



Innovation Fund for the Americas

For more than a decade, Latin America and the Caribbean (LAC) has experienced strong economic growth, declining poverty, and deepening democracy, however development challenges persist. Deteriorating citizen security, poor educational outcomes, high levels of youth unemployment, and extreme vulnerability to natural disasters are just some of the difficult issues facing countries in the region.

To address these challenges, the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) launched the Innovation Fund for the Americas (IFA) to invest in cost-effective breakthrough solutions to development challenges in Latin America and the Caribbean.

IFA will pilot, rigorously test, and bring to scale promising projects with the potential to significantly improve development outcomes. IFA is especially interested in funding proposals that address:

- Energy and environment, citizen safety, at-risk youth, education, and democracy challenges;
- Challenges within the four pillars of the U.S. Haiti strategy (infrastructure and energy, food and economic security, health and other basic services, and governance and rule of law). For more information, see the DIV Haiti Initiative (idea.usaid.gov/div/div-haiti-initiative).

Staged financing

IFA utilizes USAID's Development Innovation Ventures (DIV) financing model, which grants awards incrementally—i.e. if your idea works, and only if it works, can you compete for additional funding. IFA funds projects in any of three stages:

- **STAGE 1:** projects in the proof of concept phase. IFA grants up to **\$100,000** over one year so that grantees can refine prototypes and gather evidence they need to pull in more investment and grow.
- **STAGE 2:** larger projects, typically to support a solution's expansion across a country. IFA grants Stage Two projects up to **\$1 million**. Stage 2 projects are expected to rigorously test the project's viability at its larger size
- **STAGE 3:** for grants of up to **\$15 million** over several years. Solutions that already prove to work at a large scale will be expanded, often into multiple countries.



By the end of Stage Three, successful projects will have rigorous evidence of multinational impact and will be commercialized or replicated by developing country governments or donor institutions. Within ten years, the best solutions will be mainstreamed and reach tens of millions of beneficiaries around the globe.

How to apply to IFA

IFA encourages applicants with innovative ideas—those that address development challenges in the LAC region more efficiently and cost-effectively than standard practice and that could ultimately scale to reach millions of beneficiaries—to submit proposals via the DIV Annual Program Statement. A brief description of the application process is below, but please visit the website (idea.usaid.gov/div/how-apply) for complete eligibility requirements and application instructions.

1. The Annual Program Statement

The DIV Annual Program Statement (APS) provides guidelines for prospective applicants to develop and submit applications for USAID funding, including IFA. Before applying to IFA, please carefully review the DIV Annual Program Statement and Annex 3C on IFA at idea.usaid.gov/div/how-apply.

2. Eligible Applicants

All applicants must be legally recognized organizational entities under applicable law, including U.S. and non U.S. private businesses, non-governmental organizations, universities, and foundations. Individuals and governments are not eligible to apply directly at this time. IFA funded activities should take place in Latin American and Caribbean countries where USAID works (usaid.gov/locations/latin_america_caribbean/country/index.html). For more information on eligibility, see page 7 of the DIV Annual Program Statement at idea.usaid.gov/div/how-apply.

3. Application Process

Interested applicants must first submit a Letter of Interest (LOI) using the LOI form posted at www.usaid.gov/div. After a competitive review process, USAID will request successful applicants to submit a Full Application. The Full Application form will be provided to invited applicants with submission instructions. Please note that an invitation to submit a Full Application does not constitute intent to award.

All application materials must be in English and submitted electronically to DIVApplications@usaid.gov. Applications sent by any other means will not be considered.

4. Deadlines

Deadlines for submitting an LOI for consideration are:

- **June 1, 2012**
- **September 1, 2012**
- **December 1, 2012**
- **March 1, 2013**

5. Communication with USAID and Applicants

Applicants and those considering applying must send all questions about IFA/DIV to DIV@usaid.gov. Communications sent to USAID Missions or Offices will not be considered.

More Resources

For more information about IFA, please visit: idea.usaid.gov/div/IFA, idea.usaid.gov/div/how-apply or email DIV@usaid.gov.