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**Feed the Future Innovation Lab**

For Collaborative Research on Global Nutrition



**Tufts**  
UNIVERSITY

**Feed the Future Innovation Lab  
For Collaborative Research on Global Nutrition  
(Global Nutrition Innovation Lab)**

**Process for Identifying and Selecting Individuals  
to Receive Financial Support for Education and Training**

The Feed the Future Innovation Lab for Collaborative Research on Global Nutrition (Global Nutrition Innovation Lab) supports Master's and doctoral degree program candidates, short term trainings (workshops, courses), research based presentations at academic conferences and in-country student research grants for approved individuals. This document lays out the steps required to apply for such support, and the criteria used in selecting candidates.

**1. Solicitation of Applications**

Opportunities for educational support from the Global Nutrition Innovation Lab are posted on its website (<http://nutritioncrsp.org/opportunities/>), that of other CRSP Listservs (see, for example, <http://crsps.net/>), the printed quarterly CRSP Digest, as well as through websites and bulletin boards hosted by USAID missions in target countries. Wherever possible, printed announcements will be posted to bulletin boards in local partner institutions.

The intent is that researchers who are already involved with CRSPs or USAID will have timely notice of new educational opportunities which they, in turn, will disseminate widely. In addition, the posting of opportunities for further education supported under the Nutrition Innovation Lab will allow us to reach new potential students who have yet to have exposure to the work of the CRSPs or USAID.

The Management Entity screens opportunities to ensure that all the training is intended to improve human performance factors (knowledge and/or skills). Such opportunities include, short-term technical training, long-term academic training, entrepreneurial management training, and distance learning. In addition to posting opportunities throughout the country and electronically, Nutrition Innovation Lab in-country representatives will disseminate information through local networks. The Nutrition Innovation Lab website has the capability for candidates to post questions about certain activities they are applying for. The Nutrition Innovation Lab management team will provide candidates with feedback. In order to keep the application process fair, our website will repository for all questions and applications.

**2. Requirements**

Candidates seeking support for degree-based or short-term training support must be:

- a) Nationals (bearing a passport) from one of the Nutrition Innovation Lab core countries (currently Uganda, Nepal, or Malawi).
- b) Be appropriately qualified to undertake a period of higher education or short-term skills training.
- c) Have a formal relationship with a governmental or non-governmental institution in their home country that works in fields relevant to the Nutrition Innovation Lab's mandate areas (agriculture, health, nutrition and related domains).
- d) Not be employed in any capacity by USAID.
- e) Commit to return to the home country for a period of at least 2 years immediately on completion of the program of study.
- f) Participant is proficient in the English language enough to participate in the program.

Female applicants are strongly encouraged to apply.

### **3. Application Process for degree programs (Master's and Doctoral programs)**

The Global Nutrition Innovation Lab will selectively support students for masters and doctoral level programs located at approved universities in the United States. Applicants looking to undertake a bachelors' degree will *not* be considered. For successful candidates, support will be provided in the form a fellowship. Although there is no limit to the amount of support, each University must keep on file a commitment letter which confirms the total amount awarded to the student and a justification for the amount.

The duration of such fellowships can be up to two years for masters programs and up to three years for a doctoral program. The availability of funding is contingent on USAID grants made on an annual basis through the Management Entity of the Global Nutrition Innovation Lab; namely, Tufts University. Continuation beyond a first year of support will be conditional on the student remaining in good academic standing at the educational institution hosting the student, and approved formally by the Management Entity of the Nutrition Innovation Lab.

To be accepted for support in undertaking a degree program, the applicant must have:

1. Completed first degree or other coursework pre-requisites.
2. Demonstrated that the studies to be pursued are relevant to the Nutrition Innovation Laboratory.
3. Been accepted into an accredited degree program in the United States.

#### ***How to Apply for Financial Support***

*After* having been accepted into a valid degree program, the applicant must submit the following to the Management Entity at Tufts University, at the address given at the bottom of this document:

1. Transcripts documenting completion of appropriate pre-requisite studies (an undergraduate degree for a master's application, and a master's degree for a doctoral application).

2. An up-to-date Curriculum Vita.
3. Documented their acceptance into a relevant degree program in the United States.
4. A recommendation letter from one proposed supervisor at the United States university in which the applicant would pursue a program of study.
5. Recommendation letters from two mentors, including at least one from the candidate's home country.
6. An essay of not more than two pages focused on:
  - a. Planned fields of study, including minor specialization (for master's degree applicants) or focus of thesis research (for doctoral applicants).
  - b. Description of how the proposed degree links to national priorities in the candidate's home country, and how it relates to key issues in agriculture, health and nutrition.
7. A USAID Training Template, to be found on the Global Nutrition Innovation Lab website.
8. A USAID Biographical Data Sheet, to be found on the Global Nutrition Innovation Lab website.
9. The Tufts University Conditions of Sponsorship form.

#### ***Selection Criteria***

1. Merit defined by documented degree-level performance in prior programs of study (example GPA of >3.0).
2. The quality of the essay – which demonstrates knowledge of priority nutrition problems in the candidate's own country and the applicant's commitment to their resolution.
3. Focus of studies and/or research is explicitly linked to Nutrition Innovation Lab aims and objectives.

#### **4. Application Process for training and other short-term (<6 month) programs.**

The Global Nutrition Innovation Lab will selectively support applicants for short term training programs located in the United States, in the home country, or in a third country (one that is neither the United States nor the applicant's own country of origin). Short-term training is defined as a course offered at pre-service or in-service level (non-degree granting) that usually runs for less than six months. Support will be provided in the form a fellowship not to exceed US\$5,000 in a given year.

#### ***How to apply***

For training courses *in the United States*, an application must include the following:

1. Documented acceptance into a short term training program
2. An up-to-date Curriculum Vita (highlighting educational milestones and prior trainings received).
3. Recommendation letters from two mentors (at least one from the applicant's home country)
4. An essay of not more than two pages that provides a description of how attending this course strengthens the individuals' capacity to address home country priorities around agriculture, health or nutrition and related activities
5. A completed "USAID Training template

6. A completed USAID Biographical Data Sheet
7. A Tufts Conditions of Sponsorship form.

For trainings in home country or a third country, applicants must include the following:

1. Documented acceptance into a short term training program
2. Up-to-date Curriculum Vita
3. Recommendation letters from two mentors (at least one from home country)
4. An essay of not more than one page that provides a description of how attending this course strengthens the individuals' capacity to address home country priorities around agriculture, health or nutrition and related activities
5. A completed budget outlining costs associated with the short term training program (not to exceed \$5,000)

***Selection criteria***

1. Potential for applying skills learned in the candidates' current or future job.
2. Academic performance of prior education.
3. Quality of the essay demonstrating the strengthening of capacity in addressing priority nutrition problems in the host country
4. Focus of course is explicitly linked to Nutrition Innovation Lab aims and objectives

**5. Support for Research Based presentations at academic conferences**

The Global Nutrition Innovation Lab supports stipends that allow students or faculty to present research at appropriate academic conferences. Financial support is restricted to one time grant of up to \$5,000 to cover conference-related costs. Preference will be given to junior scientists.

***Application Criteria:***

1. Have an accepted abstract to a conference, or be accepted to the workshop program
2. Not have received another Nutrition Innovation Lab fellowship or stipend in the previous 3 years.

***How to Apply:*** Submit the following to the Program Manager of the Global Nutrition Innovation Lab Management Entity at Tufts University (at the address listed at the bottom of this document).

1. Up-to-date Curriculum Vita.
2. Recommendation letters from two mentors (at least one from host country).
3. Documentation of abstract or paper accepted by the intended academic conference.
4. An essay of not more than one page that provides a description of how attending, and presenting at, the conference strengthens the individuals' capacity to address host country priorities around agriculture, health or nutrition.
5. A completed budget not to exceed US\$5,000 for conference-related costs only.

***Selection criteria:***

1. Quality of a cover letter making the case for the importance to the candidate's work of attending, and presenting at, the intended conference.

2. The presentation, and the conference, are explicitly relevant to the Nutrition Innovation Lab's research aims and objectives
3. A letter of support provided by the candidate's supervisor, outlining the value that may accrue to the institution as a result of participation in the conference.

## **6. What happens if a candidate is successful?**

Notification by letter and email announcing that the candidate's application has been successful. The candidate must adhere strictly to all policies and procedures set by USAID and the Management Entity. The rules include that the candidate must arrive in the USA on a J1 visa only and must be willing to travel to his/her home country if necessary to obtain the visa. The candidate must also be ready to sign and adhere to documents outlining the time frame USAID mandates for returning to his/her home country after the training is complete. The candidate must maintain close and continuous communication on plans, travel schedule, visa issues, etc. with the USAID mission of the candidate's home country, and the Management Entity (Tufts University), not only with the host (receiving) academic institution where the candidate will pursue the program of study.

## **7. Student Monitoring**

Students will be monitored throughout their training to insure their training is progressing as planned. Students will meet with their advisors to monitor their academic and research progress. Advisors will be expected to provide a summary on progress made by their student on an annual basis. The interaction with the student will be required to be done through the primary institution that supports and hosts the student.

During student and advisor meetings, the interaction will include feedback to the student on the student's performance and recommendations for changes or enhancements to the student's academic or research plan. At the end of the period of study, assuming successful graduation, the new graduate will be required to complete an online exit interview prepared by the Management Entity. The exit interview asks about the student's personal experiences during their studies, focusing on the appropriateness of coursework, mentoring, training initiatives outside of the classroom, and overall usefulness of the course of study to professional goals. Such information will be used to fine-tune future educational support under Nutrition Innovation Lab auspices, and serve as a reporting tool to USAID.

## **8. Post-Training Career Assistance Strategy**

From the beginning of the partnership, the management entity and the candidate begin to strategize about possible job connections post-graduation. In the Training Template, the applicant is required to describe any in-country affiliations they have, and may be able to return to at some point. The applicant is also asked to describe any professional outreach, such as organizations, that could be possible links for future employment. The Management Entity may also have contacts, on behalf of the CRSP, at the professional agencies and can develop communications during the training period to assist the student.

All individuals trained with Global Nutrition Innovation Lab assistance are made aware of job opportunities through the network of Global Nutrition Innovation Lab collaborators, which includes major employers in central government, universities and the larger non-governmental organizations. Participation in our programs will give trainees access to a larger network of contacts, and also active counseling and recommendations from senior researchers working with the Nutrition Innovation Lab in Uganda and Nepal.