



REQUEST FOR APPLICATION

This Request for Applications (RFA) is issued by the **Long-term Assistance and Services for Research: Partners for University-Led Solutions Engine (LASER PULSE)** at Purdue University. LASER PULSE is a five-year program implemented by a consortium comprising Purdue University (lead institution), the University of Notre Dame, Indiana University, Makerere University, and Catholic Relief Services. LASER PULSE is funded by the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) under Cooperative Agreement 7200AA18CA00009.

Development Sectors of Interest: Air Pollution, Water Pollution, and Small and Medium Enterprise Competitiveness

Region/Countries of Interest: Vietnam

Award Number and Size: 4 to 6 awards for a period of 12 to 24 months of research and translation for up to a maximum of \$250K per award; for this RFA we expect to award \$1,000,000 in total funding across all awards. There is an expectation of 10% cost-share for all awards.

Application Submission Process and Timeline:

Issuance of Request for Application (RFA):	24 July 2020
Deadline for submission of questions on the RFA:	07 August 2020 at 6:00 pm Vietnam time
Webinar to address questions regarding RFA:	13 August, 2020 at 8:00 am Vietnam time
Deadline for receipt of Letter of Interest (3 weeks before Application submission deadline):	21 August 2020 at 6:00 pm Vietnam time
Deadline for submission of Application:	10 September 2020 at 6:00 pm Vietnam time
Expected award status notification:	January 2021

Contact Information:

For programmatic questions, please email Dr. Betty Bugusu at td@laserpulse.org.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

LIST OF ACRONYMS	4
1. LASER PULSE BACKGROUND AND CONTEXT	5
1.1 Higher Education Solutions Network 2.0	5
1.2 Comprehensive Success Factor (CSF)	5
1.3 Embedded Research Translation	5
2. FUNDING OPPORTUNITY DESCRIPTION	8
2.1 Air pollution	8
2.1.1 Context	8
2.1.2 Research Focus Areas	9
2.2 Water pollution	10
2.2.1 Context	10
2.2.2 Research Focus	11
2.3 Small and Medium Enterprise Competitiveness	12
2.3.1 Context	12
2.3.2 Research Focus	14
3. APPLICATION INFORMATION AND PROCESS	16
3.1 Letter of Interest (LOI)	16
3.2 Research gap identification	16
3.3 Eligibility and Leadership	16
3.4 Submission Instructions	17
3.5 RFA Question Period and Informational Webinar	17
3.6 Format and Review Process	18
3.7 On-line Training Requirement	18
3.8 Strategy for Gender Inclusion	18
3.9 Strategy for Embedded Research Translation	19
3.10 Project Duration and Funding	19
3.11 Research Output Reporting	20
3.12 Budget Preparation for Application	20
3.13 Budget, Budget Narrative, and Cost Share Documents	20
3.14 Application Summary Table	22
4. EVALUATION OF APPLICATIONS	25



4.1 Evaluation Criteria	25
4.1.1 Research Merit	25
4.1.2 Broader Impacts	25
4.2 Evaluation Process	26
5. APPENDICES	28
5.1 Appendix 1 – Comprehensive Success Factors	28
5.2 Appendix 2 – LASER PULSE Gender Analysis Considerations	29
5.3 Appendix 3 – Glossary of Selected Key Words	30
5.4 Appendix 4 – Application Checklist	31
6. REFERENCES	32
6.1 Air Pollution	32
6.2 Water Pollution	32
6.3 Small and Medium Enterprise Competitiveness	33

LIST OF ACRONYMS

CDR	Center for Development Research
CEM	Center for Environmental Monitoring
Co-PI	Co-Principal Investigator
CSF	Comprehensive Success Factors
CSFA	Comprehensive Success Factors Analysis
GHG	Greenhouse Gas
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
GVN	Government of Vietnam
HEI	Higher Education Institutes
HESN	Higher Education Solutions Network
Lab	U.S. Global Development Lab
LASER PULSE	(Long-term Assistance and Services for Research Partner University-Led Solutions Engine)
MONRE	Ministry of Natural Resources and Environment
NGO	Non-Governmental Organization
RFA	Request for Application
SF Trees	Success Factor Trees
SME	Small and Medium Enterprise
USAID	United States Agency for International Development
UIC	US Interest Countries
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund
WHO	World Health Organization

1. LASER PULSE BACKGROUND AND CONTEXT

1.1 Higher Education Solutions Network 2.0

[LASER PULSE](#) (Long-term Assistance and Services for Research Partner University-Led Solutions Engine) is part of the Higher Education Solutions Network (HESN) 2.0 portfolio of programs from the Center for Development Research (CDR) in the U.S. Global Development Lab (Lab) of the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID). HESN 2.0 leverages a vast network of higher education institutions, local stakeholders, private enterprises, and other development actors to increase the use of scientific research for development, refine and translate complex data, build local scientific potential, and test new and innovative development approaches.

1.2 Comprehensive Success Factor (CSF)

A critical goal of LASER PULSE is to catalyze evidence-based research as part of the research translation process through useful products, policies, and practices that address development outcomes. This goal is accomplished through participatory research question identification (i.e., bringing researchers and translation partner(s) together) to improve capacity to conduct research, and to ensure that the research results have been presented to decision makers in a usable form. For this Request for Application (RFA), LASER PULSE seeks Applications for three development sectors, namely: **air pollution, water pollution, and small and medium enterprise competitiveness for Vietnam**. These sectors were identified by the USAID Vietnam Mission, and refined through a systems-level process called [Comprehensive Success Factors Analysis \(CSFA\)](#). The CSFA is an innovation science method used to identify the most important and interrelated suite of factors that define a given problem to be solved. The process is used to develop a view of the “conditions for success” that are typically required to address the specific category of a system that poses a challenge. These “conditions for success” are presented in a format called “Success Factor Tree”. Specific sector focus is achieved by contextualizing “Success Factor Trees” (henceforth ‘SF Trees’) through an exhaustive search of research and grey literature. These SF Trees are contextualized to a region or country by seeking input on missing success factors (gaps) from stakeholders in the respective region or country. The stakeholders consist of a ‘scoping’ group (individuals with sectoral expertise), researchers, and translation partner(s). For Detail about the CSFA process, see [Appendix 1](#).

1.3 Embedded Research Translation

The key consideration for the LASER PULSE program is to ensure that research translation is embedded across all phases of the research project from co-defining the research question to disseminating findings. LASER PULSE defines Embedded Research Translation as:

An iterative co-design process among academics, practitioners, and other stakeholders in which research is intentionally applied to a development challenge.

Recognizing that research translation is an iterative, collaborative process, LASER PULSE promotes a model in which development solutions are derived through a co-development process between researchers and development practitioners. Development practitioners are defined as individual persons engaged in the design, planning, and/or implementation of local, regional, national, or international development programs/projects. This definition refers to personnel of NGOs and community-based organizations; but it can also include individuals representing governments or the private sector in an implementation capacity (e.g., extension agents) as

opposed to a funding capacity. Under certain circumstances (e.g., co-creation of research questions), donor staff may also fall under this definition. In this RFA, LASER PULSE uses the term “Translation Partners” to refer to development practitioners that are, or are intended to be paired with researchers as part of a team submitting an Application. The researcher should ensure with the translation partner that results will be made readily available - both useful and usable, in format, language, and dissemination channels to the various stakeholder groups.

LASER PULSE’s Embedded Research Translation model (Figure 1) is rooted in deep collaboration between researchers and translation partner(s), and follows an iterative process from discovery, to field-tested solution, to wider application, and finally to impact.

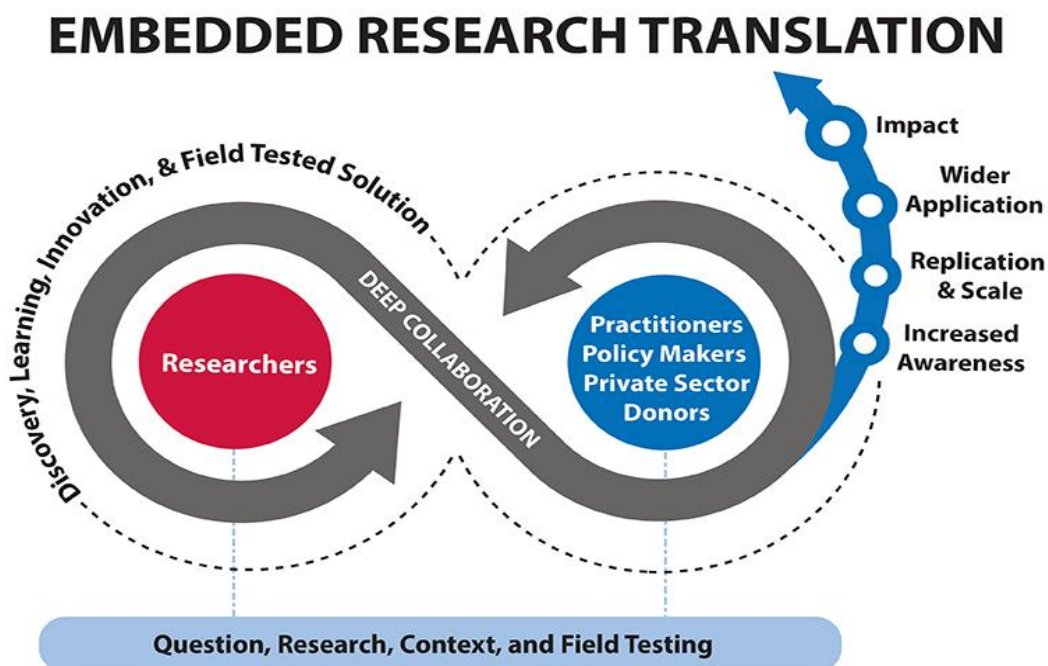


Figure 1. LASER PULSE Embedded Research Translation model

The LASER PULSE’s Embedded Research Translation model incorporates four pillars in its approach: (1) an early and active **partnership** between researchers and translation partner(s), (2) a collaborative partnership **process**, (3) a targeted translation **product**, and (4) a **dissemination plan** with recommendations for replication and scale-up.

An Embedded Research Translation Strategy includes:

- 1) At least one translation partner such as non-governmental organizations (NGOs), civil society, the private sector, and/or local government entities,
- 2) A collaborative co-design process between the researcher and translation partner(s),
- 3) A usable and appropriate research translation product applicable to:



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- a) policy (such as a policy brief or recommendation that can lead to changes in legal, constitutional, funding, accountability, feasibility, or implementation mechanisms); and/or
 - b) practice (such as a program recommendation, new production/ processing methods, education curricula, guidebooks, technical manuals, training modules, or planning tools). Examples of tangible translation products include tools/devices, reports, multimedia products, or IT platforms.
- 4) A plan for dissemination to move beyond initial partnerships and toward a larger uptake of relevant findings in the field or region.

2. FUNDING OPPORTUNITY DESCRIPTION

All Applications are required to:

1. Incorporate collaboration between researchers and a translation partner to ensure that the proposed research can, and will be, applied as a solution to the development challenge.
2. Outline anticipated intermediate and long-term policy or practice change(s) resulting from the research. This includes a strategy or plan that describes how the research project will embed *Research Translation* such that outputs are adapted into usable and appropriate products, policies, and practices.
3. Address considerations and impacts of gender in all aspects of the Application (see [Appendix 2](#)).

The following sections define the scope of research to be funded by LASER PULSE through this funding opportunity, organized by sector i.e. air pollution, water pollution, and small and medium enterprise competitiveness. Each sector provides context and high-level research focus areas identified through the LASER PULSE Comprehensive Success Factor process (see [Section 1.2](#)) in Vietnam. Applicants should use these focus areas to identify research gaps for formulating their research questions, as described under [Section 3.2](#).

2.1 Air pollution

2.1.1 Context

Vietnam is among the top 10 countries most affected by air pollution (World Bank, 2020). According to the 2019 World Air Quality Report (IQAir, 2019) Vietnam was ranked 15th as the most polluted country, while Hanoi ranked 7th among most polluted cities. The increase in air pollution is linked to electricity consumption, generated predominantly from fossil fuel use, which has tripled in the past decade.

The World Health Organization estimates that approximately 60,000 deaths occur each year in Vietnam due to air pollution, both ambient (outdoor) and household (indoor) (WHO, 2018). Furthermore, 98% of the population is exposed to particulate matter size 2.5 microns (PM 2.5) at levels exceeding WHO guidelines, amongst the worst in terms of air pollution exposure globally. In Vietnam, the majority of air pollution results from the transportation sector, which contributes up to 70% of total air pollution. Other contributors are industrial facilities, including coal mining and vegetation/forest fires (Le et al., 2014).

LASER PULSE utilized the Comprehensive Success Factor Analysis (CSFA) process ([Appendix 1](#)) to identify the unmet conditions that limit resolution of air pollution challenges in Vietnam. The process identified two unmet priority success factors that are needed for the sector to function successfully: 1) Policies that support reduction of air pollution are developed and implemented, and 2) Government of Vietnam (GVN) is committed to supporting goals set to mitigate air pollution. These unmet success factors informed the research focus areas for this RFA.

The Ministry of Natural Resources and Environment (MONRE), Vietnam Environment Administration and Center for Environmental Monitoring (CEM) are responsible for tracking air

pollution but they have struggled to implement a coordinated effort to manage and mitigate factors that contribute to it. These entities have partnered with a number of international organizations to address air pollution including, but not limited to, the United States Environmental Protection Agency, International Network for Environmental Compliance and Enforcement, Hanns Seidel Foundation, USAID, and the World Bank (U.S. International Trade Organization, 2019). These collaborations have included monitoring air pollution, recommending policy approaches, and participating in best practices or training workshops. For example, the United States Consulate and the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) Vietnam have provided funding to place 13 air monitors around Ho Chi Minh City to track air pollution.

In 2016, the Prime Minister issued the *National Action Plan on Air Quality Management (2020-2025)*, which outlined a number of actions and steps to take, including monitoring pollution sources and air quality, in order to reduce air pollution (WHO, 2019). The plan includes a 20 percent reduction target for NO_x, SO_x and particulate matter emitted by cement, chemicals, fertilizer, and petroleum production facilities. Furthermore, Vietnam's draft Environmental Law (55/2014/QH13) also contains air quality management requirements, including point source registration, emissions inventory and installation of continuous emission monitoring systems for the biggest stationary source emitters. However, according to the U.S. International Trade Organization (2019), Vietnam's Ministry of Natural Resources and the Environment (MONRE) found that the deterioration in air quality in recent years is severe in many urban areas, especially in Hanoi and Ho Chi Minh City. The primary sources of urban air pollution are traffic and industrial activities, per the Vietnam Environment Administration (U.S. International Trade Organization, 2019).

2.1.2 Research Focus Areas

LASER PULSE is seeking Applications for research that addresses the specific area identified through the CSFA process including:

A. Research to support the design, implementation and evaluation of air pollution policies

Specifically, LASER PULSE seeks Applications for evidence-based research to inform air pollution policies for the government of Vietnam, as well as evaluation research for existing policies.

Examples of research topics include, but are not limited to, the following:

- Research evaluating the design and implementation of air quality monitoring policy or air quality improvement governing public health and safety in alignment with the *National Action Plan on Air Quality Management by 2020 with the Vision to 2025*.
- Intervention design or evaluation investigating evidence-based or program-based best practices for air quality control and management.
- Intervention design or evaluation investigating innovative partnerships between governmental, non-governmental, and/or inter-governmental entities at national, regional, and international level to enhance regulation and coordination for air pollution control.

- Research investigating compliance/enforcement policy and/or programs governing air pollution control and/or air pollution regulation.

B. Research to promote government leadership in the reduction and management of air pollution

Specifically, LASER PULSE is seeking Applications for research that enhances the capacity of governmental and non-governmental actors to initiate, intervene, and maintain a sustained role in air pollution reduction in two areas, namely:

1. Research on economic assistance to support the population

This includes research on promising practices in economic assistance for high-risk communities, in alignment with the goals of the National Action Plan on Air Quality Management.

2. Research on economic assistance to improve and/or protect air quality

This includes research on programs and strategies that promote leadership on air pollution mitigations, such as adequate government budget and allocations for funding air pollution research, and for subsidies to mitigate air pollution.

This research could involve cross-institutional cooperation and coordination, at the local or national level. It could also include innovative partnerships with the private sector.

Examples of research topics include, but are not limited to, the following:

- Interventions designed to promote community engagement in air quality monitoring and management, in alignment with the goals of the National Action Plan on Air Quality Management.
- Applications that develop cost-effective green technology and strategies for detecting and measuring pollutants and contaminants.
- Intervention designs or evaluations investigating approaches to empower local organizations as stewards in air quality management through community agro-forestry incentives to reduce burning of crop residue, to increase reforestation, proper use of forest products, and conflict resolution to abate forest degradation and air pollution.

2.2 Water pollution

2.2.1 Context

Vietnam is home to 3,500 rivers of more than 10 kilometers in length spread across 16 major river basins and receives almost 2,000 millimeters of rainfall a year, thus is rich in water resources (World Bank, 2019a). However, lack of physical infrastructure and financial capacity as well as uneven distribution of rainfall have resulted in low utilization of the water supply and water shortages throughout the country (Suwal, n.d.). Rapid economic growth, since the launch of the Doi Moi (Renovation) reforms in 1986 has placed unrelenting pressures on water resources, which have resulted in several challenges including deterioration in water quality, and increased pollution (World Bank, 2019a, World Bank, 2020). Pollution impacts both surface and groundwater resources. A World Bank economic model (2019a) estimates that an increase in

water-related threats could reduce Vietnam's Gross Domestic Product (GDP) by 6% by 2035. The model quantified the consequences of four key water-related pressures, namely: spatial and seasonal water shortages; urban water pollution; climate change-induced flooding on the Red River and its impacts on rice yields; and the effects of flow impediments on fisheries. The greatest economic damage would be from water quality, which could reduce the GDP by 4.3% annually. The main source of water pollution is municipal and industrial wastewater (World Bank, 2019a).

According to the Ministry of Construction, only 46% of urban households have connections to the drainage system and only 12.5% of domestic wastewater is being treated (World Bank, 2019b). This contributes to much of Vietnam's wastewater remaining untreated before being discharged into water bodies (World Bank, n.d.), exacerbating water pollution. Extreme water pollution in urban areas has led to excessive concentrations of ammonia as well as heavy metals like lead, arsenic, and manganese (Viet Nam News, 2017). For example, some estimates indicate that approximately 7 million people living near Hanoi have severe risk of arsenic poisoning (Suwal, n.d.). Vietnam also has dioxin hotspots that exceed internationally acceptable levels (Congressional Research Service, 2020) that continue to affect water resources (Olson & Morton, 2019). Vietnam's Ministry of Natural Resources and Environment state that almost 80 percent of the diseases in Vietnam are caused by polluted water (Suwal, n.d.).

In addition to these sources of water pollution, agriculture-based water pollution is growing. Vietnam is one of the world's largest exporters of rice, pepper, coffee and aquaculture products; industries supported by 7,500 dams and reservoirs and 4 million hectares of irrigated area providing a livelihood to about a half the workforce and providing a fifth of the nation's income (World Bank, 2019b). Agriculture and aquaculture sectors account for 92 percent of Vietnam's water usage and contribute substantially to water pollution (World Bank, 2019b). Since 2010, the GVN has emphasized the importance of sustainability in agriculture to reduce water pollution, introducing policies such as the *Agricultural Restructuring Plan* and Good Agricultural Practices standards (Nguyen, 2017).

Through the CSFA process ([Appendix 1](#)), LASER PULSE prioritized two unmet success factors required for the sector to function successfully: 1) Practices and mechanisms for mitigation of water pollution are put in place and 2) Policies for reduction of water pollution are developed and implemented. These unmet success factors informed research focus areas for this RFA.

2.2.2 Research Focus

LASER PULSE is seeking Applications that provide and/or design strategies or promising models for water resource governance and protection that could help address water demand, wastewater generation, water resources pollution, or water-related disaster/risks. Specific areas of interest to LASER PULSE identified through the CSFA process are:

A. Research on practices and mechanisms to improve existing water pollution conditions

1. Good governance practices (targeting government at various levels) such as for water conservation and resource management, for environment and biodiversity protection, and for climate change and adaptation.

2. Behavior change research to inform creation of campaigns that promote a responsive social environment for water resources conservation and protection.

Examples of research topics include, but are not limited to, the following:

- Applications that design or evaluate the initiation and/or implementation of cooperative governance for biodiversity management and protection at local, regional, or basin level. Applications should describe the specific equity considerations among upstream and downstream communities.
- Intervention design or evaluations of cost-effective government-led co-financing model/s for water resource management.
- Applications that develop or evaluate indicators for improving water quality monitoring and assessment.

B. Research on policies to manage and reduce water pollution

1. Environmental protection and sustainability by strengthening quality of environmental impact assessments, and increased uptake of recommendations from these assessments.
2. Water quality management, identification and mitigation of sources of water pollution; this could include waste management strategies, and assessment and/or establishment of water quality control standards

Examples of research topics include, but are not limited to, the following:

- Intervention design or evaluations investigating activities that incentivize the creation of binding agreements for environmental impact assessment, their endorsement, and enforcement.
- Intervention design or evaluations investigating ways to enrich the efforts for identification, generation, and analysis of water reservoir quality and conditions.
- Applications that propose or investigate innovative models for creating and managing transboundary management regimes of water resources within the Mekong basin. Proposed activities must ensure the application of multidisciplinary perspectives to water management.

2.3 Small and Medium Enterprise Competitiveness

2.3.1 Context

Vietnam's socialist market-oriented economy (Anh et al., 2016; OECD/ERIA 2018) enables the State's decisive role in directing economic development (Nguyen & Pham 2019). Still, the country has a vibrant Small and Medium Enterprise (SME) sector (Shira & Associates 2020). Recent statistics indicate that approximately 98% of the 760,000 enterprises in Vietnam are SMEs and the sector contributes an estimated 45% in GDP and 31% in total State budget. Additionally, SMEs created more than five million jobs over the course of 2019 (Lee 2020). The SMEs in Vietnam are responding to business operations standards, such as the International Organization for Standardization (ISO), albeit with challenges. Vietnam SMEs can greatly

benefit from astute certification enterprises if they are able to adopt the stipulated standards (Co et al, 2017; Calza and Trifković, 2019), including standardization of training (Trinh and Thanh, 2017).

Economic and political dispensation indicates an environment attempting to: i) support SME growth, ii) increase support and services to the SME sector, and more recently with government reforms and regulatory reforms (Quang & Bentley, 2010; Shira & Associates, 2020), and iii) promote women's participation in the SME sector (Shira and Associates, 2020). For example, Decree 39/2019/ND-CP ("Decree 39") provides provisions for funding SMEs to enable access to loans and capital to commercial banks. Similarly, the Law on Facilitating the SME sector (No. 04/2017/QH14), promulgated on January 1, 2018 to promote and support SME development, and the recently issued 2019 Decree No.37/2019/ND-CP that has initiated inter-ministerial and provincial-level committee data sharing and coordination, are both indicative of the government's commitment to SME growth. This environment has elevated Vietnam to being recognized as one of South Asia's start-up hubs (Australian Trade and Investment Commission, n.d.).

Despite the government's commitment to SMEs, barriers such as access to credit, land, and financial support persist. Moreover, the performance of SMEs is still constrained by many factors, both internal and external, such as shortage of qualified human resources and limited access to technology, as well as administrative hurdles. For example, Vietnamese entrepreneurs must navigate and operate in a competitive business environment (Nguyen and Pham, 2019). The entrepreneurs must also adapt to the evolving regulatory environment in which enforcement is part of an ongoing policy agenda (Ministry of Planning and Investment, 2020).

Additionally, the process of establishing a business in Vietnam is complicated by regulations that may appear incomplete or ambiguous, and thus are subject to conflicting interpretations by central and provincial governments. Hanoi's Association of SMEs has confirmed that SMEs still face problems such as complicated administrative procedures, inconsistent business requirements, and vague regulations (Ministry of Planning and Investment, 2020).

Vietnam continues to enact reforms to simplify procedures for SMEs. In 2016 the government established a 5-year action plan to build an "enabling government" and work to align the country with international standards and practices (OECD/ERIA, 2018). Vietnam has mandated that all enterprises receive support to meet standards and compliance programs to increase product quality and productivity by 2020; however, to date these efforts have left room to develop clear policies, with transparent guidelines, and implementation mechanisms understood and applied uniformly. While concerns remain, the government introduced the Law on Support for SME(s) No 04/2017/QH14. The Law on Support for SME(s) No 04/2017/QH14 took effect in January 2018 and seeks to support SMEs (The National Assembly of Vietnam, 2017). Furthermore, Decree No.37/2019/ND-CP issued by the Government of Vietnam in May 2019 has provided mechanisms for the formulation of -a database portal to connect ministries, ministerial -authorities, and provincial people's committees in order to improve government coordination (Saxena, 2019). The decree has addressed gaps between the regulatory direction of the central government and the ability of local authorities to implement SME policies. These gaps had led to numerous unnecessary business requirements and administrative procedures that continue to hinder the development of SMEs.

Another problem facing SMEs in Vietnam is the large proportion of unskilled workforce with an estimated 75 percent of the workforce that lacks secondary education (Albano, n.d.). According to the World Bank report (2020), tertiary education institutions (colleges, universities, and institutes of technical and vocational education and training) struggle to produce graduates who have the relevant skills; there is a continued disconnect between the labor market demand and the skills these institutions provide. Workforce challenges include: employee recruitment and retention; poor leadership skills; lack of on-the-job-training; and lack of skills overall, education system deficits (JICA, 2019). The JICA report also pointed out that those who have undergone training outside the enterprise tend to keep their skills to themselves, as opposed to sharing them with colleagues through in-house presentations and other forums. Poor managerial training and skills negatively impacts enterprises, especially the SMEs (Ketels et al., 2010). Vietnam has recently increased its investment in SME workforce training and education opportunities, to ensure provision of technical advice, and to offer subsidies for training courses for women-owned SMEs through Decree No 37/2020/ND-CP issued on March 30, 2020 (Vietnam, Decree No. 37/2020/NĐ-CP of March 30, 2020).

Through the CSFA process ([Appendix 1](#)), LASER PULSE identified and prioritized the following two unmet success factors required for the sector to function successfully: 1) Structured policies have been developed and implemented to create a vibrant SME sector, and 2) Workforce and talent to support SME sector is in place. These unmet success factors informed research focus areas for this RFA.

Each of the focus areas below, and gaps identified in each area should be considered in light of how the context impacts Vietnamese men and women differently.

2.3.2 Research Focus

LASER PULSE is seeking Applications for research on policies that create an enabling environment for practices and solutions for SMEs to increase productivity, improve product quality, and enhance market efficiency at domestic, regional, and international levels. Specific areas of interest to LASER PULSE identified through the CSFA process are:

A. Research to support the design, implementation, and evaluation of SME policies

1. Simplifying procedures to establish a business and optimizing business operation procedures (e.g. tax filing); and cross-institution cooperation and coordination among all levels of government.
2. Economic assistance for SMEs (e.g. adequate government budget allocations).
3. Quality control and certification procedures for production and service provision.

Examples of research topics include, but are not limited to, the following:

- Intervention design or evaluation of government program/s or policy/ies that enhance SME growth, competitiveness, and sustenance under current reforms.
- Research that advances knowledge on strategies to assist SME financiers and regulators to address resource allocation decisions.

- Intervention or research that addresses how certification and related interventions promote SME development, SME productivity, and/or SME growth trajectory.
- Research that results in better data curation and management about SME attributes and development in order to inform resource allocation.

B. Research on workforce and/or talent development

Specifically, LASER PULSE seeks Applications on workforce training and education that focus on entrepreneurship and incubator development while promoting innovation and ensuring relevance to the labor market.

Examples of research topics include, but are not limited to, the following:

- Intervention design or evaluation investigating cost-effective training methods that benefit multiple workforce categories, and equip target workforce with in-demand skills that respond to labor market needs for trained and retained workforce.
- Research that investigates innovative models and instruments to improve access to financial and other services to support entrepreneurship and/or entrepreneurial competencies and skills.
- Research that evaluates the factors that promote business incubation and the diverse impacts of business incubator catalysts.
- Evaluations of factors that promote the adoption and diffusion of innovation among business persons, business communities, and the business sector in order to increase the benefits of an emerging innovation ecosystem.

3. APPLICATION INFORMATION AND PROCESS

This section provides specific information on the RFA including appendices that support the document.

3.1 Letter of Interest (LOI)

Applicants are required to submit a one-page letter of interest (LOI) three (3) weeks before the deadline for submitting the Application i.e. 10 September 2020 at 6:00pm Vietnam time, using the provided template. The LOI will include the following information:

1. Lead Principal Investigator (PI) (**required, cannot change**)
2. Lead institution (**required, cannot change**)
3. Research sector stated in the RFA. If your Application is cutting across two or more of the identified sectors, please state so and select the main sector (**required, cannot change**)
4. Research team/institutions/organizations (required, can change)
5. Title (required, can change)
6. Abstract/Project Summary (required, can change)

The LOI will **not** be evaluated for merit.

3.2 Research gap identification

Applicants should clearly identify and justify, in the project summary and research plan, the research gap(s) that they are addressing within the identified themes in the technical sectors under Section 2 of this Application. Researchers and their development partners should work together to co-identify specific gaps within the themes and to co-design research solutions.

3.3 Eligibility and Leadership

Only academic researchers based at Higher Education Institutions, HEIs (see definition of HEI in [Appendix 3](#)) in Vietnam and in the United States are eligible to submit an Application. (**NOTE:** In the case of Vietnam, researchers based at government research institutes are eligible to apply as lead Applicants). Researchers in Vietnam are strongly encouraged to submit Applications as lead researchers in collaboration with their translation partners in Vietnam. Lead researchers from Vietnam are encouraged, but not required, to include collaborations with other researchers in the region/country or the US, as needed. If US researchers are leading the Application, they are **required** to collaborate with both a UIC researcher(s) and a translation partner(s) in Vietnam.

Note: Collaboration with a development translation partner(s) (e.g., an NGO, civil society, the private sector, or a local government entity) as translation partner(s) is **required** for all Applications. The PI is required to provide a signed Letter of Commitment using the provided template. Foreign government institutions are considered viable translation partners, however, they are not eligible to receive funding associated with this award and should not have a budget associated with the Application. Foreign government research translation contributions can be applied as cost-share, however.

The lead researcher coordinating the research team and submitting the Application will be considered the Principal Investigator. Each PI is limited to submit one Application per RFA (regardless of sector). Other researchers and research translation experts representing partner institutions, other than the PI's institution, may be considered as Co-Principal Investigators (Co-PIs) on a research team and can be listed on multiple Applications to this RFA. For the purposes of this RFA, a Co-PI is defined as a key member of the research team (who is not the PI) that also serves as the point of contact for the partnering institution. An institution having more than one team member will specify their designated Co-PI. Co-PI(s) and translation partner(s) are not geographically restricted but must demonstrate their experience in and/or knowledge of Vietnam.

All members of the research team must be registered in the LASER PULSE Network. Please [click here](#) (or go to <https://stemedhub.org/groups/laserpulse/connect>) to register in the LASER PULSE Network.

3.4 Submission Instructions

Researchers interested in applying for an award in response to this RFA are encouraged to submit an Application via [this link](#) (or go to <https://stemedhub.org/groups/laserpulse/funding/rfa-vietnam>) on the LASER PULSE website. If the Applicant is unable to access the website, please send your Application and all associated documentation to this email, applicationsubmit@laserpulse.org. The deadline for the Application submission is 10 September 2020 at 6:00 pm Vietnam time.

Late Applications will not be reviewed. Additions or modifications will not be accepted after the submission date. LASER PULSE is not responsible for late or incomplete submissions.

3.5 RFA Question Period and Informational Webinar

Prospective Applicants are encouraged to thoroughly review the [frequently asked questions](#) (FAQs) before submitting an Application. The FAQs document is provided as part of the RFA package.

Additionally, LASER PULSE will allow two weeks for prospective Applicants to submit any additional questions concerning the RFA. Questions should be sent to Pamela McClure at pmcclure@purdue.edu. Questions should be received no later than 07 August 2020 at 6:00pm Vietnam time.

LASER PULSE will organize a webinar on 13 August 2020 at 8:00 am Vietnam time to address questions submitted by Applicants. Specific details will be announced on the LASER PULSE website and other relevant avenues, at least one week prior to the webinar date. Notification of this event will also be sent to all members of the Network via e-mail. The purpose of the webinar is to discuss questions received (without attribution to the organization that sent the questions). The questions and answers (Q&A) received and discussed during the webinar will be posted on the LASER PULSE Application website as an amendment to this RFA. Similarly, responses to questions received during the webinar will be transcribed and made available as a supplement to the RFA. Additionally, the webinar will be recorded and made available on the LASER PULSE website.

3.6 Format and Review Process

Applications have a limit of 10 typed pages of core content, excluding the cover page and supplemental materials (e.g., workplan, budget, references). Content details are provided in the Application summary table at the end of this section. Applications must be in English, with narrative portions prepared in MS Word or Open Office format, using Times New Roman font, size 11, or similar typeset in single line spacing on 8.5x11 inch sized paper. We will only evaluate the first 10 pages for Applications exceeding the 10-page limit of core content.

Applications will be reviewed by selected external reviewers, recruited worldwide and have relevant skills and experience on the topic and geographic focal areas, USAID personnel and the LASER PULSE Management team. Reviewers will evaluate the Applications based upon specifications listed in the Evaluation Criteria section (Section 4). Successful Applications are subject to final approval by USAID before notification of award.

3.7 On-line Training Requirement

LASER PULSE provides on-line training modules on “research translation” and “gender inclusion into research”. These training modules are part of the technical assistance available from LASER PULSE and tailored to provide guidance and information for effective Applications that align with the RFA requirements.

Note: PI and co-PI(s) identified in the Application must have taken and passed both on-line training courses before submitting the Application. Other team members are also encouraged to take these training sessions as they explain important concepts needed to develop a successful Application. Please click [here](https://stemedhub.org/groups/laserpulse/courses) to take the on-line training (or go to <https://stemedhub.org/groups/laserpulse/courses>). Certificates of completion for each training module will be sent via email or can be downloaded directly from the training site.

3.8 Strategy for Gender Inclusion

Prior to developing an Application, Applicants should review the gender analysis guidelines in [Appendix 2](#). Applications should reflect that the research team is fully aware of the relevant gender considerations for the development solution proposed. The intention is not that the proposed solution be ‘about gender,’ but that the team should look at gender as a factor that is relevant for any work with human beings, or solutions that propose to benefit human beings.

Applications responsive to gender will ‘unpack’ certain nouns that can have the possibility to mask the target group, but tend to default to a focus on a single sex. For example, terms such as: youth, farmers, entrepreneurs, armed group actors/fighters, and head of household often default to men or boys. Other nouns, such as teachers, caregivers, and parents, often tend to default to a focus on women or girls. Applicants should ensure that the target group is clarified and that the choice of focus population is supported by evidence that this is the population group in need for this sector. The LASER PULSE gender online training will show many practical examples where an improperly targeted group can lead to missed opportunity for impact in development solutions and research translation. The Application in response to this RFA should show how these gender considerations are addressed in research design, the development of tools, the research subject selection, the collection and analysis of data, and the proposed translation of the research.

3.9 Strategy for Embedded Research Translation

Applications should provide a concise summary of their research translation strategy that addresses the four pillars of LASER PULSE's Embedded Research Translation Model: (1) partnership, (2) process, (3) product, and (4) dissemination plan. In addition, Applications should account for any translation activities in their budget. The summary shall include brief explanations on:

1. **Partnership:** A justification of the proposed research and translation partner team, including why the translation partner was chosen and any previous history of collaboration. Roles and responsibilities of researcher and translation partners should be explicitly defined with the expectation that all partners will be engaged throughout the research translation process.
2. **Process:** The collaborative process by which the researcher(s) and translation partner(s) will work together, from identifying the research topic to ensuring the research solution will be feasible for use. The description of the collaborative process may include information on communication type and frequency and how the team will facilitate collaborative engagement.
3. **Product:** The intended policy and/or practice-focused translation product(s), to be developed collaboratively from research findings. Translated products may include, but are not limited to: policy briefs, information briefs, guidebooks, training, multimedia products, production or processing methods, education curriculum, and technical manuals. Products should lead to changes in legal, constitutional, funding, accountability, feasibility, or implementation mechanisms or practice recommendations.
4. **Dissemination:** A dissemination plan for wider application and scale beyond the initial partnership and toward a broader uptake of relevant findings in the field or region. This can include meetings, events, and workshops, in acceptable formats (virtual, in person, live, or asynchronous, etc.), targeted toward influential stakeholders for further adoption. Please be sure to list the targeted stakeholders.

Any research translation activities that are identified in the Embedded Research Translation strategy above should be accounted for in the overall budget and reflected in the budget narrative using the provided template. This may include, but is not limited to, funds to hold stakeholder workshops, consultancy fees (e.g. for copy editing briefs or manuals), resources needed to develop the translation products, etc.

3.10 Project Duration and Funding

Subject to the availability of funds, LASER PULSE will issue awards in response to those Applications that best meet the objectives of this funding opportunity as evaluated by the selection criteria contained in Section 4 of this RFA. LASER PULSE anticipates funding approximately 4-6 awards for a period of 12 to 24 months of research and translation for up to \$250,000 USD per award. For this RFA we expect to award \$1,000,000 in total funding across all awards, subject to the availability of funds. While award(s) are anticipated as a result of this RFA, LASER PULSE reserves the right to fund any or none of the Applications submitted and for the amounts funded to vary from those described. Only one Application may be submitted per PI.

3.11 Research Output Reporting

Applications must include a brief narrative describing the expected outputs of the proposed award. The research team should identify the various outputs, including the translated research products identified in Section 3.9 above, and provide an associated approximate timeline for delivery for each item. These items can be listed as bullet points within the text, with an estimated delivery date placed in parentheses after a given item's description or as a Gantt chart or other format. Note that traditional academic outputs such as journal articles, technical reports, posters, etc. should also be listed but it is anticipated that these are not the only research outputs that could be produced from the proposed work.

The PI of each successful Applicant team that is awarded will receive an Award Reporting Guidelines document describing procedures on curation and submission of award information, research products, and research datasets. These guidelines will also contain a template for the research team to develop a brief data management plan that will be required as part of the post-award process. Once the award has commenced, output data compiled and reported by the PI shall consist of, but not be limited to: (1) the names and selected information of the PI and Co-PIs; (2) research products such as technical manuals, policy briefs, guidebooks, peer-reviewed publications, technical reports, and relevant datasets; and (3) presentations at convenings where translated research is disseminated to various development actors, including translation partner(s), policymakers, donors, or other development researchers. PIs will receive from LASER PULSE a Research Output Reporting Form (via an online survey) to facilitate the submission of required data and information for bi-annual reporting.

3.12 Budget Preparation for Application

The project budget must be submitted using the [LASER Application Budget Template](#) in Excel, Google Sheets, or an Open Office format. If these options are not available please contact us via email, applicationsubmit@laserpulse.org. Please follow the directions in the workbook when entering your budget numbers.

3.13 Budget, Budget Narrative, and Cost Share Documents

The budget, budget narrative, and cost share documents should provide, in detail, the total costs for implementation of the program that the Applicant's institution is proposing using the [budget narrative template](#) provided. Generally, each institution included in the Application will be a direct sub-award of LASER PULSE's Prime institution. Foreign governments are not eligible to receive funding and should not have a budget associated with the Application. Foreign government translation contributions can be applied as cost-share, however.

1. The budget must be submitted in Excel, Google Sheets, or an Open Office format using the provided template with unlocked cells and all formulas available to enable LASER PULSE to check the calculations included. This budget template and budget narrative should be completed for each applicable institution that is planned to receive funding (i.e. the Prime and any sub-award partners) included in the Application.
2. The following major line items must be included within the budget narrative. When available, each major line item must be supported by detailed breakdowns of each expected sub-expense under that line:



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- a. Personnel (positions and/or names, rates, etc.)
 - b. Fringe Benefits
 - c. Anticipated Travel (if trips are known, please provide details, if not yet known, then overall estimates and number of proposed trips would be helpful)
 - d. Equipment and Supplies - Per USAID restrictions, LASER PULSE will not allow funding to the following categories/items:
 - i. Procurement of commodities listed below, but not limited to
 1. Agricultural commodities,
 2. Motor vehicles,
 3. Pharmaceuticals,
 4. Pesticides,
 5. Used equipment,
 6. U.S. Government-owned excess property, or
 7. Fertilizer
 - ii. Construction (e.g. alteration, or repair (including dredging and excavation) of buildings, structures, or other real property and includes, without limitation, improvements, renovation, alteration and refurbishment). The term includes, without limitation, roads, power plants, buildings, bridges, water treatment facilities, and vertical structures.
 - e. Other Direct Costs (see information in #5 below)
 - f. Indirect Costs
3. Further, please provide a breakdown of costs associated with the program for any identified partners (as sub-awardee), including any funded translation partners, if applicable. Budget details should be clearly described and denoted for all sub-awards.
 4. An estimate of the level of effort (either as a percentage or as a ratio to full time employment) relative to their role must be included for all personnel.
 5. Please provide a breakdown of all anticipated other direct costs (i.e. the amount, type, and unit cost with as much detail as possible). Examples may include, but not limited to: consulting fees, participant support costs, workshop costs, maintenance or usage fees, program specific software, etc.
 6. Cost sharing is required at 10% of the total funds requested. The cost share must consist of non-US Government funded contributions that meet the criteria detailed in [22 CFR 226.23](#). Cost sharing may include, but is not limited to: 1) Personnel effort and any associated indirect costs; 2) in-kind contributions (such as office or laboratory space, access to equipment, etc.); 3) cash contributions; or 4) any other costs. Cost-sharing documentation from the contributing entity must be provided at the time of Application submission (in most cases, this will be in the form of a letter signed by the authorized organizational representative). Within the budget narrative described above, please provide additional details outlining the cost-share expectations of the prime institution and any partner institution(s) (if applicable) with details, including dollar amounts and descriptions. The cost share (total 10%) can come from any of the partner

organizations. It is the Applicant's responsibility to ensure that all necessary documentation is complete and received on time.

7. Note: Purdue University may request additional detailed budget information following notification to an Applicant that it is under consideration for an award. If necessary, Purdue may conduct discussions to verify cost data, evaluate specific elements of costs, and examine data to determine the necessity, reasonableness and allocability of the costs reflected in the budget and their allowability pursuant to the applicable cost principles.

3.14 Application Summary Table

Section	Description
Cover Page (<i>1 page maximum; does not count against the page limit</i>)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Project title • Lead institution applying for the Award • PI, Co-PI(s): names, titles, addresses, email addresses, and phone numbers • Sector of inquiry • Geographic Focus Area(s) • Region where project will take place • Project length (years, months) • Total budget requested (USD) • Signature and contact information for authorized official from the lead institution (email and phone number) • Contact information for the person responsible for negotiating the final agreement, if different from the above
Project Summary (<i>1 page maximum; does not count against the page limit.</i>)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Project Summary
Research Plan (<i>7 pages</i>)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Brief background and local context of development challenge in Vietnam. • Description of research gaps. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Clear identification of research question(s) and justification for research focus framed in the context of local, social, cultural, and economic background. ○ Clear differentiation from past published research and description of innovative concepts and methodology. • Research methods and approaches, including objectives and hypotheses

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Description of how the project will leverage the team's experience with community engagement, private sector, or government entities in Vietnam. • Strategy for research translation [partnership, process, research translation product(s), dissemination plan]. • Integration of gender considerations into the research plan (see Appendix 2).
Project Management (<i>1 page</i>)	Qualifications, roles and responsibilities of team members, including technical and administrative staff.
Workplan (<i>not included in page limit</i>)	Timeline for the entire project period by activity, indicating what, when, by whom and where, using the provided workplan template as part of the RFA package.
Research Output Reporting (<i>2 page</i>)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Link research activities to outputs/deliverables: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Describe research outputs intended as deliverables (e.g. journal articles and/or technical reports, white papers, and conference posters) with estimated approx. dates of completion. ○ Describe research translated products (e.g. policy briefs, infographics, dissemination workshops) that follow from the translation strategy, with estimated approx. dates of completion for each item. • Brief description of output curation and management strategy (1-2 paragraphs).
Budget (no page limits)	Use provided <u>Excel Application Budget Template</u> as part of the RFA package (see budget details in Section 3.12 and 3.13)
Budget Narrative/ Justification (no page limits)	Detailed budget narrative that explains each cost including cost associated with research translation activities. Use the provided <u>Budget Narrative Template</u> , as part of the RFA package.
Appendices	
List of References (Bibliography)	
PI Qualifications (<i>maximum 2 pages each</i>)	Curriculum vitae (CV) of the PI (use the provided <u>CV Template</u>)
Collaborator qualifications (<i>maximum 2 pages each</i>)	Curriculum vitae (CV) of any Co-PIs (use the provided <u>CV Template</u>)



Letter of Commitment from translation partner(s)	Signed letter(s) of commitment from primary translation partner(s) on the research project (use template provided as part of the RFA package).
Checklist for Application	see Appendix 4

4. EVALUATION OF APPLICATIONS

LASER PULSE will conduct a peer review for submitted Applications, followed by Consensus Reviewer Panel meetings organized by sector, to discuss the reviews based on the criteria listed below. Selected Applications will be recommended to USAID for final approval prior to notification of award. Applicants are highly encouraged to develop their Applications with these criteria in mind.

4.1 Evaluation Criteria

Applications will be rated based on two criteria: Research Merit and Broader Impact.

4.1.1 Research Merit

The research merit criterion encompasses two sub-criteria: (1) Attention to local context and leveraging local capacity, as well as (2) Technical merit:

1. Sub-criterion 1: Attention to local context and leveraging local capacity

To what extent does the research plan take into account the local social, cultural, and economic contexts in Vietnam in framing the development challenge, research questions, and research methodology/approach? To what extent does the Application appropriately leverage the team's experience with community engagement, the private sector, or government entities in Vietnam?

2. Sub-criterion 2: Technical merit

To what extent is the technical plan for carrying out the proposed activities well-reasoned, well-organized, and based on a sound rationale? To what extent does the proposed research build off/leverage the team's ongoing or completed research projects or learning projects? To what extent does the proposed research explore innovative concepts and methodologies?

4.1.2 Broader Impacts

This criterion encompasses the potential to benefit society and contribute to the achievement of specific, desired outcomes for LASER PULSE; and will be judged based on these sub-criteria:

1. Sub-criterion 1: Embedded Research Translation

To what extent does the Application reflect LASER PULSE's Embedded Research Translation model? Key considerations for the model are:

- a. Assessment of the appropriateness of the translation partner(s) and the extent to which the partner's (or partners') role(s) in implementing policy and/or program change is explicitly detailed.*
- b. Extent to which the Application captures the collaborative process by which researcher(s) and translation partner(s) will work together, including how the research topic was identified.*
- c. Assessment of the potential impact of the research translation product(s) to be developed, including feasibility of the plan for wider dissemination and any budget-related considerations for the translation strategy.*

2. Sub-criterion 2: Gender Mainstreaming

How well does the proposed research project identify relevant gender issues for the specific context and how has the consideration of these contributed to the overall research design? How will the team composition promote gender inclusive participation and contribute to inform the research focus and implementation at all stages?

3. Sub-criterion 3: Other Societal Impacts

What is the potential of the proposed activities to benefit the community/society beyond the scope of the project?

4.2 Evaluation Process

LASER PULSE staff will conduct a preliminary screening of Applications to ensure they are complete and conform to instructions and requirements.

The screened Applications will be separated into respective technical sector groups and reviewed by a panel consisting of technical experts assembled by LASER PULSE in consultation with USAID. The evaluation criteria emphasize strengths and weaknesses of each sub-criterion and the overall adjectival rating for the main criteria (RM and BI). Each Application will be evaluated based on the main criteria (RM and BI) and sub-criteria described above. Reviewers are required to provide written narratives on the “strengths” and “weaknesses” of each sub-criterion and the adjectival rating based on the scale of “Excellent (E)”, “Very Good (V)”, “Good (G)”, “Fair (F)”, and “Poor (P)”, according to the descriptions in [Table 1](#). Additionally, Reviewers will also provide overall adjectival rating for the main criteria (RM and BI).

After the individual reviews have been completed, LASER PULSE will conduct a Consensus Reviewer Panel for each of the technical sectors, to deliberate on the review comments and determine a final consensus rating for each Application. The Consensus Panel will also recommend the Applications into one of three funding recommendation categories - “Fund”, “Fund if Possible” and “Do not Fund” - according to those final ratings. LASER PULSE, in consultation with USAID, will make the final selection of successful Applications based on the criteria listed above in addition to regulatory and geographic factors that may be relevant to individual Applications. USAID will provide final review and approval for the selected awards. While 4 to 6 awards are anticipated as a result of this request for Applications, LASER PULSE reserves the right to fund any or none of the Applications submitted. All proposed activities that occur outside of the United States require concurrence of the respective USAID Mission(s). Additional regulatory assessments may also be made. As such, Applicants may be asked to provide additional information to USAID if your Application is shortlisted for a potential award.

Table 1. Rating Definition for Research Merit and Broader Impact Sub-Criteria

Adjectival Rating	Descriptive Statement
Excellent	Outstanding Application in all aspects. Applicant fully addresses all aspects of the criterion and convincingly demonstrates that it will meet the RFA objectives. Weaknesses, if any, can be easily addressed.
Very Good	Strong Application in all aspects. Applicant fully addresses all aspects of the criterion and convincingly demonstrates a likelihood of meeting the RFA objectives. Weaknesses, if any, can be easily addressed.
Good	Applicant addresses all aspects of the criterion and demonstrates the ability to meet the RFA objectives but shows some weaknesses, yet the positives of the Application outweigh the negatives.
Fair	Applicant does not address all aspects of the criterion nor is evidence presented indicating the likelihood of successfully meeting the RFA objectives. Significant weaknesses are demonstrated and clearly outweigh any strengths presented.
Poor	Applicant does not address all aspects of the criterion and the information presented indicates a strong likelihood of failure to meet the RFA objectives.

5. APPENDICES

5.1 Appendix 1 – Comprehensive Success Factors

Developed at Purdue University, [Comprehensive Success Factors](#) (CSF) identifies key interrelated factors that define complex, multi-dimensional problems – such as those encountered in the field of global development – by applying a systems approach to delineate a set of conditions, termed “success factors”, which must be present in a given system (e.g., Basic Education sector) in order to enable large-scale impact.

The process as applied by LASER PULSE is briefly summarized as follows. Priority sector focus areas are provided by the USAID Vietnam Mission staff. The CSF team then undertakes a systematic, CSF-specific literature (grey and research) review of thousands of key documents (e.g., Country Development Cooperation Strategies, National Development Plans, NGO publications, and academic sector-focused research) to yield the success factors for those focus areas. At the end of this process the CSF team develops a success factor “tree” (SF Tree) for the sector, which is essentially a list of all conditions along a 15-categories system level framework required for the sector to function successfully. Examples of the 15 categories are security/safety, policy, government/leadership, workforce/talent, and behavior change. Once the SF Trees are finalized, the CSF Team creates a Qualtrics survey from which to gather information on those system conditions that are not present in the existing country context. The survey initially goes to a ‘Scoping Group,’ which comprises key leaders, NGOs, or donor leaders with long country experience, recognized local or international policy, and think tank experts, etc. who have a broad understanding of the sector at all system levels. The results from the Scoping Group are collected, analyzed, and presented to LASER PULSE. A second Qualtrics survey round is conducted for a Participants Group consisting of researchers and NGO practitioners, who are potential Applicants for the LASER PULSE RFAs. Participants are sourced from the LASER PULSE network, USAID Implementing Partners, and recommendations from other regional or country networks. This larger group provides additional input to that of the Scoping Group.

This process serves as the foundation for LASER PULSE RFAs, which is further verified by the USAID.

5.2 Appendix 2 – LASER PULSE Gender Analysis Considerations

Researchers responding to this RFA must consider the questions below when designing Applications. ***Please do not answer these questions as written in this Appendix. Instead, show in the research Application (focus, tools, analysis, recommendations, and translation plan) that these questions have been considered to the extent possible and relevant.***

Note that gender does not mean women. Gender refers to socially constructed norms and concepts about masculinity and femininity. These norms cut across all other aspects of an individual, as relates to his or her race, class, religion, ethnicity, ability, and age. Research has shown that gender norms are remarkably resilient across cultures [[World Bank Gender Portal](#)].

The LASER PULSE research Award Application will require Applicants to apply a ‘gendered lens’ to the research translation that they propose, so that LASER PULSE does not fund work that reinforces harmful gender norms, or fails to take advantage of opportunities to address gender norms to promote development and human rights goals.

Research Considerations¹

In formulating your Application, please ensure that you have:

- 1) Discussed the relevant gendered social inequalities and/or gender gaps.
- 2) Identified any direct and indirect problem impacts and how they vary by gender.
- 3) Described how these differential impacts inform the research project design.
- 4) Described the relevance of gender considerations to any human subjects research.
- 5) Reviewed literature relating to gender differences and implications of gender to the research field.
- 6) Show that sex-disaggregated (by biological sex of subjects) and gender-sensitive data² (contextual/ situational) will be collected and analyzed throughout the research cycle, and included in the final publication and research translation products.
- 7) Demonstrate how differentiated outcomes and impacts on women and men are considered.
- 8) Ensure that all questionnaires, surveys, focus groups, etc. (when included) are also designed to unravel potentially relevant sex and/or gender differences in your data. Particularly, describe how translation products, including policy recommendations, physical products, or practices, could result in subsequent gender-differentiated outcomes.

Resources for Gender Analysis

- [USAID’s Gender Equality and Female Empowerment Policy](#)
- CARE Gender Marker Guidance: https://insights.careinternational.org.uk/images/in-practice/Gender-marker/CARE_Gender-Marker-Guidance_new-colors1.pdf
- <https://www.feedthefuture.gov/the-womens-empowerment-in-agriculture-index>

¹ Adapted from <https://www.genderportal.eu/projects/gender-eu-funded-research-toolkit-and-training>

² <https://www.oecd.org/dev/38640915.pdf>

5.3 Appendix 3 – Glossary of Selected Key Words

Comprehensive Success Factors (CSF)

CSF is a systems approach used to identify various crucial constraints in any given technical area that must be addressed to achieve impact. It examines a mutually-exclusive, collectively-exhaustive set of pattern-derived issues tied to outcomes to identify the many underlying aspects of a system that must be addressed to overcome an observed challenge. This innovation science approach focuses on the multiple linkages between stakeholders, resources, and context needed to resolve a problem and so comprehensively sorts ‘symptoms’ from ‘causes’.

Collaboration

Willingness to work together in an open and supportive manner to advance the work of LASER PULSE to achieve its goals and objectives; applies to LASER PULSE staff in their interactions with USAID and research teams (e.g. HEI researchers, development actors) that are recipients of LASER-funded awards. Also applies to HEI researchers and development translation partner(s) involved in their funded research.

Co-Principal Investigator (Co-PI)

Each research team receiving an award will be composed of a Principal Investigator (PI) affiliated with the prime recipient, as well as one or more Co-PI(s). LASER PULSE defines Co-PI as a key member of the research team (who is not the PI) that also serves as the point of contact for their institution. If there is more than one team member from a given institution, said institution will inform LASER PULSE who will be their designated Co-PI.

Development Practitioner(s)

Individual persons engaged in the design, planning, and/or implementation of local, regional, national, or international development programs/projects. This definition refers to personnel of NGOs and community-based organizations; but it can also include individuals representing governments or the private sector in an implementation capacity (e.g., extension agents) as opposed to a funding capacity. Under certain circumstances (e.g., co-creation of research questions), donor staff may also fall under this definition.

Development Stakeholders

Any entity involved in international development funding, promotion, and/or implementation, as well as the intended beneficiaries (e.g. local communities and their citizens).

Higher Education Institution

Based upon USAID documents, LASER PULSE defines a Higher Education Institution (HEI) as a tertiary education institution that provides educational opportunities that build on secondary education, providing learning activities in specialized fields. It aims at learning at a high level of complexity and specialization. This may include public or private universities, colleges, and training institutes. **Exemption for Vietnam:** Researchers based at government research institutes are eligible to apply. In Vietnam, government research institutes and public universities are considered quasi-government agencies. This means that their key personnel are appointed by the GVN and their office space (including some facilities) is provided by the GVN; however, they are allowed to implement grants/contracts from non-GVN sources to generate revenue for most of their staff/employees.

Embedded Research Translation

An iterative co-design process among academics, practitioner(s), and other stakeholders in which research is intentionally applied to a development challenge.

Success Factor Tree

An output of the Comprehensive Success Factors methodology employed by LASER PULSE; it is an extensive outline of the key factors that are likely needed to achieve commonly desirable outcomes when addressing a grand challenge within a given development sector. The tree is organized in a logic format that incorporates a hierarchy (e.g., leaves, twigs, branches, trunk) that conveys issue relatedness and/or dependence in and across categories.

Translation Partners

In this RFA, LASER PULSE uses the term “Translation Partners” to refer to Development Practitioner (s) (see definition above) that are, or are intended to be paired with researchers as part of a team submitting an Application.

5.4 Appendix 4 – Application Checklist

List of required documents for the Application

- ☐ A completed Application (maximum 10 pages)
- ☐ Workplan (not included in the page limit); use template provided
- ☐ Detailed budget; use Application budget template provided
- ☐ Detailed budget narrative that explains all costs; use template provided
- ☐ Curriculum vitae (CV) of the PI (maximum 2 pages); use template provided
- ☐ Curriculum vitae (CV) of the Co-PIs (maximum 2 pages each); use template provided
- ☐ Signed letter(s) of commitment from each primary translation partner(s), using the provided template
- ☐ Certificates of completion from the PI and Co-PIs for two online trainings: 1) Gender Analysis in Research and Application; 2) LASER PULSE Research to Translation Training



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6.1 Air Pollution

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6.2 Water Pollution

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