has ongoing work with the ministries of health in the region, so it is not necessary to socialize project ideas with country governments before submission.

10. Is co-funding required from an awardee. If so, what is the required funding level?

No, co-funding is not required.

11. Is there budget allocated to funding concepts that are developed out of this process?

USAID is not obligated to issue a financial instrument or award as a result of this Addendum.

12. In describing talent and other resources to dedicate to this collaboration, do you want us to get into specifics about key staff or focus on general team capabilities?

No, USAID would prefer that you focus your submission on the idea, concept and resources. General team capabilities should be mentioned, but it is not expected that this needs to be elucidated in great detail at this stage.

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

The co-creation stage will not be funded or reimbursed by USAID. (See Stage 2 of the Selection Process under Addendum No. 1)

14. If we receive an award under one addendum, are we allowed to submit a concept note/application for another addendum?

Yes.

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

No, this is not a commitment of funding from USAID. Awards are subject to the availability of funding. USAID is not obligated to award any instruments as a result of this addendum.

16. What kind of mechanisms can we use after the BAA board approval?

USAID's Office of Acquisition and Assistance will make a determination of the appropriate mechanism for each award, if any concepts are approved to proceed to the award stage.

17. If my concept note is taken to the award stage, do I have to compete for proposed future years of funding?

After the initial competition and selection for award, the mechanism selected for award will have the appropriate amount of funding, as well as, period of performance.

18. What does the co-creation, co-development process look like?

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Washington, DC 20523
www.usaid.gov

See BAA Section II, “Collaboration,” # 1 “Co-Creation” and #2 “Co-Design/Development.”

19. What will be accomplished at the workshop?

Details will be provided to successful applicants at a later date.

20. When will the workshop take place?

USAID is tentatively planning on the workshop taking place November 12-14.

21. Where will the workshop take place?

USAID is tentatively planning on hosting the workshop in Washington, DC.

22. How many representatives from each organization can participate in the workshop?

One to two participants from each selected organization can expect to attend. USAID asks that organizers prioritize relevant software developers or architects in their organization in selecting participants.

23. Will travel costs be covered for participation in the workshop?

Selected applicants are responsible for covering the cost of their travel. Please note that details around travel costs are subject to change.

24. What resources are available online about this process?

- Recording of Webinar 1: [Building Resilience: Strengthening Digital Health Systems in West Africa](#),
- Recording of Webinar 2: [Strengthening Health Information Systems toward Interoperability Webinar](#), discusses how to apply, and a discussion of what is our vision for this project and reasoning behind the questions USAID asks in the Addendum
- The Broad Agency Announcement, Addendum, and Amendment (extending the deadline to Oct. 9th), and the slides from webinar 2 are all available on the [USAID website](#)

Please note that additional questions are answered in each of the webinar recordings that are not addressed in this document.

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Technical questions:

- 1. How will the West African Ministries of Health be involved in decision making about the platform?**

USAID is engaged in ongoing work with the Ministries of Health in the three Ebola-affected countries, as well as with the West African Health Organization (WAHO), which oversees regional health information systems and data. USAID will continue to engage with them throughout the convening and concept development process.

- 2. My work has involved the health sector recovery plan for three Ebola affected countries. We are interested in integrating additional data in the context of CRVS, but linking to current ISDR or other existing surveillance structure/sites, such as, the current Community Event-Based surveillance. Some ICT technology with geographic mapping have already been used in the affected countries. We are interested in adaptation and scale-up for real-time gathering of basic data regarding indicators specific to our area of focus. Does this fall under the scope of support from USAID's BAA?**

Yes. Linking systems to IDSR is highly relevant to what USAID is looking to answer with the BAA process. The connection between any existing ICT systems and using existing platforms to solve additional challenges, thereby minimizing duplication and building upon the work of others - is a core theme in HIS interoperability.

- 3. Would a dashboard, data reservoir, or data visualization be supported under the scope of USAID'S BAA?**

Real-time data information systems, digital dashboards, etc are all covered under the context of Health Information Systems. The BAA again targets the *interoperability* of such systems through finding common data models, reference architectures, or standardized workflows.

- 4. Can the government provide us with any performance evaluations and/or organizational lessons learned concerning DHIS2 used in the Region?**

For such systems, there is much open-source documentation available about the specifics of the platforms. In targeting, HIS interoperability - these country-agnostic documentation sources are appropriate towards understanding generic platform interoperability than country-specific technical requirements. Interested parties are encouraged to collaborate with other actors to identify the appropriate considerations and consider submitting joint expressions-of-interest, or at least referencing other partners that would be critical in this process.

5. Can the government make available any Technical Requirements documents for existing solutions: DHIS2 and others?

There is a high probability that participants in the BAA co-creation and collaboration process will incorporate solutions already deployed on the ground in the Ebola-affected countries. Representation and review from local country Ministries and other actors will be carried out. Should any potential output of the BAA co-creation and collaboration process continue towards a country-specific solution, it will be imperative to bring country-specific requirements into further solution design.

6. Are you interested in attracting participatory surveillance mechanisms that might include mHealth technologies through this addendum? Are you interested in both the technical design & roll-out as well as the community engagement approaches that support these systems to become a success?

USAID is primarily interested in the technical design aspects, including ideas using mHealth technologies. Community engagement and roll out are critical components of appropriate design and implementation of HIS systems. This stage of the BAA co-creation and collaboration process focuses on the interoperability of system architectures used in the West Africa region during the Ebola outbreak. Please have your expression of interest incorporate ideas *and considerations* around parties that would need representation for a solution, while maintaining a focus on the technology and system architecture solutions that address the questions in the BAA.

7. What are some of the key information systems in the region that would need integration based on your experience? Do you recommend a single system as the best?

Organizations interested in participation should be aware of the multiple systems that play a critical role in health information technology in the region of West Africa. Patient, facility, and human resource registries are all critical components with specific interoperability needs that have been met by various open-source and proprietary systems in the past. Systems that support use case needs, such as integrated disease surveillance and response, commodity tracking, ambulance dispatch, or general data exchange are all valid examples of HIS where expressions of interest should capture ideas around the interoperability and sustainability.

8. With the ratification of the Sustainable Development Goals by the UN last week, will the resilience components inherent to the health of communities be supported under this initiative?

While this is an important consideration for the co-creation and collaboration process.

Participants in the BAA co-creation and collaboration process should focus on the recovery and strengthening of HIS systems deployed on the ground in the Ebola-affected countries.

9. Will tools and products developed under these agreements, must they utilize federal IT standards such as FEA and the FISMA act?

USAID complies with all federal IT standards in all award mechanisms.

Sincerely,

/s/

Roderick Watson
Agreement Officer