

**http://sites.nationalacademies.org/pga/peer/index.htm**

**PEER Cycle 7 request for applications released**

The latest in our series of annual calls for proposals was announced on October 2, 2017. PEER is once again inviting researchers in selected developing countries to apply for funding support to carry out projects in a variety of topical and geographic focus areas. This cycle marks the return of the program's [Open Call](http://sites.nationalacademies.org/PGA/PEER/PGA_181899) for proposals from all 65 eligible countries on a wide range of development-related fields, including biodiversity, agriculture, environment, clean energy, disaster mitigation, food security, water/sanitation, urbanization, democracy and governance, and education. Proposals on selected health-related topics may be appropriate for submission under the new focus area [Multiple Countries/Family Planning and Reproductive Health](http://sites.nationalacademies.org/PGA/PEER/PGA_181900). Several countries are the focus of specially targeted calls this cycle, including [Cambodia](http://sites.nationalacademies.org/PGA/PEER/PGA_181901), [Indonesia](http://sites.nationalacademies.org/PGA/PEER/PGA_181902), [Haiti](http://sites.nationalacademies.org/PGA/PEER/PGA_181905), [Laos](http://sites.nationalacademies.org/PGA/PEER/PGA_181903), [Peru](http://sites.nationalacademies.org/PGA/PEER/PGA_181904), and [Tunisia](http://sites.nationalacademies.org/PGA/PEER/PGA_181907). There is also a regional call focused on projects in the Middle East and North Africa relevant to [health issues in refugee host communities](http://sites.nationalacademies.org/PGA/PEER/PGA_181906). The deadline for submitting a pre-proposal is **Friday, January 12, 2018.** Interested applicants are invited to review the full [request for applications](http://sites.nationalacademies.org/cs/groups/pgasite/documents/webpage/pga_181924.pdf) and click the blue Apply Now button below to register to use our online system for preparing and submitting their pre-proposals. Questions about eligibility and the application process may be directed to PEER staff at peer@nas.edu.

**For Applicants | Focus Areas**

The PEER program is accepting research proposals in the following focus areas. PEER-eligible countries are listed on the linked pages for each focus area, and applicants should review eligible country criteria carefully before applying. Applications are being accepted only for projects within the scope of one of the focus areas listed below.

(Note: On October 12, 2017, a new focus area, Zambia/ Technological and Social Alternatives to Charcoal Use and Production, was added below.)

**Multi-Country Focus Area Calls**

* [Multiple Countries/ Open Call](http://sites.nationalacademies.org/PGA/PEER/PGA_181899)

 http://sites.nationalacademies.org/PGA/PEER/PGA\_181899

* [Multiple Countries/ Family Planning and Reproductive Health](http://sites.nationalacademies.org/PGA/PEER/PGA_181900) http://sites.nationalacademies.org/PGA/PEER/PGA\_181900

**Regional or Country-Specific Calls**

* [Cambodia/ Investigator Development Awards: Multiple Sectors](http://sites.nationalacademies.org/PGA/PEER/PGA_181901)
* [Indonesia/ Multiple Sectors and Biodiversity](http://sites.nationalacademies.org/PGA/PEER/PGA_181902)
* [Laos/ Nutrition and Disabilities Capacity Strengthening](http://sites.nationalacademies.org/PGA/PEER/PGA_181903)
* [Peru/ Impacts of Extractive Industries on Indigenous Peoples in the Peruvian Amazon](http://sites.nationalacademies.org/PGA/PEER/PGA_181904)
* [Haiti/ Education](http://sites.nationalacademies.org/PGA/PEER/PGA_181905)
* [Middle East and North Africa/ Refugee Host Communities Health](http://sites.nationalacademies.org/PGA/PEER/PGA_181906)
* [Tunisia/ Multiple Sectors](http://sites.nationalacademies.org/PGA/PEER/PGA_181907)
* [Zambia/ Technological and Social Alternatives to Charcoal Use and Production](http://sites.nationalacademies.org/PGA/PEER/PGA_182070)

PEER funding will be awarded to projects related to the USAID and partner agency focus areas specified above. Regional collaborations are encouraged, provided that they fit within the scope of one of the focus areas for this cycle and the primary PI is based in an eligible country for the focus area under which the proposal is submitted. Co-PIs may be involved in such regional collaborative projects, provided that the co-PIs are based in a country eligible for PEER (please see the country list for the Open Call for the most comprehensive list or check with program staff at peer@nas.edu to confirm eligibility). When writing pre-proposals, applicants should also consider how their proposed research and/or capacity building activities will contribute to USAID’s strategic priorities in development. More information about USAID including the agency’s mission statement, structure, and technical and regional programs can be found on the USAID website: <http://www.usaid.gov/>.

Applications that explicitly connect their proposed research to the development goals of their country’s USAID Mission will generally be more competitive. Country-specific development objectives are reflected in Country Development and Cooperation Strategy (CDCS) reports that are posted publicly on each USAID Mission’s homepage. Each CDCS lays out high-level strategic priorities for each bilateral USAID Mission over a five-year time frame. We encourage PEER applicants to review CDCS reports and other documents specific to USAID Mission priorities and reflect how their proposed research may contribute to these high- level objectives. A link to USAID-approved CDCS reports can be found here: <http://www.usaid.gov/results-and-data/planning/country-strategies-cdcs>.

A directory of USAID Missions and links to home-pages can be found here: <http://www.usaid.gov/mission-directory>.

**Additional Criteria for Applicants:**

Please see Section V of the Solicitation for [General Eligibility requirements](http://sites.nationalacademies.org/PGA/PEER/PGA_147199). PEER does not support clinical trials research. All projects that interact with patients, human subjects data, or other personally identifiable information will be required to go through a protocol review coordinated by the National Academies and to obtain and maintain a Federal Wide Assurance of their institution’s Internal Review Board. This process typically takes three months from the announcement of the PEER award. The time needed to obtain IRB compliance and successfully implement the PEER Project should be calculated in the budget and timeline of activities.

**General Eligibility Requirements.**

The information included in this section is relevant to applicants to the PEER program in general.  The country-specific focus areas have specific eligibility requirements and applicants are encouraged to review eligibility criteria under [specific focus areas](http://sites.nationalacademies.org/PGA/PEER/PGA_147214) of interest. Additional information can also be found in the [Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)](http://sites.nationalacademies.org/PGA/PEER/PGA_147202).

**PEER Applicant Eligibility**

Applicants who submit pre-proposals to PEER must be based at an academic institution, non-profit organization, or government-managed research laboratory, center, or institute in a PEER-eligible country. Applicants in government ministries who conduct research are also eligible, but will be screened for compliance with bilateral agreements on a case-by-case basis. We encourage applicants from government ministries to consult with PEER program staff at peer@nas.edu prior to submitting their pre-proposal.

PEER applicants must hold a career-track position or equivalent at their respective institution or organization. Applicants should be working in the country from which they are applying and should be nationals (citizens or permanent residents) of a PEER-eligible country for the focus area to which they are applying.

**To qualify for multi-institutional award status, PEER applicants are required to provide financial support to a researcher or research unit at another institution as part of their proposed project. Applicants who are invited to submit full proposals will be required to specify funds for activities to be implemented by partnering institutions in a separate budget table using the template to be provided.**

Researchers from non-eligible countries and employees of for-profit firms in PEER-eligible countries may participate in projects using their own resources but are not permitted to serve as PIs, as PEER awards will not be issued to such organizations. All institutions will be vetted to determine compliance with USAID policies for receipt of funds. PEER awards will be issued to institutions or organizations, not to individuals. Female applicants are encouraged to apply.

PIs of currently active PEER grants are not eligible to apply to serve as PIs in future cycles of PEER until their first funded project has been successfully completed. For the current cycle of the program (Cycle 7), this successful completion date must be prior to **September 1, 2018**.

Prior PEER awardees who re-apply for PEER funding must justify how their proposal is distinct from their prior PEER award and/or how the proposed work builds on previous PEER work to address new research questions.

**PEER Applicant Eligibility Summary**

* National of a PEER-eligible country
* Meets country-specific eligibility criteria for [focus area](http://sites.nationalacademies.org/PGA/PEER/PGA_147214) to which applying
* Affiliated with and permanently based at an academic institution, non-profit organization, government-managed research laboratory, or relevant government ministry in a PEER-eligible country ([learn more about eligible countries by visiting each focus area](http://sites.nationalacademies.org/PGA/PEER/PGA_147214))

**USG-Supported Partner Eligibility**

PEER applicants are required to partner with a U.S. Government (USG)-supported researcher from one of the following agencies:

* Agricultural Research Service (ARS)
* National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA)
* National Institute of Food and Agriculture (NIFA)
* National Institutes of Health (NIH)
* National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA)
* National Science Foundation (NSF)
* Smithsonian Institution
* United States Forest Service (USFS)
* United States Geological Survey (USGS)

The role of the USG-supported partner is to provide complementary expertise and skills to the PEER project, but the USG-supported partner’s research experience does not need to directly overlap. While partnerships are generally based on topical or disciplinary similarities, many PEER partnerships also provide access to specific methodologies or instrumentation otherwise unavailable to the PEER applicant. Proposals should demonstrate the benefits of the PEER research partnership to the USG-supported partner as well as the PEER PI.

PEER pre-proposals are not accepted from U.S.-based researchers.

USG-supported partners can be researchers with whom you currently collaborate, or you can establish a new partnership for the purposes of the PEER award.

USG-supported partners may either be intramural researchers or serve as principal investigators or co-principal investigators of active USG-funded research awards. Active awards may include grants, cooperative agreements, or contracts. USG-supported partners might be employed by or based at a participating USG agency, or they might be based at a university, nongovernmental organization, or other research institution. They do not need to be based in the United States, nor do they need to be U.S. citizens. Many foreign researchers receive USG funding.

**In order to be eligible, the USG-supported partner’s award must remain active for at least 12 months after the expected start date of the PEER project (which may start no earlier than September 1, 2018) to ensure that both sides have resources available to support their collaboration. If the USG-supported partner is a staff scientist or researcher intramurally supported by the USG participating agency, his/her appointment at the USG participating agency must extend for at least 12 months from the start date of the PEER research collaboration, beginning no earlier than September 1, 2018.**The pre-proposal application requires a brief letter of support from the USG-supported partner. For USG-supported partners serving as co-PIs of active USG research awards, a written letter of support from the lead PI must also accompany the application at the full proposal stage. [For more information on USG-supported co-PIs please refer to this this FAQ.](http://sites.nationalacademies.org/PGA/PEER/PGA_147202#pi)

PEER funds may not be used to cover the USG-supported partner’s salary, travel, or other expenses. USG-supported partners are encouraged to **seek supplemental funds from their funding agencies**. However, supplemental funds for USG-supported partners are not guaranteed by the PEER program and must be determined on a case-by-case basis by each participating agency. In exceptional cases in which, after the award is made, travel funding for USG-supported partner is found to be essential to the training objectives of the PEER project, PEER staff may authorize the use of limited amounts of PEER funds for this travel only, not for salary support for the USG-supported partner. Applicants should not count on this option in estimating their project budgets, however.

**USG-Supported Partner Eligibility Summary**

* Primary PI or co-PI of an active research award from a USG agency participating in the PEER program or intramural researcher employed by such an agency. The USG-supported partner’s award or intramural funding must remain active for at least 12 months after the start of the PEER project (which may start no earlier than September 1, 2018). If the USG-supported partner’s award expires prior to 12 months of overlap with the PEER award, a no-cost extension will need to be obtained before the PEER award can be issued.
* PI or co-PI meets agency specific eligibility criteria
* USG-supported partner’s expertise aligns with and contributes to the PEER proposal

**To help PEER applicants find a USG-supported partner, each participating agency has provided links to either:**

(a) a searchable database of active awards (NSF, NIH);
(b) a searchable database of agency staff eligible to participate as PEER partners (USGS);
(c) searchable databases of agency staff and recipients of active awards eligible to participate as PEER partners (ARS, NIFA, USFS);
(d) a list of scientists eligible to participate as PEER partners and their contacts (Smithsonian Institution, NASA); or
(e) a point of contact who can be reached to identify potential partners (NOAA).

Intramural researchers at NIH are also eligible to participate as PEER partners, although their work may not be captured in the NIH Reporter database.

For more details on how to find a USG-supported partner, applicants should [explore the "Find a USG-Supported Partner" page](http://sites.nationalacademies.org/PGA/PEER/PGA_147201).

**Types of Research Activities Supported by PEER**

PEER funding can be used to support a wide range of research methodologies, as long as pre-proposals address the priorities outlined in the focus areas. PEER can support multiple types of research, including: the development of new technologies or instruments, proof-of concept proposals, formative studies, surveys, operational and implementation research, social science and behavior change research, systems research, and policy studies, among others. PEER also supports research awards from a wide range of academic disciplines, including the natural, physical, social, economic, and behavioral sciences, as well as engineering. Applicants are encouraged to clearly articulate how their proposed research project will impact their local, regional, or national communities.

Applicants are encouraged to consult the [list of projects](http://sites.nationalacademies.org/PGA/PEER/PGA_161128) funded in past cycles of PEER for examples of previously supported projects. Proposals focused on basic science topics without clear relevance to USAID development objectives will not be eligible for PEER funding.

Examples of research-related activities that PEER will support include:

* Design and conduct of baseline surveys, modelling and simulation, implementation/operational research
* Primary data collection for undergraduate and graduate students or support for other field visits necessary for data collection by a member of the research team
* Exchanges and data analyses with USG-supported partners
* Dissemination events and stakeholder meetings to translate research results to policy-makers and the community

In addition to research, PEER projects may also be used to support capacity building activities that contribute to research objectives, including: education and training support for students, postdoctoral associates, and researchers; international travel; conference and workshop attendance; communications; and equipment, materials, and supplies for developing country institutions and research networks.

There are some categories of research that PEER will **NOT** support:

* Implementation projects that lack a strong research component
* Dissertation or master's work of the PEER principal investigator (however, justified costs for students supported under the award are allowable)
* Training programs, workshops, or conferences that are not tied to the proposed research project
* Randomized control trials (RCTs) for biomedical interventions such as vaccines, drugs, etc.
* Research conducted principally in the United States
* Research led by the USG-supported partner
* Projects that are not likely to yield any impact in low- and middle-income countries
* Basic research not directly linked to potential development impact
* Approaches that present unacceptable ethical or safety risks

**U.S. Partner Eligibility:**In addition to the standard eligibility requirements of U.S. Government-Supported Partner described in Section V of the Solicitation for General Eligibility requirements, applicants are also encouraged to partner with U.S. university recipients (including prime awardees and sub-awardees) of USAID family planning and reproductive health funding. More information about current USAID funded programs and partners can be found in the [User's Guide to USAID/Washington Health Programs](https://www.usaid.gov/sites/default/files/documents/1864/GH_Users_Guide_Q3.pdf) (pgs. 133-163).

**Objectives:**

Under the PEER Family Planning focus area, the PEER program will award funds to a limited number of highly competitive, novel research projects from PIs in PEER-eligible countries that help increase demand and access to high-quality voluntary family planning services, information, and reproductive health care. More specifically, PEER is seeking to support family planning implementation research that develops and tests proven interventions leading to sustainable family planning services AND behavior change research that leads to an increased understanding and use of family planning services in priority communities, such as youth and low income populations. Where applicable, research should include and address the roles of men and boys in access to and use of family planning services. More information about USAID’s Family Planning and Reproductive Health programming can be found at: <https://www.usaid.gov/what-we-do/global-health/family-planning>.

Implementation research areas may include, but are not limited to:

* Uptake and scale up of proven family planning interventions
* Activities that foster expansion and institutionalization of family planning interventions and services
* Methods or innovations that increase access to and use of family planning services by youth and integrate family planning services into youth development activities
* Interventions that promote integration of family planning services with HIV/AIDS and STI services and into routine health care in rural and poor communities
* Innovations in engaging the private sector in the provision of family planning services; and the development of sustainable financing mechanisms that support equitable access to family planning services

Behavior change research areas may include, but are not limited to:

* Understanding and mitigating social norms that negatively impact uptake and access to and use of family planning services
* Identifying and addressing barriers that underlie non-use of contraception and family planning services among women

Consistent with the goals of PEER, applicants should outline how their research findings will lead to development-related policy or programmatic change. All projects must also contribute to USAID higher education objectives by strengthening engagement with junior researchers and undergraduate/graduate students. Proposals that include multi-disciplinary research teams, multi-country collaboration, and/or engagement with policy actors and other development stakeholders are desired but not required.

Country specific USAID health objectives are articulated in [USAID Regional and Country Development Cooperation Strategies (RCDS and CDCS)](https://www.usaid.gov/results-and-data/planning/country-strategies-cdcs). Applicants should closely read the appropriate RDCS and/or CDCS, and USAID Mission website in the country or countries where the PEER project will take place before submitting a proposal. Proposed research projects must also adhere to requirements of the USAID [Protecting Life in Global Health Assistance](https://www.usaid.gov/what-we-do/global-health/cross-cutting-areas/legislative-policy-requirements) policy.

(Note: the text describing this focus area was revised on October 13, 2017, to add the section on U.S. Partner Eligibility and provide the reference to the USAID Protecting Life in Global Health Assistance policy.)