



REQUEST FOR APPLICATIONS (RFA)

for Higher Education for Innovation and Growth (HEIG) Activity

Issuance Date: March 24, 2026

Closing Date: April 23, 2026 (30 days after issuance date)

Closing Time: 16:00 (GMT+3) Amman Time

Subject: Request for Applications (RFA) Number *IREX/HEIG/RFA/004/FY26*
HEIG - Cluster Lead Organization, **Medical Manufacturing Sector**

Reference: Issued under International Research and Exchange Board (IREX) project and DOS Cooperative Agreement No. 72027824CA00001

This Request for Applications outlines the information required from the applicant for the development and submission of an application for consideration. The potential applicant is expected to review, understand, and conform with specifications contained in this RFA. Failure to do so will be at the applicant's own risk.

The RFA is focused on proposals to select a Cluster Lead Organization, within the **Medical Manufacturing Sector**, that will act as the leading arm for the implementation of cluster activity in close cooperation with the elected Cluster Chairs and HEIG team to actively broker partnerships between private sector enterprises and Higher Education Institutions, coordinate meetings, facilitate operations, and ensure effective communication. The Cluster Lead Organization will also handle logistics and organization while collaborating closely with cluster leadership.

Subject to the availability of funds, IREX expects to issue one 2-year award in this cycle up to a total ceiling of \$150,000 (106,200 JOD). The size of the individual award will be up to \$150,000 (106,200 JOD). IREX reserves the right to fund any or none of the applications submitted. All reasonable, allocable, and allowable expenses, both direct and indirect, which are related to the subaward program and are in accordance with applicable cost standards (usually [2 CFR 200 Subpart E](#) Cost Principles), may be charged under the subaward.

For non-US organizations, the [Department of State Standard Terms and Conditions](#) and [2 CFR 200](#) Subpart A through E apply. This RFA is being issued and consists of this cover letter, Schedule A, **Attachment 1:** Application Form Template, **Attachment 2:** Application Budget Template.

Issuance of this RFA does not constitute an award commitment on the part of HEIG/IREX, nor does it commit HEIG/IREX to pay costs incurred in the preparation and submission of an application. The application is submitted at the risk of the applicant. All preparation and submission costs are at the applicant's expense.

All information shared in your application is treated as confidential according to the HEIG's Confidentiality Policy.

Thank you for your interest in HEIG/IREX activities.

Sincerely,

Dr. Abdallah Abdallah

Chief of Party, IREX

Higher Education for Innovation and Growth (HEIG) Activity

SCHEDULE A

SECTION I: FUNDING OPPORTUNITY DESCRIPTION

The HEIG Activity is a 5-year program funded by the United States Department of State (DOS) and implemented by IREX. HEIG is advancing Jordan's higher education system as a driver of innovation, employability, and economic growth. After establishing strong foundations in the Sustainable Agri-Food Security Sector in Years 1 and 2, Year 3 is expanding into the Medical Manufacturing and Digital Growth and Security sectors, engaging new universities and deepening collaboration between HEIs, industry, and government to drive graduate employment and research-led innovations. This work is carried out in close partnership with the Government of Jordan and with beneficiaries, emphasizing co-design and delivery of interventions that directly improve graduate employability and foster innovation, both key strategic objectives of the Ministry of Education strategic plan and Economic Modernization Vision for Jordan.

Higher Education for Innovation and Growth (HEIG) Activity is establishing a Catalytic Collaboration Cluster (C³) in the **Medical Manufacturing** Sector. This cluster works as a platform that brings together HEIs, private sector, community, and government stakeholders related to Jordan's pharmaceutical and medical manufacturing industry to identify opportunities for sustainable partnerships that strengthen HEI's role in addressing Jordan's workforce and innovation needs. Through the creation of this Cluster, HEIG aims to help stakeholders work together such that Jordanian industry problems and opportunities are resolved by Jordanian HEIs.

To maintain an open innovative environment, HEIG will select a dedicated Cluster Lead Organization that will act as the leading arm for the implementation of cluster activity in close cooperation with the elected Cluster Chairs and HEIG team to actively broker partnerships between private sector enterprises and Higher Education Institutions, coordinate meetings, facilitate operations, and ensure effective communication. The Cluster Lead will develop a pipeline of partnership opportunities for HEIG's Partnership Incubator Fund (PIF), leveraging local networks and partnerships to support all cluster activities and promote sustainability within the Medical Manufacturing sector. The Cluster Lead Organization will also handle logistics and organization while collaborating closely with cluster leadership.

This platform will align with the objectives of the Higher Education for Innovation and Growth (HEIG) Activity, fostering innovation, partnerships, and investments in the medical manufacturing sector. The platform will highlight best practices, showcase success stories, and provide tools for collaboration, funding opportunities, and industry engagement.

Scope of Work

Through this Request for Applications (RFA), HEIG seeks to engage a qualified Cluster Lead Organization to serve as the operational backbone for the Medical Manufacturing Cluster, building on the collaborative model established in the Agri-Food Security Sector, for a two (2) year period. The selected organization will act as the Cluster Secretariat and Partnership Broker, responsible for actively identifying and brokering partnerships between private sector enterprises and Higher Education Institutions, building a pipeline of partnership opportunities for HEIG's Partnership

Incubator Fund (PIF), coordinating all cluster activities, facilitating stakeholder engagement, managing communications, and ensuring the long-term sustainability of the cluster platform.

Program Objectives

The Cluster Lead Organization shall support the achievement of the following objectives:

- **Operational Excellence:** Establish and maintain efficient cluster operations through dedicated staffing, resource allocation, and adherence to standard operating procedures (SOPs).
- **Partnership Brokerage and Pipeline Development:** Actively identify private sector needs and match them with HEI capabilities to develop a continuous pipeline of structured partnership opportunities. The CLO will serve as hub through which partnership concepts are developed, structured, and potentially submitted for consideration under HEIG's Partnership Incubator Fund (PIF), across both short-term transactional engagements and longer-term strategic collaborations.
- **Stakeholder Engagement:** Facilitate meaningful participation from Higher Education Institutions (HEIs), private sector, government, and civil society stakeholders in cluster activities and decision-making processes.
- **Knowledge Sharing:** Promote the exchange of best practices, research findings, and innovative solutions among cluster members.
- **Digital Innovation:** Support the design, development, and operationalization of a digital platform that enables collaboration, networking, and resource sharing, including a partnership pipeline tracker that provides visibility into the status of partnership opportunities from identification through funding and implementation.
- **Sustainability:** Develop and implement strategies to ensure the cluster's continuity beyond the HEIG project lifecycle through partnerships, resource mobilization, and institutional embedding.

Anticipated Results

The selected Cluster Lead Organization will be responsible for achieving the following results during the two-year period of performance:

Private Sector Engagement

- Identify, recruit, and maintain active engagement with a minimum of **30 private sector enterprises** in the Medical Manufacturing sector through the convening of 5-7 cluster meetings per year. Expected target attendance of 20 private sector members per meeting.
- Ensure private sector members are actively contributing to cluster work, demonstrated by participation in at least 2 working groups or co-design activities per year, provision of technical input or data, and/or involvement in defined joint initiatives.
- Beyond participation in cluster meetings, the CLO shall conduct targeted demand-mapping activities — including one-on-one consultations, site visits, and industry roundtables — to systematically identify private sector needs, challenges, and

partnership-ready opportunities twice a year. Each demand-mapping cycle should yield at least 2–3 actionable partnership leads that enter the brokerage pipeline.

Active Cluster Participation

- Build and sustain a cluster network of at least **50 active organizations** (including HEIs, private sector firms, government entities, and civil society organizations) who regularly contribute to cluster initiatives. Expected attendance at 4 cluster meetings per year.
- Facilitate consistent participation through meetings, working groups, events, and collaborative projects. Members should send a representative to attend 80% of meetings and participate in at least one working group, event or collaborative project.

Partnership Pipeline Development and Brokerage

The CLO shall establish and maintain an active partnership development and brokerage function that supports collaboration between higher education institutions and private sector actors in the Medical Manufacturing sector. As part of this role, the CLO shall develop **4 partnership project briefs aligned with the 2 below tracks** ((Check Annex 2 for Illustrative Examples), positioning them for a potential proposal submission once the **HEIG Partnership Incubator Fund (PIF) call for the Medical Manufacturing sector is announced**. In addition, throughout the life of this agreement, the CLO shall **continuously cultivate and maintain a pipeline of at least 4 additional partnership concepts** between HEIs and industry actors, serving as a facilitation hub that brokers relationships, supports partnership design, and prepares emerging collaborations for future PIF or other funding opportunities.

- **Track 1: Short-Term Transactional Partnerships (3–8 months)**

These are focused, time-bound engagements addressing a specific private sector need or opportunity through a defined HEI contribution. The CLO shall identify, and structure these as standardized Partnership Briefs to HEIG for review.

- **Track 2: Longer-Term Strategic Partnerships (12–18 months)**

These are deeper, multi-dimensional collaborations that address systemic sector needs and involve sustained engagement between one or more private sector partners and HEIs. The CLO will identify and cultivate potential opportunities.

Pipeline Performance Targets:

- **Active Pipeline:** Maintain an active pipeline of at least 2 partnership opportunities under development each year.
- **Co-Investment:** Ensure each submitted partnership includes documented private sector co-investment commitment (financial or in-kind).
- Facilitate the formation of at least four new formal partnerships between Higher Education Institutions and private sector or other stakeholders to support collaboration in areas such as applied research, technology development, curriculum improvement, student training opportunities, or other activities that strengthen links between academia and industry.

Private Investment Mobilization

- Structure co-investment and cost-sharing models for each brokered partnership, ensuring that every Partnership Brief submitted to HEIG includes a defined private sector contribution (minimum 30%). The CLO shall support partners in identifying and committing financial resources, in-kind contributions, laboratory access, equipment, or staff time.
- Connect cluster members to external funding sources — including government programs, international donor instruments, and development finance — to supplement member contributions and bridge the sector’s identified funding gap. Support cluster members in identifying co-investment and cost-sharing opportunities that leverage HEIG resources to unlock additional private and public investment.

Operational Digital Platform Adopted by Cluster Members

- Support the design and early operationalization of a digital collaboration platform that enables industry-HEI engagement, resource sharing, and visibility of cluster initiatives. The platform shall include a partnership pipeline dashboard that tracks the status of all identified partnership opportunities (identified → in development → submitted → under review → funded → active → completed), accessible to HEIG and cluster leadership. Ensure the platform is adopted by at least 50% of active cluster members and generates documented cases of matchmaking, partnership formation, or evidence-based decision-making within the first year of operation.

Partnership Sustainability

- Cluster Sustainability Modelling: Conduct financial and business modelling to determine the long-term operating costs of cluster facilitation and identify viable revenue streams, cost-sharing options, and investment pathways. Deliver a sustainability model that outlines how the cluster can remain financially viable and institutionally embedded beyond the HEIG project lifecycle.
- Contribute to the initiation of **collaborations** among cluster participants and facilitate the launch of collaboration initiatives among cluster participants and provide ongoing coaching and oversight to ensure these collaborations are sustained and continue to operate effectively **well beyond their first year**.
- Develop cluster mechanisms and support structures that enable partnerships to thrive independently.

Trust Building

- Contribute to a measurable **improvement in trust levels** between Higher Education Institutions and private sector partners using the Activity’s approach and tools to capture trust improvement.
- Foster an environment of transparency, mutual respect, and shared value creation among all cluster stakeholders.

Result Area	Key Targets
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Private Sector Engagement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Engage ≥30 private sector companies in the medical manufacturing sector. • Convene 5–7 cluster meetings annually (≈20 participants per meeting). • Private sector members participate in ≥2 working groups or co-design activities annually. • Demand-mapping activities generate 2–3 partnership leads per cycle.
Active Cluster Participation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Maintain a cluster network of ≥50 active organizations (HEIs, companies, government, CSOs). • Hold ≥4 cluster meetings per year. • Members attend ≈80% of meetings and participate in ≥1 working group or collaboration activity.
Partnership Pipeline Development & Brokerage	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop and submit ≥4 Partnership Briefs. • Maintain ≥4 additional partnership concepts in the pipeline

USG Regulations:

[Department of State Standard Terms and Conditions](#) and [2 CFR 200](#) Unified Administrative Requirements Subpart A through E apply.

SECTION II: AWARD INFORMATION

Subject to the availability of funds, IREX expects to award one (1) subaward, ranging up to \$ [150,000 USD] (106,200 JOD). The total amount available is \$150,000 USD (106,200 JOD). The expected duration of IREX’s support or the period of performance is twenty months with an anticipated start date of May or June 2026. HEIG/IREX reserves the right to fund any or none of the applications submitted.

SECTION III: ELIGIBILITY INFORMATION

The applicant/application must meet the following requirements:

- Be officially registered and working in compliance with all applicable civil and fiscal regulations, including, but not limited to pertinent local laws and status.
- Be officially registered as a legal entity and working in compliance with all applicable local laws. An applicant can show proof of effort to secure registration.
- Proposal meets the project’s objectives and principles of the expected Scope of Work with documented experience in multi-stakeholder coordination within the Medical Manufacturing sector.
- Proposal contains expected outcomes and results consistent with and linked to the project’s objectives.
- Applicant is not a debarred organization.

Types of Eligible Subawardees:

- Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs)
- Private Enterprises
- Civil Service Organizations (CSOs)
- Sector Specific Industry Professional Associations
- Chambers of Commerce
- Other entities with demonstrated experience in multi-stakeholder coordination within medical manufacturing or related sectors

SECTION IV: APPLICATION AND SUBMISSION INFORMATION

Schedule of Events:

The following schedule applies to this RFA but may change in accordance with IREX's needs or unforeseen circumstances. Changes in this timeline will be announced as a formal modification to the RFA.

LINE	TIME	DATE	STEP
A	17:00, Jordan time	April 1, 2026	Deadline for requesting clarifications from IREX. Questions must be submitted via email to grants.heig@irex.org .
B	17:00, Jordan time	April 5, 2026	Estimated date for issuance of any clarifications by IREX. All questions will be answered in one document inclusive of a link to view the information session recording and shared with all applicants.
C	17:00, Jordan time	April 23, 2026	Deadline for submission of applications. Applications must be submitted via email to grants.heig@irex.org .

Any questions concerning this RFA should be submitted in writing not later than **April 1, 2026** to Grants.HEIG@irex.org. Applicants should retain for their records one copy of all enclosures which accompany their application.

The application must be received at the HEIG/IREX's email indicated below no later than the closing date listed on the front page of this RFA. Pre-award costs are not allowable and will not be reimbursed. An application and modifications thereof shall be submitted in electronic format to the following address: Grants.HEIG@irex.org

Applicants are required to clearly indicate the RFA number and organization name in the email subject line as follows:

IREX/HEIG/RFA/004/2026 – [Your Organization Name] Application Submission

Failure to follow this format may affect the timely processing of the application.

The application must be submitted in electronic form. The complete application packet must be submitted in the required format with the required attachments.

- a. Application form – Attachment I
- b. Budget Template – Attachment II
- c. UEI number if available (*Please see below for more information on UEI number)
- d. Letters of support from key stakeholders and partners
- e. Organizational registration documents and CVs of key personnel

***IMPORTANT:** Any applicant selected for funding under this RFA must apply for and receive a Unique Entity Identifier (UEI) number prior to the signing of a Fund Agreement with HEIG. While not a requirement for submission of an application under this RFA, HEIG encourages all interested organizations to begin the UEI application as early as possible as this represents a US Government requirement for award funding. Though the registration process is free, it is important to note that it might take some time and potential applicants are invited to apply as possible.

The UEI Number process can be initiated at: <https://login.gov/>

HEIG may provide guidance to the applicant selected for funding in obtaining their UEI Number but is unable to directly intervene in UEI application processes.

Restrictions:

- Subaward funds provided under the terms of this RFA shall not be used to procure goods or services from suppliers that may be identified on the USG consolidated list of debarred, suspended or ineligible contractors at <http://www.sam.gov/>.
- Any purchases or activities deemed unnecessary to successfully complete the activity, including any subawardee headquarters' expenses that are not directly linked to the implementation of the proposed project.
- Previous obligations and/or bad debts.
- Fines and /or penalties.
- Other costs unallowable as referenced [2 CFR 200 Subpart E](#) Cost Principles.

Funding Restrictions:

- Subaward funds provided under the terms of this RFA shall not be used to procure goods or services from suppliers that may be identified on the USG consolidated list of debarred, suspended or ineligible contractors at <http://www.sam.gov/>.
- Any purchases or activities deemed unnecessary to successfully complete the activity, including any subawardee headquarters expenses that are not directly linked to the implementation of the proposed project.
- Previous obligations and/or bad debts.
- Fines and /or penalties.

- Other costs unallowable as referenced 2 CFR 200 Subpart E Cost Principles.

None of the funds awarded under this RFA may be made available for subawards, direct financial support, or otherwise used to provide any payment or transfer to the United Nations Relief and Works Agency (UNRWA).

Late Application:

Late applications are marked as “late” and are ineligible for review or award; however, IREX reserves the right to accept and include late applications in the review and award process when it is considered within the best interest of IREX to do so and if applications that were received on time have not been opened and reviewed. Applications that are submitted late or incomplete run the risk of not being considered for review.

SECTION V: APPLICATION REVIEW INFORMATION

The application will be evaluated according to the evaluation criteria set out below. To the extent necessary (if an award is not made based on initial applications), negotiations may be conducted with each applicant whose application, after discussion and negotiation, has a reasonable chance of being selected for an award.

Evaluation Criteria:

a. Technical Merit (60 points)

- ✓ Private Sector Engagement Capacity: The applicant's existing relationships and networks with private sector enterprises in the Medical Manufacturing sector, including current memberships and partnerships. The proposed strategy for recruiting and maintaining meaningful engagement with at least 30 private sector enterprises, ensuring active participation rather than superficial involvement, and capacity to support the platform operationalization. Applicants must provide evidence of these networks (e.g., active MOUs, letters of support, or past joint-project portfolios). The proposal must outline a strategy for recruiting and maintaining meaningful engagement with at least 30 private sector enterprises, distinguishing between passive membership and active participation, and approach for operationalizing the platform.
- ✓ Stakeholder Mobilization and Network Building: The applicant's ability to convene diverse actors including HEIs, government agencies, civil society organizations, and private sector firms. The proposed approach for building and sustaining a network of at least 50 active organizations through meetings, working groups, events, and collaborative projects. The applicant must detail the approach for building a network of at least 50 active organizations and include quantitative evidence of past mobilization efforts (e.g., previous working group outcomes, event attendance metrics, or collaborative project reports).
- ✓ Partnership Brokerage and Pipeline Management: The applicant's methodology for actively identifying private sector needs, matching them with HEI capabilities, and structuring partnership opportunities across both short-term transactional engagements and longer-term strategic collaborations. The applicant should

demonstrate understanding of partnership models including applied research, product co-development, technology transfer, curriculum co-design, and workforce training. The proposal should describe how the applicant will develop, manage, and track a pipeline of partnership opportunities for submission to HEIG's Partnership Incubator Fund.

- ✓ Sustainability and Long-Term Viability: The applicant's vision and plans for cluster sustainability beyond the period of performance, including mechanisms for partnerships to continue independently and self-sustaining operational and financial models. Institutional commitment, alignment with organizational mission, and proposed governance structures for long-term continuity.
 - ✓ Relevance to program goals.
 - ✓ Anticipated impact on the beneficiaries.
 - ✓ Creativity of approach.

b. Past Performance / Organizational Capacity 20 points

The applicant's reputation and credibility within the Medical Manufacturing sector, recognition as a trusted convener by stakeholders, organizational structure including staffing and financial management capabilities, and track record in managing multi-stakeholder initiatives involving HEIs, private sector, and government entities. The applicant must include letters of recommendation from key stakeholders and/or contact information for professional references.

- ✓ Past performance in similar projects.
- ✓ Relevant staff skills pertaining to the proposed project. Proposed staff must demonstrate experience in partnership development, business matchmaking, or deal facilitation between private enterprises and academic or research institutions, preferably with expertise in the pharmaceutical, medical device, or medical manufacturing sector. Experience in demand mapping, pipeline management, or investment brokerage is a strong advantage.
- ✓ Experience in the geographical region.
- ✓ Written accounting and procurement procedures.
- ✓ Capacity to adhere to DOS compliance provisions and guidelines.

c. Feasibility and Cost Effectiveness 20 points

- ✓ Are costs reasonable, allowable, and allocable.
- ✓ Is the application cost effective.
- ✓ Demonstrates cost share or leveraging, where applicable.

SECTION VI: AWARD AND ADMINISTRATION INFORMATION

The recommendation or selection of an application in accordance with established procedures does not guarantee an award. All applicants must demonstrate that they possess, or have the

ability to obtain, the necessary management competence to practice mutually agreed upon methods of accountability for funds and other assets provided.

A successful applicant can expect to receive an Award Letter, signed by the program. The award letter will be addressed to the organization's point of contact as stated in the application. Applicants that were not successful can expect a letter explaining the reason for their unsuccessful application.

Following the Award Letter, final negotiations will take place before the signing of a subaward agreement.

Reporting Procedures:

A description of reporting requirements will be included in the Subaward Agreement. The types of reporting required, along with the schedule of reporting, will depend on the subaward agreement and project duration. Reporting forms will be provided to subaward recipients. Types of reporting will include the following:

- Program report to be submitted during project implementation according to a schedule described in the subaward agreement. This report will include a description of progress made during the period, problems in project implementation; actions taken to overcome them; and activities planned for the next period.
- Final program report will describe how the project objectives and goals were reached, results of the project, and problems and solutions during implementation.
- Financial reports will be submitted according to a schedule described in the subaward agreements. The types of financial reports, as well as the schedule of reporting, will depend on the type of subaward, length of the project, and amount of funding. In addition, the subawardee is required to submit a detailed Final Financial Report.

Issuance of the final installment of subaward funds is contingent upon HEIG's receipt and acceptance of Final Financial and Final Program Reports.

SECTION VII: OTHER INFORMATION

Issuance of this RFA does not constitute an award or commitment on the part of IREX, nor does it commit HEIG/IREX to pay for costs incurred in the preparation and submission of an application.

IREX reserves the right to fund any or none of the applications submitted. Further, IREX reserves the right to make no awards as a result of this RFA.

Annex 1: Standard Terms and Conditions

- U.S. Department of State Standard Terms and Conditions ([Final FY26 - Standard Terms and Conditions for Federal Awards](#))
- 2 CFR 200 Uniformed Administrative Requirements Subpart A-through E ([eCFR :: 2 CFR Part 200 Subpart E -- Cost Principles](#)).
- 2 CFR 600 The Uniform Administrative Requirements, Cost Principles, and Audit Requirements for Federal Awards (<https://www.ecfr.gov/current/title-2/subtitle-B/chapter-VI/part-600>)
- 2 CFR 601 Nonprocurement Debarment and Suspension (<https://www.ecfr.gov/current/title-2/subtitle-B/chapter-VI/part-601>)

Annex 2

Partnerships Tracks

Track 1: Short-Term Transactional Partnerships (3–8 months)

These are focused, time-bound engagements addressing a specific private sector need or opportunity through a defined HEI contribution. The CLO shall identify, and structure these as standardized Partnership Briefs to HEIG for review.

Illustrative examples:

- *A pharmaceutical company partners with a university chemistry or pharmacy department to conduct bioequivalence testing or analytical method validation for a generic drug product, using the university's laboratory facilities and faculty expertise.*
- *A medical device manufacturer engages an engineering faculty to prototype and test a locally adapted medical device component (e.g., a surgical tool housing or a diagnostic device casing), with the university providing 3D printing, materials testing, and design-for-manufacturing support.*
- *A biosimilar producer commissions a university biotechnology lab to conduct cell line characterization or stability studies for a biosimilar candidate, building toward regulatory submission readiness.*
- *An industry association partners with multiple HEIs to develop and deliver a short-cycle specialized training program (e.g., Good Manufacturing Practices, regulatory affairs, or quality assurance) for current university students seeking upskilling, with curricula co-designed by industry and academia.*

Track 2: Longer-Term Strategic Partnerships (12–24 months)

These are deeper, multi-dimensional collaborations that address systemic sector needs and involve sustained engagement between one or more private sector partners and HEIs. The CLO will identify and cultivate potential opportunities. .

Illustrative examples:

- *A company or a consortium of pharmaceutical companies' partners with two or three universities to establish a shared biosimilar development pilot facility, including joint investment in laboratory infrastructure, a multi-year research agenda, student placement pathways, and a technology transfer framework leading to commercial-scale production readiness.*
- *A medical device cluster partners with engineering and biomedical faculties across multiple HEIs to co-design a new undergraduate specialization track in medical device design and manufacturing, including embedded industry internships,*

capstone projects on real product challenges, and an industry certification pathway — with the aim of producing the first cohort of graduates within 24 months.

- *An industry partners, working with a university's school of pharmacy and regulatory affairs experts, jointly develop industry-academia regulatory sciences center of excellence, providing regulatory pathway advisory services, dossier preparation training, and a shared regulatory intelligence database that serves both academic research and commercial product registration needs.*
- *A pharmaceutical manufacturer partners with a university's schools of pharmacy and engineering to co-develop a continuous manufacturing process for a high-demand generic medication, including process design research, scale-up piloting, workforce training for continuous manufacturing operations, and a joint IP-sharing agreement.*

Annex 3

Partnership Briefs Structure

- **Partnership Title and Track** – Working title and identification as Track 1 (transactional, 3–8 months) or Track 2 (strategic, 12–24 months).
- **Private Sector Need / Problem Statement** – The specific industry challenge, gap, or market opportunity that the partnership will address, based on demand-mapping activities.
- **HEI Name, Role, and Contribution** – The role of the Higher Education Institution, such as:
 - Faculty expertise and relevant departments, labs, or research groups
 - Use of laboratories, infrastructure, or equipment
 - Student engagement (capstone projects, internships, thesis research, or work placements)
 - Curriculum or training development (if applicable)
 - Quality assurance, documentation, or technical oversight
- **Private Sector Name, Role, and Contribution** – The role of the private sector partner, including:
 - Industry challenge definition and market context
 - Co-investment (cash or in-kind contributions such as materials, data, equipment, or staff time)
 - Technical input, standards, and regulatory considerations
 - Plan for applying results (e.g., product development, hiring, manufacturing, or scaling)
 - Commercialization or market access pathway, if relevant
- **Mutual Value Proposition** – Clear benefits for both partners. The brief should demonstrate a two-way partnership, where the HEI contributes knowledge and talent while the private sector provides real market engagement and application opportunities.
- **Scope of Work and Deliverables** – Key activities and outputs with timelines.
- **Timeline and Milestones** – Milestone schedule linking deliverables to key dates and disbursement points.
- **Budget Summary** – High-level budget table showing:
 - Total partnership cost
 - Funding requested
 - Private sector contribution
- **Alignment with Cluster Priorities** – Explanation of how the partnership supports cluster priorities (e.g., innovation-to-market pipelines, biosimilars development, workforce readiness, regulatory strengthening, or medical device development).

PUBLIC NOTICE

REQUEST FOR APPLICATIONS (RFA)
for Higher Education for Innovation and Growth (HEIG) Activity

Issuance Date: March 24, 2026

Closing Date: April 23, 2026

I. SUMMARY

The Activity is a 5-year program funded by the United States Department of State (DOS) and implemented by IREX. HEIG is advancing Jordan's higher education system as a driver of innovation, employability, and economic growth. After establishing strong foundations in the Sustainable Agri-Food Security Sector in Years 1 and 2, HEIG Year 3 is expanding into the Medical Manufacturing and Digital Growth and Security sectors, engaging new universities and deepening collaboration between HEIs, industry, and government to drive graduate employment and research-led innovations. This work is carried out in close partnership with the Government of Jordan and with beneficiaries, emphasizing co-design and delivery of interventions that directly improve graduate employability and foster innovation, both key strategic objectives of the Ministry of Education strategic plan and Economic Modernization Vision for Jordan.

Higher Education for Innovation and Growth (HEIG) Activity is establishing a Catalytic Collaboration Cluster (C³) in the **Medical Manufacturing** Sector. This cluster works as a platform that brings together HEIs, private sector, community, and government stakeholders related to Jordan's pharmaceutical and medical manufacturing industry to identify opportunities for sustainable partnerships that strengthen HEI's role in addressing Jordan's workforce and innovation needs. Through the creation of this Cluster, HEIG aims to help stakeholders work together such that Jordanian industry problems and opportunities are resolved by Jordanian HEIs.

II. PURPOSE

This RFA is seeking applicants to propose effective approaches to act as a dedicated Cluster Lead organization that will act as the leading arm for the implementation of cluster activity in close cooperation with the elected Cluster Chairs and HEIG team to actively broker partnerships between private sector enterprises and Higher Education Institutions, coordinate meetings, facilitate operations, and ensure effective communication. The Cluster Lead will develop and manage a pipeline of partnership opportunities for HEIG's Partnership Incubator Fund (PIF), leveraging local networks and partnerships to support all cluster activities and promote sustainability within the Medical Manufacturing sector. The Cluster Lead organization will also handle logistics and organization while collaborating closely with cluster leadership.

III. LOCATION OF ACTIVITIES

The geographic focus under consideration includes the following countries for regional activities:
Jordan

IV. PROGRAM OBJECTIVES

The Cluster Lead Organization shall support the achievement of the following objectives:

- **Operational Excellence:** Establish and maintain efficient cluster operations through dedicated staffing, resource allocation, and adherence to standard operating procedures (SOPs).
- **Stakeholder Engagement:** Facilitate meaningful participation from HEIs, private sector, government, and civil society stakeholders in cluster activities and decision-making processes.
- **Knowledge Sharing:** Promote the exchange of best practices, research findings, and innovative solutions among cluster members.
- **Digital Innovation:** Support the design, development, and operationalization of a digital platform that enables collaboration, networking, and resource sharing, including a partnership pipeline tracker that provides visibility into the status of partnership opportunities from identification through funding and implementation.
- **Sustainability:** Develop and implement strategies to ensure the cluster's continuity beyond the HEIG project lifecycle through partnerships, resource mobilization, and institutional embedding.

V. APPLICANTS ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA

The applicant/application must meet the following requirements:

- Be officially registered and working in compliance with all applicable civil and fiscal regulations, including, but not limited to pertinent local laws and status.
- Be officially registered as a legal entity and working in compliance with all applicable local laws. An applicant can show proof of effort to secure registration.
- Proposal meets the project's objectives and principles of the expected Scope of Work with documented experience in multi-stakeholder coordination within the Medical Manufacturing sector.
- Proposal contains expected outcomes and results consistent with and linked to the project's objectives.
- Applicant is not a debarred organization.
- Received a U.S. government Unique Entity ID (UEI) from SAM.gov.

VII. AWARD INFORMATION

Subject to the availability of funds, IREX expects to award one (1) subaward, ranging up to \$ 150,000 USD. The total amount available is \$150,000 USD (106,200 JOD). The expected duration of IREX's support or the period of performance is twenty months with an anticipated start date of May or June 2026. HEIG/IREX reserves the right to fund any or none of the applications submitted.

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VIII. CONTACT INFORMATION

Please contact the following to receive the Request for Application and the application packet:

Grants.HEIG@irex.org

Applicants are required to clearly indicate the RFA number and organization name in the email subject line as follows:

IREX/HEIG/RFA/004/2026 – [Your Organization Name] Application Submission.

Failure to follow this format may affect the timely processing of the application.