



# Request for Applications (RfA) USAID-funded STAR Project

## General Information and Instructions

Issuance Date: July 8, 2019 at 9:00 a.m. Eastern Time (ET) via [www.ghstar.org](http://www.ghstar.org)

RfA Questions Due Date: July 22, 2019 at 9:00 a.m. ET via [academicpartnerships@ghstar.org](mailto:academicpartnerships@ghstar.org)

RfA Question/Answer Dissemination: July 26, 2019 at 5:00 p.m. ET via [www.GHSTAR.org](http://www.GHSTAR.org)

**Application Due Date: August 9, 2019 at 5:00 p.m. ET**

The Consortium of Universities for Global Health (CUGH), a partner under the Sustaining Technical and Analytic Resources (STAR) Project, is pleased to issue this competitive **Request for Applications (RfA) to launch STAR's Collaboration Laboratory.**

STAR is funded by the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) and is managed by the Public Health Institute (PHI), in collaboration with Johns Hopkins (JHU), the University of California, San Francisco (UCSF), and CUGH. The information provided in this RfA is not official U.S. Government information and does not represent USAID.

All questions concerning this RfA must be submitted to: [academicpartnerships@ghstar.org](mailto:academicpartnerships@ghstar.org) by **July 22, 2019 at 9:00 a.m. ET.**

### SECTION 1: GENERAL INFORMATION

One goal of the [STAR Project](#) is to increase and strengthen academic partnerships, especially among those in low- and-middle-income countries (LMICs). In collaboration with these academic institutions, STAR aims to increase knowledge generation and sharing across this community towards greater evidence-based, inclusive global health practice.

To do this, STAR has developed a Collaboration Laboratory – a facilitated approach to test, refine, and document what works and what does not in creating and sustaining academic partnerships.

Through an RfA, STAR is soliciting academic institutions from the United States (U.S.) and LMICs (see the [list of eligible countries](#)) to apply to join our Collaboration Laboratory. Submissions will be scored by a Steering Committee comprised of global health professionals from both the U.S. and LMICs with experience in partnerships.

Collaboration Laboratory tasks/projects are flexible; applicants are free to propose tasks/projects that involve an academic institutional partner, are specific to global health work, and can be completed within 12 months.

Illustrative examples include:

- A research project or paper (\*\*papers/projects requiring Institutional Review Board, IRB, approval will have access to PHI IRB for no cost.)
- Course or curriculum development
- Training or workshop



- Toolkit
- Small-scale initiative that is part of an existing project/program/task
- Communications or marketing product

Upon selection, eight academic institutions (or four sets of Experimenters: a combination of U.S. – LMIC, or LMIC – LMIC pairs) will join the Collaboration Laboratory. Over a 12-month experimentation period, STAR staff will facilitate and support each pair of academic institutions towards the completion of their stated, mutually agreed upon task or project.

CUGH intends to issue either a fixed price subaward or cost reimbursable agreement to the successful awardees. Each partnership will receive a total of USD \$15,000 to incentivize and support their task or project, and the funds will be disbursed in three tranches. The agreement each institution will sign with CUGH will outline approved amounts and the terms and conditions applicable to the work performed.

Funds, as outlined in the proposed budgets, can be used to facilitate meetings that incentivize or support continued collaboration towards project completion. Pairs are encouraged to prioritize funding allocations towards the benefit of their partnership’s task/project. Single academic institutions from LMICs, as well as U.S. academic institutions, whether partnered or applying individually, should submit a budget capped at 50% ( $\leq$  \$7,500 USD) of each awarded grant.

Approved funding usages include:

- In-person or virtual meetings, including IT or Communications equipment
- Travel costs related to task/project development or completion
  - Basic or Economy class tickets only
  - [U.S. Department of State](#) (non-U.S. locations) or [GSA](#) (U.S. locations) rates apply for hotel and per diem

Non-allowable funding usages include:

- Salaries/Stipends
- NICRA or overhead costs
- Undocumented travel outside of the experimentation period of performance, OR unattached to milestones/tasks towards project completion
- IT or Communications equipment with a per unit value of USD \$5,000 or more

**Failure to adhere to approved usages of funding will result in immediate disqualification and/or termination from the Collaboration Laboratory.**

## SECTION 2: COLLABORATION LABORATORY FACILITATION

The STAR Project aims to facilitate and support new opportunities for academic institutions to connect and learn from each other. There are many barriers to academic institutional collaboration and exchange.

To this end, during the 12-month experimentation period of performance, STAR staff will facilitate a series of meetings aimed to support, document, and monitor each partnership’s work toward their stated goal(s) and completion of their task/project. STAR’s facilitation, in concert with respectful collaboration with each academic partner, is designed to be creative and inclusive; our goal is to support your work, not create additional work.



## SECTION 3: WHO CAN APPLY?

Academic institutions from the U.S. and LMICs, as listed [here](#) are eligible to apply. ***Note, as a recipient of Federal funds, CUGH is subject to compliance reviews of eligibility. CUGH will review relevant compliance lists to ensure that applicants are from eligible countries and not included on any restricted party lists. CUGH reserves the right to select or reject applicants listed on one or more of these compliance lists. These lists include, but are not limited to, U.S. Government Excluded Parties List System, Office of Foreign Assets Control (OFAC), and the United Nations Sanction List.***

***In addition, for any institution that currently works in reproductive health and/or activities that may be defined as abortion services or counseling, further eligibility requirements are explained in Annex 2.***

CUGH will accept three types of applications:

1. A **pre-existing partnership** consisting of two academic institutions that propose a new and mutually agreed upon task/project. The task/project can be part of a larger project. Pairings must be either: U.S. – LMIC, OR LMIC – LMIC.
2. **Pre-identified partners** who have not previously worked together, or do not currently have an existing partnership. Pairings must be either: U.S. – LMIC, OR LMIC – LMIC.
3. An unpaired, **individual academic institution** that proposes a scope of work that can be carried out with another academic institution. Pairings will be facilitated by STAR and will be either: U.S. – LMIC, OR LMIC – LMIC.

If selected, STAR will pair academic institutions with similar proposed tasks/projects and solicit agreement on a new task/project. Institutions will have until September 26, 2019, to accept the pairing and project, sign and submit a Partnership Memorandum of Understanding (MOU), and move forward with the Collaboration Laboratory implementation.

**Equal consideration will be given to all three types of applications.** CUGH is committed to promoting equal opportunity through this solicitation and will be conducting a fair and open, competitive and blind evaluation process to ensure fairness and inclusion.



## SECTION 4: APPLICATION COMPONENTS

**\*For existing and pre-identified partnerships, one joint application should be submitted on behalf of both entities. Upload the required legal entity proof for both institutions. For non-U.S. entities only, upload the required bank information.**

<b>Name of Institution(s) and Location (Country)</b>	
<b>Partnership Type for the Experiment (choose one)</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Existing partnership</li> <li>• Pre-identified partnership</li> <li>• Single institution</li> </ul>
<b>Proposal Title (10 words or less)</b>	
<p><b>Proposed Task/Project Narrative (750 words or less). Please include:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Outline of goal/objective (to be achieved during 12-months)</li> <li>• Specific tasks and interventions</li> <li>• Milestones towards success (used to monitor/measure progress)</li> <li>• Deliverable(s)/Output(s)</li> <li>• Potential for scale/sustainability (post-Collaboration Laboratory experimentation)</li> </ul>	
<p><b>Proposed Staffing (500 words or less). Please include:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Names, Titles, Duties for <u>each</u> academic institutional <u>representative</u>, including who will be the point of contact at each institution for STAR’s knowledge sharing exchanges</li> <li>• Names, Titles, Duties for any supporting staff, including <u>administration, finance, and accounting</u>. Detailed structure of <u>financial controls</u> at each institution, verifying adherence to financial policies and procedures. (These policies/procedures should be available to be shared with CUGH, if requested.)</li> <li>• Names, Titles, Roles and Responsibilities for those in a <u>leadership</u> role (For example, who at both institutions has the influence, oversight, and decision-making authority needed to achieve expected partnership goals.)</li> </ul>	
<b>Budget (Template Provided, see Annex 1):</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Itemized budget, use <a href="#">template</a></li> <li>• Explain how the budget will be managed, including allocation between institutions; timeline for how the money will be spent; and way it will be distributed throughout the 12-month duration</li> <li>• For currency exchange, use <a href="#">OANDA rates</a></li> <li>• <b>Note:</b> If applying as an individual academic partner, please cap budget at USD \$7,500. U.S. academic institution partners are capped at 50% (≤ \$7,500 USD) of each awarded grant</li> </ul>



<p><b>Legal Entity Proof (required for all institutions)</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• For U.S. institutions, upload a copy of the entity’s IRS determination letter or equivalent</li> <li>• For non-U.S. entities, upload an equivalent document issued by a federal agency indicating incorporation and/or taxation status</li> </ul>
<p><b>Bank Information (for non-U.S. entities only)</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• For all non-U.S. entities, upload a copy of a certified bank letter on bank letterhead that confirms the institution’s bank name. (The legal entity’s name listed on the account must match the name included in the legal entity proof letter.)</li> <li>• Non-U.S. entities must also indicate the ability to accept funds from the United States.</li> </ul>

## SECTION 5: EVALUATION CRITERIA

Component	Evaluation
<p><b>TECHNICAL</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Clearly defined goal(s)</li> <li>• Clear and specific tasks and interventions</li> <li>• Clear monitoring &amp; evaluation plan</li> <li>• Potential for sustainability and/or scalability beyond experiment duration</li> </ul>
<p><b>STAFFING AND PERSONNEL</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Dedicated staff</li> <li>• Showcase strong leadership and roles</li> <li>• Identified staff for knowledge sharing exchanges</li> </ul>
<p><b>BUDGET</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Detailed, itemized and costed budget in compliance with the allowable and unallowable uses of funds described in Section 1 of the RfA</li> <li>• Specific details on how budget and cash flow will be managed and distributed throughout the 12-month duration</li> </ul>



## SECTION 6: POST AWARD INFORMATION

CUGH expects to notify selected institutions for the Collaboration Laboratory on/by August 28, 2019.

**Each institution will be required to submit to CUGH three documents to confirm their award:**

1. A signed agreement between CUGH and the academic institution ([see participant agreement template](#));
2. A signed Partnership MOU between the academic institutions ([see the sample template](#)). The Partnership MOU will adhere to the sample template, with a clear outline of the parameters, i.e., dates of the 12-month partnership, metrics to measure it, and defined roles and responsibilities for all parties.

**\*\*Due to the short time period to return both the participant agreements and the Partnership MOU, it is strongly advised that each institution have their legal and/or other necessary departments review these contractual templates during the application process (July & August 2019).**

3. A letter of support for the partnership work from a supervisor, director, dean and/or president.

\*If requested by CUGH, and available, both institutions should be prepared to share the last two fiscal year audits of their institution to verify and confirm their financial control procedures.

### FOR PRE-EXISTING AND PRE-IDENTIFIED PARTNERS:

- Individual institutions are expected to return a signed participant agreement to CUGH by September 11, 2019.
- The Partnership MOUs are expected to be developed and signed by each institution and returned to CUGH by September 26, 2019.
- Both institutions will need to send CUGH, by September 26, 2019, a letter of support for the partnership work from a supervisor, director, dean and/or president.
- Until each institution submits the three documents, no funds will be disbursed by CUGH.
- **\*\* Failure to develop and submit the documents to CUGH by September 26, 2019, means the funding opportunity will be forfeited. If this occurs, CUGH will award the grant to a new pair.**
- Upon receipt of all of the documents, CUGH will disburse 50 percent of the funds. Disbursements are expected to go out on or before September 30, 2019. (Allocation of funding between institutions will have been determined in their proposed budget.)
- Following STAR's mid-line evaluation (six months) and receipt of a partner report, CUGH will disburse 25 percent of the funds.
- The final 25 percent funding disbursement will be made at the end of the 12-month period, or upon STAR's receipt of the final report by September 30, 2020.

### FOR SINGLE INSTITUTION APPLICANTS:

- Single institution applicants paired by STAR are expected to develop and sign a joint MOU and return it to CUGH by September 26, 2019. Note, this is likely to lead to both project proposal and budget changes for both institutions. Upon receipt of the MOU, STAR may suggest further refinements.



- Individual institutions are expected to return a signed participant agreement to CUGH by September 26, 2019.
- Both institutions will need to send CUGH, by September 26, 2019, a letter of support for the partnership work from a supervisor, director, dean and/or president.
- Until all documents are submitted, no funds will be disbursed by CUGH, and the same schedule and rules as listed above for pre-existing and pre-identified partners applies.

#### **FOLLOWING SIGNING OF DOCUMENTS FOR ALL PAIRINGS:**

- An IRB review is encouraged, where applicable to the awarded activity. As part of its capacity strengthening efforts, the STAR Project has access to a qualified IRB for a no-cost review. CITI certifications are highly recommended (not obligatory) for applicants involved with data collection from human subjects.
- STAR will facilitate three knowledge generation and sharing exchanges with all partnerships during the 12-month period (launch, mid-line, and end-line).
- During Orientation, STAR will outline structures and assessments for the Collaboration Laboratory. The experimenters, along with the support of STAR staff, will refine target indicators for “success.”

## **SECTION 7: PROPOSAL INSTRUCTIONS**

- Applications must be submitted in English
- Avoid use of acronyms and jargon
- Applicants must be based in either the U.S. or an LMIC (see the [list of eligible countries](#))
- If you are an existing partnership or have a pre-identified partner, please submit **one (joint)** application. Only one individual, representing both institutions, should create a profile, complete the online application, and upload the budget and legal entity proof for both institutions. Non-U.S. entities will also need to upload the required bank information.
- If you are applying as an individual academic institution, please submit a budget, using the STAR [template](#), capped at USD \$7,500
- Before submitting your final application, please consult the checklist below
- All applications must be submitted at [www.ghstar.org](http://www.ghstar.org)

All RfA questions can be submitted to: [academicpartnerships@ghstar.org](mailto:academicpartnerships@ghstar.org) by July 22, 2019 at 9:00 a.m. ET.

## **RfA CHECKLIST**

Please make sure you have each of these components before submitting your application:

- Proposal Title (10 words or less)
- Proposed Task/Project Narrative (750 words or less)
- Staffing Proposal/Structure of Financial Controls (500 words or less)
- Budget (using provided Excel budget [template](#) in online application)
- Legal Entity Proof for all institutions
- Bank Information for all non-U.S. entities



## ANNEX 1:

### Budget Template Image (download [template](#))

Collaboration Laboratory Budget Template					
Item Description	Unit Quantity	Unit Price	Duration of use through partnership	Purchased by which institution	Total Price
<b>Budget Instructions</b>					
1. Budget should be for only USD \$15,000 for pre-existing partners or if individually applying for USD \$7,500. List everything in USD. 2. For currency exchange, use OANDA rates: <a href="https://www.oanda.com/currency/convert/">https://www.oanda.com/currency/convert/</a> 3. Budget may include costs for the following partnership components: -Travel: Transportation, lodging, per diem, using U.S. State Department (for non-U.S. locations) or GSA rates (for U.S. locations) -Equipment costs: Communication/IT needs (per unit value of less than USD \$5,000) -Supplies 4. Budget cannot include items for personnel time (no salaries or stipends), funding gaps, institutional capacity/funding needs or travel outside the parameters of the experiment.  <b>GSA Per Diem:</b> <a href="https://www.gsa.gov/travel/plan-book/per-diem-rates">https://www.gsa.gov/travel/plan-book/per-diem-rates</a> <b>U.S. State Department Per Diem:</b> <a href="https://aoprals.state.gov/webq20/per_diem.asp">https://aoprals.state.gov/webq20/per_diem.asp</a>					
<b>Budget Narrative:</b> Include a brief narrative below with specific details on how the budget (in compliance with the allowable and unallowable uses of funds described in Section 4 of the RfA) and cash flow will be managed, including allocation between institutions; timeline for how the money will be spent; and the way it will be distributed throughout the 12-month duration. Note, U.S. academic institutions are capped at 50% (≤ \$7,500 USD) of each awarded grant.					

## ANNEX 2:

### Additional Eligibility Requirements for Institutions Involved in Reproductive Health

The RfA has an additional eligibility requirement, as required by the U.S. Government, in regard to: Protecting Life in Global Health Assistance. For more details, refer to Fixed Amount Award Standard Provisions RAA 23 (May 2019), found at this link:

<https://www.usaid.gov/sites/default/files/documents/1868/303mat.pdf>

1. For U.S.-based institutions, no Federal funding can go toward any abortion type services or activities (as defined below) and, in addition, U.S.-based institutions must guarantee that any subrecipient, that is a NON-U.S.-Based Organization follow in detail RAA 23 from the Fixed Amount Award Standard Provisions.
2. For non-U.S.-based institutions to qualify, they must follow the details of Fixed Amount Award Standard Provisions—Required as Applicable RAA 23, and below are the key elements to verify an entity’s eligibility for any potential funding under this RfA:

For purposes of this RfA, the definition of NON-U.S.-Based entity is:

- a foreign non-governmental organization (NGO), which includes academic institutions, is a for-profit or not-for-profit nongovernmental organization that is not organized under the laws of the United States, any State of the United States, the District of Columbia, or the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico, or any other territory or possession of the United States.



The potential subrecipient agrees that it will not, during the term of this award, perform or actively promote abortion as a method of family planning in foreign countries or provide financial support to any other foreign non-governmental organization that conducts such activities.

A non-U.S.-based organization is not eligible if it performs or practices any of the following, and this must be determined before any agreement is signed involving U.S. Federal funds, including USAID funds:

- The subrecipient will not in any of its offices or programs, while receiving assistance under this award, perform or actively promote abortion as a method of family planning in foreign countries or provide financial support to other NGOs that conduct abortion activities.

According to U.S. Federal Regulations, abortion provisions are defined as follows:

- Abortion is a method of family planning when it is for the purpose of spacing births. This includes, but is not limited to, abortions performed for the physical or mental health of the mother, and abortions performed for fetal abnormalities, but does not include abortions performed if the life of the mother would be endangered if the fetus were carried to term or abortions performed following rape or incest.
- “To perform abortions” means to operate a facility where abortions are provided as a method of family planning. Excluded from this definition is the treatment of injuries or illnesses caused by legal or illegal abortions, for example, post-abortion care.
- “To actively promote abortion” means for an organization to commit resources, financial or other, in a substantial or continuing effort to increase the availability or use of abortion as a method of family planning.
- Operating a service-delivery site that provides, as part of its regular program, counseling, including advice and information, regarding the benefits and/or availability of abortion as a method of family planning;
- Providing advice that abortion as a method of family planning is an available option or encouraging women to consider abortion (passively responding to a question regarding where a safe, legal abortion may be obtained is not considered active promotion if a woman who is already pregnant specifically asks the question, she clearly states that she has already decided to have a legal abortion, and the healthcare provider reasonably believes that the ethics of the medical profession in the host country requires a response regarding where it may be obtained safely and legally);
- Lobbying a foreign government to legalize or make available abortion as a method of family planning or lobbying such a government to continue the legality of abortion as a method of family planning; and
- Conducting a public information campaign in foreign countries regarding the benefits and/or availability of abortion as a method of family planning.