

Opportunity #1: Research-to-Action Planning for Mid-Stage Research Projects

Appropriate for:

Mid-stage research projects or innovation projects with a clear link to USAID development objectives. “Mid-stage” applicants will have strong foundational results from their projects/research, with some components of the project still in progress.

Objective:

USAID’s Research Division (ITR/R) aims to identify one (1) USAID-funded project with an affiliation to a higher education institution to engage in an intensive “Research-to-Action” (R2A) planning process, with the goal of assisting the project team in strategically advancing research and building stakeholder support to accelerate development impact.

Description:

The successful research team will work closely with USAID and the Research Technical Assistance Center (RTAC) to develop thoughtful, strategic plans for how best to translate research evidence or technological innovations into development impact. Following an established approach to promoting research utilization, RTAC and its partners will work with the selected research team to set “research-to-action” goals, identify and engage key stakeholders, discuss opportunities and barriers for research uptake, distill key messages, develop a plan for packaging and disseminating findings, and prioritize future research. The process includes a multi-part R2A workshop and support in conducting a series of interviews with key stakeholders. These R2A components will take place virtually and/or in person, depending on situational factors. With input from these components, **RTAC will develop a detailed R2A Plan for the research team**, to include a set of recommendations and a tailored strategy for how to advance utilization of research products in development policy, programs, and/or practice. Overall, Research-to-Action planning serves to strategically direct future research, stakeholder engagement, and/or scaling efforts to help research teams achieve maximum development impact.

Research/Project Team Requirements:

In order to ensure the most effective and beneficial research-to-action planning process, it is essential that the research team be willing and able to collaborate regularly with USAID and RTAC, either virtually or possibly in person. This may include attending webinars, engaging in regular meetings/phone calls with RTAC and USAID, arranging and participating in site visits, working collaboratively to conduct stakeholder mapping exercises, contributing to draft R2A plans, etc. To ensure a successful process, **the project team must commit to being highly responsive by phone and email. Time spent on coordination phone calls, emails, and other communications will vary, but remote collaboration may require significant time input over the course of the activity. In addition, applicants must be willing and able to devote 2-3 months of weekly 2-hour virtual engagements, or as many as 7-10 days (part-time) to in-person collaboration with USAID/RTAC.** The timing of collaboration will depend on availability of the USAID/RTAC team, research team, and key stakeholders, but we anticipate completing the workshop and stakeholder interviews within a 3-month period over the next calendar year.

In addition, the research/project teams that receive research-to-action planning support will be required to **provide a progress report one year from the completion of the R2A Plan,**

detailing how the product was used and any program or policy changes, new partnerships, or shifts in practice that resulted from successful utilization. Successful Applicants may also be asked to respond to a survey and/or be subject to a brief interview (at the project team level) about their satisfaction with the process.

Evaluation criteria:

1. Extent to which institutions and/or individuals from [USAID Partner Countries](#) are involved in the project.
2. Potential for the research results, innovation, and/or project outputs to result in meaningful development impact in the near future (3-5 years).
3. Extent to which the applicant and/or successful uptake of project outcomes would benefit from the Research-to-Action Planning process.
4. Extent to which the project or its possible applications align with USAID priorities.
Note: Development objectives are articulated at the country level in USAID Regional and Country Development Cooperation Strategies (RCDS and CDCS), which can be found here: <https://www.usaid.gov/results-and-data/planning/country-strategies-cdcs>. Applicants are also referred to Agency-wide development priorities: <https://www.usaid.gov/what-we-do>.
5. Extent to which the applicant (at the project team level) demonstrates the necessary willingness and capacity, including time and stakeholder knowledge/connections, to work closely with USAID/RTAC to generate high-quality research-to-action plans.