PARTNERSHIPS FOR ENHANCED ENGAGEMENT IN RESEARCH (PEER) OPPORTUNITY TO SUPPORT GRADUATE STUDENT RESEARCH ON LAND AND RESOURCE GOVERNANCE

Eligible Countries: Ethiopia, Ghana, Guinea, Liberia, Tanzania, and Zambia

TIMELINE

Deadline to submit the full application is Friday, April 17. Applications will not be accepted after the deadline.

PROGRAM OVERVIEW

PEER is a competitive awards program that invites researchers in developing countries with a USAID presence to apply for funds to support research and capacity building activities on topics of importance to USAID. The projects funded under this special call for proposals must be conducted by graduate students and postdoctoral fellows, working in close partnership with university-based research mentors. Through PEER, the Lab leverages investments, data and methodologies funded by USAID and other USG-supported agencies in order to enhance evaluation and learning, which in turn can lead to improved development programming.

USAID's development approach is committed to building local capacity on the Journey to Self Reliance. This includes fostering locally-driven research capacity and training the next generation of practitioners. This PEER funding opportunity is soliciting applications from research mentors based at universities in the above-listed countries for small, high-quality, one-year awards to support graduate students whose research will rapidly investigate critical gaps in the land and resource governance sectors in Ethiopia, Ghana, Guinea, Liberia, Tanzania, or Zambia. Priority will be given to research topics capable of rapidly and rigorously generating data for informing policies and USAID programs.

APPLICANT ELIGIBILITY AND POTENTIAL RESEARCH TOPICS

PEER invites applications from university-based research mentors (professors or other faculty members) in the listed eligible countries with the purpose of supporting research teams of graduate students and/or postdoctoral fellows.

Having a U.S. based researcher who can contribute his or her expertise and skills as an additional mentor is encouraged, but not required.

Research projects proposed can pull from a variety of datasets, as well as secondary and primary sources, but must be sufficiently rigorous (i.e., have a low risk of bias) and **must incorporate previously-generated USAID impact evaluation data** to fill critical knowledge gaps on land and resource governance. Research topics may include, but are not limited to the following:

- A rigorous analysis (quantitative or mixed methods) on the relationship between formal, customary, and "formalized customary" land tenure;
- A rigorous analysis (quantitative or mixed methods) on the relationship between titling, documentation, and tenure security;
- A rigorous analysis (quantitative or mixed methods) on improving the sustainability and effectiveness of land tenure institutions;
- Use of survey data to examine the relationship between land and resource governance and women's economic empowerment and poverty reduction, among other development objectives, with a particular focus on data that surveys female heads of households and other women in the household (e.g., wives);
- Means and mechanisms for how interventions can change social norms with respect to women's land rights;
- The impact of different tenure regimes on sustainable agricultural and forestry practices;
- The impact of different tenure regimes on climate change mitigation;
- A rigorous analysis (quantitative or mixed methods) on the relationship between land and resource governance and improved agricultural productivity and food security;
- A rigorous analysis (quantitative or mixed methods) on the emergence of medium-scale farmers in Sub-Saharan Africa;
- Long-term impacts of land tenure interventions on productivity, food security, nutrition, or resilience;
- A rigorous analysis (quantitative or mixed methods) on the relationship between land and resource governance interventions and the reduction of the frequency and cost of conflict;
- A rigorous analysis (quantitative or mixed methods) on innovative approaches to credit access;
- The impact of urbanization on land and resource governance;
- A rigorous analysis (quantitative or mixed methods) on the relationship between land and resource governance and artisanal and small-scale mining;
- A rigorous analysis (quantitative or mixed methods) on the relationship between land and resource governance and pastoralism; and
- A rigorous analysis (quantitative or mixed methods) on responsible land investments and tenure risk.

To help applicant mentors and their teams prepare one-year research proposals tailored to USAID needs, impact evaluation datasets will be provided to teams by USAID E3's Office of Land and Urban (LU). To view datasets, survey instruments, reports, and other information related to LU's impact evaluations in Ethiopia, Ghana, Guinea, Liberia, Tanzania, and Zambia, please visit the Evaluations and Research page [here](#) on USAID LU's LandLinks website or email [data@land-links.org](#). **All proposals submitted in response to this call MUST incorporate previously-generated USAID impact evaluation data available on USAID LU's LandLinks or by contacting LU at the above email**. However, in addition to these sources, applicants are also welcome to augment proposals using other available data or collecting additional data that may be necessary to answer their research questions.

AWARDS

Applicants may request between US $5,000 and US $15,000 for their projects, which are not to exceed one year in duration, with the possibility of a no-cost extension of 6-12 months if justified. Awards will be issued and funds disbursed to the university where the research mentor is employed, not directly to individual mentors, student or postdoc participants. Funds can cover the following expenses:

- Travel, living expenses, and supplies for field work by students or postdocs to supplement existing datasets;

- Student or postdoc stipends during the research project;
- Minimal equipment required for data gathering and analysis; and
- Publication costs.

REVIEW PROCESS AND CRITERIA

The proposal review process is managed by the National Academies, which will also disburse the awarded funds and collect and monitor recipients' quarterly and final reports. Pre-proposals will be evaluated by USAID and National Academies staff based on the following criteria:

- Skills: Applicant demonstrates a sufficient understanding of the local land tenure context, as well as the skills necessary to conduct rigorous, quantitative or mixed methods research.
- Objective: Applicant clearly describes the research objective, including a focused research question that can be addressed rigorously within one year.
- Methodology: Applicant's methods are clear, well thought out, and sufficiently rigorous, with a low risk of bias, and successfully incorporates already-generated USAID impact evaluation data as well as other datasets as needed.
- Relevance: Applicant describes why the proposed topic is relevant for policy and/or USAID programs. In addition, applicant demonstrates a thorough understanding of the proposed topic, including citations of relevant literature and supporting documents.
- Timetable and Budget: Research can be completed within one year with the funding requested.

HOW TO APPLY

Applications must be submitted online, in English, via the program's [application portal](). Paper and e-mail submissions are not accepted. After the pre-proposals are reviewed, applicants will receive notification from National Academies program staff that indicates one of the following:

- Proposal has been accepted;
- Proposal has been accepted, provided that requested revisions are made; or
- Proposal has been declined.

POLICY ON FRAUDULENT OR PLAGIARIZED DATA AND DOCUMENTS IN PROPOSAL 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 proposals. 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.

QUESTIONS?

Please contact National Academies staff at peer@nas.edu.