

Funding Opportunity Title:	Call for Partnership
Announcement Type:	Annual Program Statement
Funding Opportunity Number:	TIF-APS-01
Issuance Date:	March 10, 2021
Final Closing Date:	March 9, 2022
Questions Deadline:	May 31, 2021

Submit Development plans on-line:

<https://fs24.formsite.com/llSOui/mfuzthif1z/index.html>

To Interested Applicants:

The purpose of this Call for Partnership – Annual Program Statement (APS) – is to solicit Development Plans from potential partners that enhance production capacity, increase exports or promote import substitution throughout the Lebanese economy. DAI, through funding by the United States Agency for International Development (USAID), seeks Development Plans first and then final applications after successfully passing the initial concept review from prospective partners to implement activities that facilitate the export of Lebanese goods and services to generate foreign exchange through investments that simultaneously promote job creation, increase income generation, and improve livelihoods throughout the country. Activities are expected to: (1) increase exports of Lebanese goods and services, (2) facilitate investment leading to increased domestic investment, and (3) improve the business and investment enabling environment.

Activities must benefit sectors, enterprises and jobs, and improve the Business and Investment Enabling Environment in Lebanon. Funding may support eligible equipment purchases, technical assistance and access to finance/investment.

Competition for this APS will be open for one year. Development Plans will be evaluated periodically throughout the year. A successful Development Plan will proceed to a co-creation process with the DAI TIF team. TIF anticipates evaluating Development Plans 20 days after submission. TIF encourages interested parties to submit Development Plans as early as possible, as notices to proceed to the co-creation process will be evaluated and then approved on a rolling basis until funding is exhausted.

Questions will be received until May 31, 2021. Questions and answers will be published on TIF social media sites and the Development Plan on-line submission site for potential applicants to review throughout the year of the APS. Questions can be submitted to grants@tifproject.com.

The length of the proposed activities may be up to two years but cannot go beyond April 30, 2023. TIF may choose to partially or fully fund the selected application(s). The number of awards and amount of available funding is subject to change and TIF reserves the right to make no awards as a result of this APS.

Partners will be expected to share evaluation results and key lessons learned and disseminate periodic activities and outcomes with TIF and USAID. Partners are encouraged to engage with other key players in their sector to improve sector competitiveness and efficiency.

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SECTION I - FUNDING OPPORTUNITY DESCRIPTION

(1) Description of the Proposed Activity

Background

TIF addresses underlying economic development problems that affect four productive sectors in Lebanon: Agro-Food Processing, Manufacturing, Knowledge Economy and Services, and Tourism and Hospitality. While these sectors are significant contributors to employment, their contribution to foreign exchange and exports has deteriorated in recent years. The ongoing financial crisis and the COVID-19 pandemic have stifled trade, export and finance/investment. Other enduring problems include: a lack of market linkages/networks outside traditional GCC markets; weak business support institutions and services; and, limited government capacity and/or willingness to respond to private sector needs.

Overall TIF Objectives

TIF's purpose is to facilitate export of Lebanese goods and services to generate foreign exchange through finance and investment that simultaneously expands job creation, increases income generation, and improves livelihoods throughout the country. TIF has three objectives: (1) increased exports of Lebanese goods and services, (2) investment facilitation leading to increased domestic investment, and (3) an improved business and investment enabling environment.

TIF will focus on four sectors approved by USAID. These sectors include: (1) Agro-Food Processing, (2) Manufacturing, (3) Knowledge Economy and Services, and (4) Tourism and Hospitality.

Note:

- **Knowledge Economy** includes but is not limited to: *Information and Communications Technologies (ICT), Media and Creative Services.*
- **Media and Creative Services, as part of Knowledge Economy**, includes but is not limited to: *Advertising, Digital Media, Production and Post-Production, Architecture, Design and Fashion.*
- **Business Services** includes but is not limited to: *Franchising, Information Technology Outsourcing (ITO), Business Process Outsourcing (BPO), Knowledge Process Outsourcing (KPO) and Consulting.*

(2) Selection Criteria for Development Plans

Applicants must design activities that contribute to TIF's overall objectives and sectors listed above. TIF will assess Development Plans through a cost-benefit analysis based on applicability to TIF's objectives.

Proposed activities must meet the specific selection criteria outlined below:

1-Export potential

- a. *Growth potential.* Applicants must target export or import substitution or offer domestic products/services that meet effective business-to-business (B2B) or business-to-consumer (B2C) demand (i.e. identified or potential buyers).

2-Impact

- a. *Jobs*. Create employment and economic opportunities for Lebanese citizens, particularly women and youth.
- b. *Multiplier effect*. Generate a positive impact on supply or value chains for local producers/providers of raw materials and/or services.

3-Feasibility

- a. The applicant must generate sales growth, increased exports and job creation within 12-24 months, preferably in the first 12 months.
- b. A clear plan demonstrating that growth and jobs will continue after TIF's support.
- c. Clear evidence that TIF's support will have a cost-efficient impact on jobs, sales, exports and finance/investment.
- d. The applicant must have a successful business model that, historically, demonstrates profitability, employment growth and increasing market share. This criterion applies only to individual enterprises, not syndicates or associations.

4-Attribution and additionality

- a. TIF's support is essential for business continuity and/or expansion.
- b. TIF's support will clearly lead to significant additionality in sales, exports and jobs with examples showing the connection.

5- Entity commitment

- a. It is highly recommended that applicants co-invest.

6-Risk Assessment

- a. TIF-supported entities will not distort markets or engage in monopolistic behaviors.
- b. TIF-supported actions will not have or generate a negative environmental impact.

TIF will provide the following responses based on the outcome of specific selection criteria:

- Proceed to co-creation and/or collaborate with other sector partners.
- More information required about the Development Plan.
- Not a match for TIF.

TIF will provide prompt feedback to applicants post submission.

SECTION II- PARTNERSHIP INFORMATION

Types of partnership support will be assessed during the co-creation process between TIF and the potential partner. Applicants may be selected to receive assistance in the form of a grant agreement. Grants will primarily be fixed amount awards based on performance targets and in-kind grants for procurement of equipment or services.

In addition, TIF may match applicants with access to finance tools or investment opportunities. TIF will also compete subcontracts and purchase orders for services and goods through separate specific requests for bids.

TIF will determine appropriate start dates upon grant award. Grants may be up to two years.

SECTION III- ELIGIBILITY INFORMATION

Per DAI's objectives for the Trade and Investment Facilitation (TIF) contract with USAID, TIF will only consider Development Plans that address USAID-approved priority sectors:

- Agro-Food Processing
- Manufacturing
- Knowledge Economy and Services
- Tourism and Hospitality

Furthermore, TIF requires all enterprises or entities (applicants) submitting Development Plans to confirm their willingness to confidentially share information with TIF and USAID. This APS is issued as a public notice to ensure that all interested and qualified applicants have a fair, open and transparent opportunity to submit proposals for funding.

(1) Types of Entities that May Apply

Lebanese registered non-government entities, universities, community-based entities, and other civil society organizations may apply. Private sector for-profit firms (companies, business service providers, etc.) are also encouraged to submit applications but they cannot charge fees or profit to TIF. Industry groups, associations, organizational clusters and shared platforms may also apply. All applicants must provide a Development Plan that clearly supports one or more of TIF's USAID-approved sectors that increase exports and enhance competitiveness, leading to improved production capacity, employment generation and domestic finance/investment.

Groups of enterprises may collaborate to initiate sectoral improvements, increase production capacity, propose policy reforms, etc. Collaboration to improve a sector or sectors and/or increase production capacity is highly encouraged. Where possible, TIF will request applicants to collaborate and increase impact as a result of TIF support.

(2) Partner Co-Investment

Successful proposals will mobilize private-sector contributions, including in-kind or cash. Partner contributions are intended to leverage additional resources toward achieving TIF's objectives and to incentivize a partner's stake in the outcome of the activity. While partner contributions are not mandatory, TIF strongly encourages applicants to co-invest in their proposed Development Plans. Applicant co-investment is listed above as selection consideration and it is highly encouraged.

SECTION IV- DEVELOPMENT PLAN SUBMISSION

TIF will select applicants using a two-stage process.

1. Applicants must answer a series of questions to confirm eligibility. If successful, applicants will next submit a concise Development Plan (no more than 500 words). See Instructions below.

2. If the proposed Development Plan meets the needs of this APS; then, partners will be contacted to move forward and co-create a final application together with TIF. The number of awards and amount of available funding is subject to change and TIF reserves the right to make no awards as a result of this APS.

Applicants must not submit a final application unless requested by TIF. After TIF provides written feedback on the Development Plan, the partner will be requested to co-create a final application with TIF. Once finalized, the Development Plan (final application) will be submitted to USAID for concurrence.

Development Plan Instructions

The Development Plan must be submitted via the TIF online form (Formsite®).
<https://fs24.formsite.com/lISOui/mfuzthif1z/index.html>

Applicants must complete a series of questions before preparing a 500 word or less Development Plan. Applicants must scroll to the bottom of the first page and check the Captcha® “I am not a robot” and proceed to the list of questions. The application must be accompanied by a confirmation for submission by an authorized representative of the applicant.

The Development Plan, or Technical Approach, (500 words or less): This section should include background, statement of needs, objectives, main activities, type of support request, intended results, and impact. It must respond to the activity objectives outlined in this APS.

SECTION V – AWARD AND ADMINISTRATION INFORMATION

(1) Post-Selection Information

Following selection of an acceptable Development Plan by TIF and USAID, TIF will inform the successful applicant in writing about the progression to the co-creation process for a final application. The final application will be submitted to USAID for approval.

Potential partners must attend a compliance workshop with TIF before co-creating the technical and financial application. The final application will be submitted to USAID for approval. Final award is contingent on USAID approval. A grant agreement will be signed by TIF’s Chief-of-Party and it will become the official authorization document. TIF will provide this document either electronically or in hard copy to the successful partner’s main point of contact.

TIF also will notify unsuccessful applicants concerning their status after selections have been made.

(2) Important USAID Compliance Information

Successful applicants chosen for co-creation will participate in a USAID compliance workshop with TIF staff. Rules and requirements will be explained prior to the co-creation process.

A. Branding

All USAID-sponsored assistance awards are required to adhere to branding policies and revised marking requirements for grants and cooperative agreements in accordance with ADS 320. This includes visibly displaying the USAID Standard Graphic Identity that clearly communicates assistance is “From the American People” on all activities, projects, activities, publications, public communications, and commodities provided or supported through USAID assistance awards. ADS 320 may be found at the following website:

www.usaid.gov/policy/ads/300/320.pdf

B. Environmental Procedures

The Foreign Assistance Act of 1961 requires that the impact of USAID’s activities on the environment must be considered and environmental sustainability must be a central consideration when designing and implementing an activity.

C. Reporting Requirements

Activity implementation reporting will be determined based on the outcome of the collaborative finalization of the planned activity and the delineation of roles and responsibilities. An annual performance monitoring and evaluation plan using established baseline data and specific, measurable targets and indicators will also be agreed upon. Financial reporting will be in accordance with the requirements of the obligating document.

D. List of Ineligible Goods

USAID funds are not allowed to buy from the following list of ineligible goods:

<https://www.usaid.gov/sites/default/files/documents/1876/312.pdf>

E. Prohibited Countries

The US Government does not do business with, i.e. purchase goods or services, from prohibited source, nationality, and origin countries. The current list of countries under comprehensive sanctions include Cuba, Iran, North Korea, Sudan, and Syria.

F. Certifications

USAID requires all successful grant applicants submit a signed copy of applicable certifications and assurances. TIF will work with the applicants during the co-creation process to explain and obtain the appropriate certifications and assurances.

(3) Administration of Grant Award

Awards to U.S. organizations will be administered in accordance with 2 CFR 200 Subpart E, ADS 303 and USAID Standard Provisions for U.S. nongovernmental organizations. For non-U.S. organizations, USAID Standard Provisions for non-U.S. non-governmental organizations apply.

Applicants may obtain copies of the referenced material at the following websites:

2 CFR 200: <http://www.ecfr.gov/cgi-bin/text-idx?SID=0a5b7fee6378930cce72564449dd8bb7&mc=true&node=sp2.1.200.d&rqn=div6>

Standard Provisions for U.S. Nongovernmental Recipients:
<https://www.usaid.gov/sites/default/files/documents/1864/303maa.pdf>

Standard Provisions for Non-U.S., Nongovernmental Recipients:
<https://www.usaid.gov/sites/default/files/documents/1868/303mab.pdf>

SECTION VI- DAI PROJECT CONTACTS

The point-of-contact for this APS and any questions during the APS process are TIF Grants Team: grants@tifproject.com.

Prospective applicants desiring an explanation or interpretation of this APS must request it in writing by the date listed on the cover letter to allow a reply to reach all prospective applicants before the submission of their applications.

SECTION VII - OTHER INFORMATION

Issuance of this APS does not constitute an award or commitment on the part of DAI, nor does it commit DAI to pay for costs incurred in the preparation and submission of a Development Plan and/or application.

DAI reserves the right to fund any or none of the applications submitted. Further, DAI reserves the right to make no awards as a result of this APS.