

Feed the Future Innovation Lab for Nutrition
Tufts University
Call for Expression of Interest

Introduction

The Feed the Future Innovation Lab for Nutrition (herein as, Nutrition Innovation Lab) at Tufts University is one of 20 Innovation Labs supported by the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) Bureau for Resilience and Food Security. The Nutrition Innovation Lab aims to address all forms of malnutrition, through policy-relevant research focused on the intersections between health, nutrition, and agriculture.

In Jordan, the Nutrition Innovation Lab through support from USAID/Jordan will implement a rigorous evaluation research agenda and support capacity building activity that support key priorities of the Government of Jordan and the USAID/Jordan on the optimal infant, young child, and maternal nutrition and health in Jordan.

The lack of awareness of the population-level impact of low levels of exclusive breastfeeding and improper infant and young child feeding (IYCF) practices is a critical shortcoming in the Jordanian healthcare system. Exclusive breastfeeding has long term implications for both the mother and child with reduction in risk of diseases such as cancer, diabetes mellitus, overweight, and obesity (either in the mother or the infant).

USAID/Jordan has funded the Nutrition Innovation Lab to implement a rigorous research agenda and innovative capacity building activities. The key objectives of the Nutrition Innovation Lab Jordan project are:

- i) To develop and implement a rigorous research agenda to understand how the CHN program, aiming to improve maternal and IYCF practices within the context of maternal health and nutrition, achieves its outcomes. The evaluation of CHN will involve three components: first, a rigorous quantitative impact evaluation designed by the Nutrition Innovation Lab; second, a process and performance evaluation of the CHN; and third, an assessment of sustainability, based on the learning and best practices of the CHN program. Both qualitative and quantitative assessment methods will be utilized across the three components.

- ii) To build human and institutional research capacity in the area of exclusive breastfeeding and infant and young child feeding. An underlying objective is to support the generation of evidence to support advocacy at the policy level. To achieve this the Nutrition Innovation Lab will implement an annual symposium and support young scholars with small grants for conducting their thesis research.

Call for Expression of Interest

In this call, the Nutrition Innovation Lab invites Jordanian institutions to submit an expression of interest (EOI) to develop and implement a qualitative and quantitative impact and process evaluation of the USAID Community Health and Nutrition (CHN) program and implement capacity-building activities. The duration of this project will be January 2021 through January 2025.

Applicant institutions must present demonstrated technical and administrative capacity to support the development and implementation of the Nutrition Innovation Lab activities in Jordan.

The EOI will highlight the organization's expertise in the design and implementation of both large scale quantitative and targeted in-depth qualitative surveys across Jordan, with specific expertise in the areas of health and nutrition. The institution will demonstrate the technical and administrative ability and commitment to engage and collaborate with the Nutrition Innovation Lab at Tufts University, key local stakeholders, and other interested groups in Jordan to meet the goals and objectives of the project.

Activity Scope

The Nutrition Innovation Lab seeks a core partner in country who will be involved in the following activities:

- A) Support the Nutrition Innovation Lab to establish In-country presence: This will include the following:
 - 1. Host an office for the Nutrition Innovation Lab in Jordan and provide administrative capacity for all Jordan based activities.
 - 2. Identify and recruit two Nutrition Innovation Lab positions in country: A Nutrition Innovation Lab Country Coordinator and a Post-Doctoral Research Fellow.
 - I. The Country Coordinator will be a critical position that will bridge the research, policy and capacity building components of the project. The Country Coordinator will be responsible in ensuring that all stakeholders have been identified, will conduct the

appropriate interactions to introduce the project and be the key link for the Principal Investigator (PI), the core partner along with Jordanian stakeholders.

- II. The Jordan Research Fellow will be a Jordanian national with a PhD degree and experience working on quantitative evaluations related to infant and young child feeding. The researcher will monitor and assist both qualitative and quantitative evaluation studies implemented by the Nutrition Innovation Lab at Tufts University. The research fellow will assist the PI and Country Coordinator to promote knowledge management and disseminate research activities update to partners, collaborators and donors through regular publications and presentations.

B) Partner with the Nutrition Innovation Lab in conducting rigorous research and evaluation activities:

This includes the following:

1. In collaboration with the Nutrition Innovation Lab, develop and implement
 - a. A quantitative impact evaluation of the CHN program
 - b. A process and performance evaluation using mixed methods (quantitative and qualitative)
 - c. An assessment of sustainability using mixed methods (quantitative and quantitative)
2. Support the Nutrition Innovation Lab in research dissemination and policy engagement in Jordan.

C) Human and Institutional capacity Building

1. Implement an annual scientific symposium to promote program and policy relevant engagement in supporting infant, young child and maternal nutrition and health in Jordan.

EOI Application Requirements

A successful EOI application will demonstrate the following:

1. The technical and administrative ability and commitment to engage, collaborate and support the Nutrition Innovation Lab to meet the goals and objectives of the proposed project.
2. Proven track record in the implementation of large research studies particularly those focused on programmatic evaluations.
3. Institution's capacity to provide administrative and logistic support and commitment to support key in-country staff of the Nutrition Innovation Lab.

4. The ability to implement an annual scientific symposium in collaboration with the Nutrition Innovation Lab at Tufts University, USAID/Jordan, Ministry of Health and Jordanian academic institutions.
5. The ability to develop a strategic plan for policy engagement at the national and sub-national level in Jordan to ensure research uptake and dissemination of findings.
6. Demonstrate the capacity to satisfy the administrative and financial reporting requirements to the Management Entity at the Nutrition Innovation Lab at Tufts University, including the audit requirements contained in the Single Audit Act Amendments of 1996 (31 U.S.S 7501-7505) and 2CFR 200 Section F. The applicant must commit to provide an audit report for the most recently completed fiscal year or commit to use an independent, non-federal auditor or audit organization to fulfill the auditing requirements immediately upon receipt of the sub-award.

Eligibility Information

This EOI is open to any organizations that is based in Jordan that has research and administrative capacity to support the Nutrition Innovation Lab through the duration of the project.

All supported activities will be conducted in compliance with the Nutrition Innovation Lab Policy and Operating Procedures (POP) Manual. A draft copy of the POP Manual is available at www.nutritioninnovationlab.org.

Application and Submission Information

1. Electronic Application

To be considered, the EOI should be completed and submitted electronically using the mandatory JNIL EOI template. [Click here to download the EOI template.](#)

In addition to the EOI application, the applicant must also submit:

- 1) Curriculum vitae of the institutional leadership and/or two key personnel (2-page limit)
- 2) Two (2) Letters of Support/Recommendation from collaborating institutions (no page limit).

All EOIs must be submitted by email to the following email addresses: Elizabeth.marino_costello@tufts.edu and Justin.Hackett@tuft.edu. All EOIs should have 'EOI -Jordan Nutrition Innovation Lab' in the subject line. Receipt of the applications will be acknowledged by e-mail.

2. Deadline for Submission

All EOIs must be received by close of business (5:00PM Jordan Time/EEST) on November 12, 2020. EOIs received after applicable deadlines will not be considered for funding.

3. EOI review requirements

Each EOI will be evaluated using the following criteria:

1. Institutional Capacity: Outline of institutional and human capacity to engage in rigorous multi-disciplinary research. Include details of past activities, with reference to reports and publications (including full citations), letters of recommendation, and organizations worked with or for.
2. Research Credibility: Past research activities of the institution and/or proposed key personnel relevant to the areas of maternal and child nutrition and reproductive health. Details of experience in monitoring and evaluation of programs should also be included where appropriate in the EOI application.
3. Partnerships: The quality of the collaborating institution and its stakeholder approach, including institutional (universities, IARCs, NGOs, etc.) and disciplinary diversity and involvement with USAID/Jordan.

4. Announcement of Selection

The announcement of selection will be made by the Nutrition Innovation Lab at Tufts University to the competitively chosen institutions by November 30, 2020, with pertinent instructions and information on the next phase of the selection process which will include the response to a Request for Applications (RFA).

Funding

Funding will be available for four years from the project start date. The award period will be February 1, 2021 to January 30, 2025.