



REQUEST FOR APPLICATIONS (RFA)

for the Higher Education for Innovation and Growth Activity

Issuance Date: April 13, 2026

Closing Date: June 9, 2026

Closing Time: 17:00 Amman, Jordan Time

Subject: Request for Applications (RFA), Number *IREX/HEIG/RFA/003/2026*
Higher Education for Innovation and Growth (HEIG) - **Partnership Incubator Fund (PIF) – Digital Growth and Security Cluster – Faith-based Tourism (including Christian Tourism)**

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

This Request for Applications outlines the information required from the applicant for the development and submission of a proposal 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.

This Request for Applications (RFA) seeks to mobilize two innovative, demand-driven partnerships between Jordanian higher education institutions (HEIs) and private sector stakeholders in the Digital Growth and Security sector with a focus on supporting Faith-based Tourism (including Christian Tourism) as a sub sector. While Digital Growth and Security serves as a cross-cutting enabler across all sectors, this RFA specifically targets its application within the Faith-based Tourism sector through workforce development, innovation, and digitally enabled visitor experience solutions.

Under the HEIG project, the recently approved Digital Growth and Security sector represents a strategic opportunity to catalyze development across multiple industries. By positioning this sector as an enabler rather than a standalone focus, the Catalytic Collaboration Cluster can effectively support various sub-sectors, with the Faith-based Tourism sector identified as a priority for immediate attention. This RFA focuses on fostering collaboration between private-sector stakeholders and higher education institutions to enhance graduate readiness through industry-aligned curricula, work-based learning opportunities, and experiential placements across the Faith-based Tourism value chain, or advance applied research and development initiatives that drive innovation in heritage site digitization, digital marketing and destination promotion, visitor experience technologies, data-driven tourism management, digital inclusion and accessibility, and secure tourism operation. This approach ensures that the Digital Growth and Security sector's capabilities—including digital marketing, cybersecurity, data analytics, and technological innovation—are strategically leveraged to unlock the full potential of Faith-based Tourism as a growth sector within Jordan's national economy.

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, and Annexes.

Issuance of this RFA does not constitute an award commitment on the part of HEIG/IREX nor does it commit HEIG/IREX to pay for 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.

Thank you for your interest in HEIG/IREX activities.

Sincerely,

Dr. Abdallah Abdallah

Chief of Party

Higher Education for Innovation and Growth (HEIG)

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ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS

ADS	Automated Directives system
BPWA	Business and Professional Women Association
C3	Catalytic Collaboration Cluster
CBOs	Community Based Organizations
CSOs	Civil Society Organizations
CFR	Code of Federal Regulations
FAR	Federal Acquisition Regulation
HEI	Higher Education Institution
HEIG	Higher Education for Innovation and Growth Activity
IREX	International Research and Exchange Board
MTDC	Modified Total Direct Costs
NGOs	Non-Governmental Organizations
NICRA	Negotiated Indirect Cost Rate Agreement
OFAC	Office of Foreign Assets Control
PIF	Partnership Incubator Fund
Q&A	Question and Answer
RFA	Request for Applications
SAM	System of Award Management
SNP	Specific Needs Partnerships

SWP	Sector-wide Partnerships
U.S.	United States
UEI	Unique Entity Identifier
DoS	U.S. Department of State
USD	United States Dollars
USG	United States Government

SCHEDULE A

SECTION I: FUNDING OPPORTUNITY DESCRIPTION

The Higher Education for Innovation and Growth Activity (HEIG) is a 5-year program funded by the United States Department of State (DOS) and implemented by the International Research & Exchanges Board (IREX), headquartered in Washington, DC, USA. It additionally convenes the Business and Professional Women Association (BPWA), Integrated International, and Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University (Virginia Tech) in its implementing consortium. HEIG aims to activate higher education institutions (HEIs) as key drivers of innovation and economic growth. The implementation timeline for HEIG is October 17, 2023 – October 16, 2028.

HEIG seeks to create an ecosystem where Jordanian HEIs provide quality, market-relevant, student-centered education, and foster innovation for economic growth through research-led partnerships with industry that bridge the gap between supply and demand.

Working within, between, and beyond HEIs, HEIG will strengthen workforce and innovation ecosystems and activate HEIs as effective and trusted actors within them. The activity has three main pillars:

1. Establishing effective and sustainable platforms for collaboration among HEIs, the private sector, youth, community, and government stakeholders, through the establishment of a Partnership Incubator, a Partnership Incubator Fund (PIF), and a series of sector-focused Catalytic Collaboration Clusters.
2. Strengthening the performance of HEIs' core functions (teaching and learning, research, engagement) in selected sectors through provision of material and technical assistance.
3. Supporting the development of a supportive and aligned policy environment that promotes HEI collaboration for innovation and growth.

The Monitoring and Evaluation and Learning framework designed for the HEIG Activity is crafted to operate on a results-based approach emphasizing the importance of achieving and assessing outcomes. **Annex 2** highlights some of the key indicators that the HEIG program uses to track its performance.

THE CATALYTIC COLLABORATION CLUSTER: DIGITAL GROWTH AND SECURITY – FAITH-BASED TOURISM

In support of the objectives stated above, HEIG has initiated a **Catalytic Collaboration Cluster (C3) in the Digital Growth and Security sector**. Recognizing the sector's role as a cross-cutting enabler of economic transformation, and in alignment with Jordan's Economic Modernization Vision and the Government of Jordan's strategic priorities, the Cluster is strategically applying its digital innovation and cybersecurity capabilities to priority national sectors.

As an initial focus, the Cluster is working to support the advancement of **Faith-based Tourism** (including Christian Tourism) through a partnership between private sector and a higher education institution. The partnership would promote digital enablement, data-driven solutions, cybersecurity enhancement, and/or a technology-based visitor experience innovation.

The Cluster brings together HEIs, private sector actors, community stakeholders, and relevant government entities to identify opportunities for sustainable partnerships that strengthen the role of Jordanian higher education institutions in addressing national workforce and innovation needs.

Through the creation of this Cluster, HEIG aims to ensure that Jordanian industry challenges and growth opportunities — particularly those requiring digital transformation and security solutions — are addressed through applied research, innovation, and talent development led by Jordanian HEIs.

For workforce and innovation ecosystem actors, the Digital Growth and Security C3 will:

- Facilitate knowledge exchange among stakeholders to promote best practices in digital technologies, cybersecurity, and sector-specific digital transformation applications.
- Provide structured opportunities for sharing and discussing data on digital demand trends, HEI outputs in technology-related disciplines, emerging digital innovations, and sector use cases such as Faith-based Tourism.
- Support and incentivize strategic partnerships between industry actors, academic institutions, and government agencies to leverage digital expertise and resources.
- Actively engage stakeholders in identifying shared value propositions and designing collaborative interventions that apply digital growth and security solutions to priority economic sectors.

THE PARTNERSHIP INCUBATOR FUND (PIF)

The Partnership Incubator Fund (PIF) is a catalytic financing mechanism designed to mobilize and de-risk demand-driven partnerships between the private sector and Jordanian HEIs.

PIF supports partnerships that:

- Are led by private sector demand;
- Substantially involve one or more Jordanian HEIs;
- Address workforce, productivity, or innovation needs; and
- Establish sustainable collaboration models beyond the grant period.

PURPOSE

The purpose of this RFA is to invite applicants to develop proposals for effective partnerships, described below, between HEIs and organizations in the Digital Growth and Security private sector supporting the Faith-based Tourism industry in line with HEIG Activity objectives:

Partnership Types:

All partnerships must include at least one private sector organization and one Jordanian HEI within the Digital Growth and Security Catalytic Collaborative Cluster (C3) and the partnership proposal should focus on driving the digital transformation of the Faith-based Tourism industry. To be eligible, applicants must apply under one of two focuses for the type of partnership:

- **Sector-Wide Partnerships (SWP):** Partnerships addressing shared challenges or opportunities affecting a broad segment of the sector, typically involving multiple firms or a representative body. These initiatives generate collective, non-competitive benefits such as workforce alignment, applied research, or policy-relevant improvements.
- **Specific Needs Partnerships (SNP):** Partnerships addressing clearly defined technical or commercial needs of one firm or a limited consortium of firms. These initiatives typically generate firm-specific value and may involve confidential or competitive elements.

Examples of Areas of Intervention:

Applicants should select the category (SWP or SNP) that best fits their proposed approach.

Sector-Wide Partnerships (SWP) – Illustrative Interventions:

These interventions address shared sector challenges and generate collective benefit, such as:

- Facilitating employer engagement in curricular design or improvement for digital tourism technologies, e.g., digital visitor experience platforms, smart destination management systems, online booking and CRM systems, cybersecurity for tourism operations, and data analytics for Bethany Beyond the Jordan, Mt. Nebo, and Madaba heritage sites.
- Piloting of digital tourism courses, modules, or micro-credentials within existing HEI programs, using Faith-based Tourism, including Christian Tourism, as the applied learning context. Pilots may include new courses in tourism technology, digital marketing for destinations, data analytics for visitor management, or cybersecurity for hospitality—embedded within tourism, IT, business, or hospitality faculties with potential for scaling to other tourism markets.
- Enabling employer engagement in education delivery through guest lectures and co-teaching by digital tourism solution providers, cybersecurity firms serving the hospitality sector, and tech companies specializing in heritage digitization and virtual pilgrimage experiences.
- Supporting experiential and/or work-based learning placements at tech companies and digital tourism platforms (UX/UI design for tourism apps, data analytics practicum, cybersecurity operations, digital marketing, e-commerce for tourism).
- Fostering inclusive bridges between students, graduates, and employers in digital tourism and tech-enabled heritage services, including internship-to-employment pipelines for software developers, data analysts, digital marketers, cybersecurity specialists, and IT support roles serving the tourism sector.
- Tailoring responsive training services for Faith-based Tourism businesses on digital transformation (digital payment systems, online booking platforms, CRM implementation,

social media marketing, basic cybersecurity hygiene, data protection compliance under Jordan's PDPL).

- Leading tailored responsive research services for digital tourism applications (visitor behavior analytics, conversion optimization for online bookings, cybersecurity threat assessment for tourism SMEs, digital accessibility audits, AI-powered personalization for pilgrimage experiences).
- Facilitating evidence-based digital policy reform relevant to tourism technology (e-commerce regulations for tourism, data protection standards for visitor information, digital payment frameworks, cybersecurity standards for tourism operators, digital accessibility requirements).
- Facilitating faculty capacity building by training HEI instructors on digital tourism technologies, enabling them to deliver new or updated course content.
- Facilitating student-industry applied learning projects, including capstone projects, hackathons, or innovation challenges where students develop digital solutions for real Faith-based Tourism operators.

Specific Needs Partnerships (SNP) – Illustrative Interventions:

These interventions address firm-specific technical or commercial needs, such as:

- Facilitating new or innovative digital pilgrimage/heritage tourism product development, commercialization or upscaling (e.g., AR/VR Faith-based heritage experiences, AI-powered multilingual tour guide apps, "Jordan Faith-based Heritage Circuit" digital platform co-created by a tech company, tour operator, and HEI).
- Establishing of new digital business lines for a limited partner group, e.g., a specialized pilgrimage booking and experience platform, mobile apps for faith-based travel, IoT-enabled visitor management systems, or secure digital payment solutions for pilgrimage groups.
- Developing of cybersecurity solutions for tourism operators, e.g., secure payment processing systems, customer data protection frameworks, threat monitoring for tourism websites, compliance systems for Jordan's Personal Data Protection Law (PDPL).
- Facilitating optimization of digital systems and data infrastructure for pilgrimage operations, e.g., integrated booking systems across Faith-based heritage sites, real-time visitor flow monitoring using IoT sensors, cloud-based tour management platforms, automated scheduling systems.

- Developing smart destination solutions for Faith-based heritage sites, e.g., digital wayfinding and interpretation apps, contactless visitor services, AI chatbots for pilgrim inquiries, predictive analytics for peak-season management.
- Facilitating development of solutions to local/regional digital inclusion and accessibility challenges affecting Faith-based Tourism, e.g., multilingual digital content platforms, accessible website and app design, offline-capable mobile solutions for areas with limited connectivity.
- Developing HEI-led applied research and capstone projects solving private-sector digital transformation needs in Faith-based Tourism.
- Accessing HEI R&D services such as digital prototyping, user experience testing, cybersecurity auditing, or technology performance validation for tourism applications.
- Deploying AI-powered visitor analytics, demand forecasting, personalization engines, or digital marketing automation systems customized for specific tourism operators, developed in partnership with HEI departments.

HEIG intends for this RFA to complement and connect with other relevant U.S. Government-supported efforts that advance tourism development, economic growth, digital transformation, workforce readiness, and heritage-based opportunity in Jordan. Applicants are encouraged to identify how their proposed partnerships can create synergies, coordination, knowledge-sharing, or complementarity with relevant U.S. Government-supported initiatives where appropriate and feasible.

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 **two (2) cost reimbursable subawards, ranging from \$100,000 to \$150,000**. The total amount available is \$300,000. The expected duration of IREX's support or the period of performance is a maximum of 16 months. 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 in Jordan and working in compliance with all applicable local laws. An applicant can show proof of effort to secure registration.
- Be operational in Jordan for at least 2 years.

- Meet the program’s technical objectives and principles.
- Contain expected outcomes and results consistent with and linked to the program’s objectives.
- Applicant is not a debarred organization.
- Must demonstrate financial and operational capacity to manage funds.
- Received a U.S. government Unique Entity ID (UEI) from SAM.gov or receive a UEI prior to the expected start date of the subaward, if selected.*

***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 subaward 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 U.S. 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 soon 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.

Types of Eligible Subawardees:

- Private Enterprises: Jordanian enterprises and U.S. enterprises registered and operating in Jordan.
- Non-U.S. Nongovernment Organizations (Non-U.S. NGOs).
- Community Based Organization (CBOs).
- Civil Society Organizations (CSOs).
- Professional Associations.

Partnership Requirements:

Each proposal must include:

- At least one private sector partner; and
- At least one Jordanian HEI.

Additional partners are encouraged.

Allowable Expenses:

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.

The following types/examples of direct expenses are considered allowable under this RFA;

1. Supplies and Materials: Costs associated with purchasing necessary supplies or materials required for project implementation.
2. Equipment: Costs associated with purchasing or leasing necessary equipment required for project implementation. Any single equipment item costing over 5,000 USD will require an additional approval process.
3. Services: Costs associated with purchasing necessary services from individuals or suppliers, vendors, contractors that are required for project implementation such as leasing, training, events, legal advice, technical assistance, or consulting.
4. Personnel Costs: Salaries, wages, and benefits for project staff directly involved in implementing the fund activities. These staff may be already contracted by project partners or may be duly hired to conduct project activities. Values must be in line with the job market, and contracts and payments will be audited.
5. Subawards Costs associated with carrying out part project activities.
6. Any other duly justified expenses allowable by United States Department of State (DoS).

NICRA & De-Minimis Indirect Rate:

If applicants do not have an approved Negotiated Indirect Cost Rate Agreement (NICRA), a de minimis indirect rate of 15% may be applied on all "Modified Total Direct Costs ([MTDC](#))." This rate must be used to pay for organizational indirect operating costs. Therefore, no organizational operating costs will be directly billed to this subaward. This rate must be used to pay for organizational indirect operating costs. Therefore, no organizational operating costs will be directly billed to this subaward.

Pre-award costs are not allowable and will not be reimbursed. All costs related to the development, drafting, and submission of applications in response to this RFA are the sole responsibility of the applicant.

Cost Share:

Cost share is required, which means that applicants are expected to exhibit vested interest by committing significant cash or in-kind investments towards the implementation of proposed activities. This investment is a cost share contribution, i.e. a percentage of the budget covered by the applicant or from other demonstrable sources. **The minimum acceptable cost share is 30%.**

This represents the **minimum** amount of cost share required to be eligible for award under this RFA. HEIG encourages applicants to include additional cost share wherever appropriate to strengthen their application's competitiveness.

All costs detailed in the application must be duly recorded and verified, including the cost share. Cost Share is exclusive of the requested amount for the proposed Fund. Cost Share must follow all applicable regulations and clauses in [2 CFR 200.306](#) "Cost Sharing."

Authorized Geographic Code:

The Authorized Geographic Code for the procurement of goods and services is **937**. Geographic Code 937 authorizes procurement from the United States, the cooperating country, and "low-income" and "lower-middle income" economies.

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	14:00 – 15:00, Jordan time	April 20, 2026	Information session, which will be recorded, to provide additional details about Digital Growth and Security – Faith-based Tourism Cluster RFA and to offer prospective applicants the opportunity to ask questions related to this RFA. Join: https://teams.microsoft.com/meet/21293987350545?p=508hdO0jHSr4ctYRMJ Meeting ID: 212 939 873 505 45
B	17:00, Jordan time	April 24, 2026	Passcode: EH2ze3uu <u>Deadline for requesting</u> clarifications from IREX. Questions must be submitted via email to grants.heig@irex.org .
C	17:00, Jordan time	April 27, 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 responses to applicants.
D	17:00, Jordan time	June 9, 2026	Deadline for submission of applications. Applications must be submitted via email to grants.heig@irex.org .

IREX/HEIG will conduct an information session to provide additional details about the Partnership Incubator Fund (PIF) – Digital Growth and Security – Faith-based Tourism Cluster RFA and to offer prospective applicants the opportunity to ask questions related to this RFA.

The session will be held online via Microsoft Teams on **April 20, 2026**, from **14:00 – 15:00 (Jordan time)**.

Microsoft Teams Meeting Details:

Join via link: <https://teams.microsoft.com/meet/21293987350545?p=508hdO0jHSr4ctYRMJ>

Meeting ID: 212 939 873 505 45

Passcode: EH2ze3uu

Interested applicants are encouraged to attend. The meeting will be recorded and shared with IREX responses to clarification questions.

Any further questions concerning this RFA should be submitted in writing no later than April 24, 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 IREX/HEIG'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/003/2026 – [Your Organization Name] Application Submission.

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

Applications 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. Letters of support from key stakeholders and partners
- d. Organizational registration documents and CVs of key personnel

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 Applications:

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.

a. Technical Merit / HEI Engagement & Technical Value (45 points)

- ✓ Relevance to Digital Growth and Security – Faith-based Tourism sector priorities and program goals, including potential complementarity with other relevant U.S. Government-supported efforts.
- ✓ Sustainability of project results and potential for scale beyond PIF support.
- ✓ Anticipated workforce or innovation outcomes within the proposed period of performance.
- ✓ Depth and relevance of HEI contribution and creativity of approach.
- ✓ Sound methodology and realistic workplan.
- ✓ Clear articulation of demand and level of private sector commitment.
- ✓ Strength and clarity of the HEI–industry partnership, including roles, incentives, and shared values.
- ✓ Defined roles, governance, and evidence of collaboration readiness.
- ✓ Relevance to HEIG Performance Indicators (the extent to which the application aligns with the specified indicators and demonstrates a clear understanding of their importance), highlighted in Annex 2.
- ✓ Target Setting: The appropriateness and feasibility of the proposed targets for each indicator.

b. Past Performance / Organizational Capacity (25 points)

- ✓ Past performance in relevant projects in terms of complexity.
- ✓ Relevant staff skills to the proposed project documented by submission of staff bios or CVs.
- ✓ Experience in the geographical region.
- ✓ Written accounting and procurement procedures.
- ✓ Capacity to adhere to DOS financial guidelines.

c. Cost Effectiveness & Co-Investment (30 points)

- ✓ Reasonableness of budget - costs are reasonable, allowable, and allocable.
- ✓ Level of cost-share and co-investment from partners (a minimum of 30% cost-share required). Cost-share may be financial or in-kind and may include:

- Cash contributions toward digital research, training, or technology equipment;
 - Staff time (technical, supervisory, academic);
 - Use of facilities, labs, digital infrastructure, or equipment;
 - Paid internships or trainee stipends in digital tourism roles;
 - Digital tools, software licenses, or prototyping inputs;
 - Digital product testing, user experience research, or commercialization costs.
- ✓ Overall cost effectiveness of the proposal.

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 Agreement. 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 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: Relevant HEIG Performance Indicators

Indicator Name	Indicator Definition	Link to HEIG Indicators
Number of New Employability Pathways Created for Specific Skill Sets	<p>This indicator tracks the number of new employability pathways specifically designed to develop targeted skill sets that are in demand by the local job market. These pathways should be created in collaboration with external partners such as businesses, industry associations, or governmental bodies.</p> <p>To be counted, the educational programs, training courses, or skills development initiatives should focus on specific skills identified as high demand in the local job market. Each pathway must involve the collaboration of at least one external partner</p>	A.P.1
Number of Innovations Created with Support from HEIG Assistance	<p>This indicator tracks the number of new innovations (e.g., methods, technologies, solutions) developed with HEIG support. These innovations should be created through collaborative efforts involving higher education institutions (HEIs) and external partners such as businesses, government agencies, or NGOs.</p> <p>To be counted, new innovations should be designed and developed with the involvement of external partners. And these innovations should address specific needs or challenges and have the potential for adoption by public or private sector entities.</p>	A.P.4.
Amount of Private Investment Attracted	<p>This indicator measures the total amount of private sector funds invested in projects supported by HEIG funding. It includes both cash and in-kind contributions.</p>	A.P.5
Amount Increase in New Investments in HEIs	<p>This indicator tracks the increase in new private or other non-USG investments directed towards higher education institutions to support innovation pathways. It measures the absolute increase in investment amounts over a specific period.</p>	2.3.2
Number of Learners Who Receive Market	<p>This indicator counts the number of learners who satisfactorily participate in educational activities specifically designed to equip them with competencies and expertise that directly align with the demands and requirements of the current job market or industry</p>	1.3.2

<p>Needed Skills Training</p>	<p>needs. These learners participate in training sessions or educational programs or initiatives developed and delivered by the consortium or supported partners that focus on developing practical skills, knowledge, and proficiencies sought after by employers or industries operating within Jordan's economic sectors identified as high-growth or in demand. This indicator measures the number of learners benefiting from skill-building initiatives aimed at addressing workforce gaps and enhancing employability by tailoring education to the demands of the labor market. Educational initiatives can include curricular or extra-curricular courses or initiatives (such as design challenges, internships or mentorship programs) that have a skill building component and defined intended learning outcomes.</p>	
<p>Number of Faculty Members, Administrative Staff, or Learners Participating in Research and/or Innovation Capacity-Building Programs or Initiatives</p>	<p>This indicator measures the number of individuals engaged in structured activities aimed at enhancing their abilities, skills, and competencies in conducting research or fostering innovation.</p> <p>This indicator refers to faculty members, administrative staff, or learners who actively participate in programs specifically designed to develop their personal, or their institutions' research or innovation capacities.</p>	<p>1.3.3</p>

PUBLIC NOTICE
REQUEST FOR APPLICATIONS (RFA)
for the Higher Education for Innovation and Growth Activity

Issuance Date: April 13, 2026

Closing Date: June 9, 2026, 17:00 Amman, Jordan Time

I. SUMMARY:

The Higher Education for Innovation and Growth Activity (HEIG) is a 5-year program funded by the United States Department of State (DOS) and implemented by the International Research and Exchange Board (IREX). The Higher Education for Innovation and Growth project seeks to create an ecosystem where Jordanian HEIs provide quality, market-relevant, student-centered education, and foster innovation for economic growth through partnerships with industry that bridge the gap between supply and demand.

Working within, between and beyond HEIs, HEIG will strengthen workforce and innovation ecosystems and activate HEIs as effective and trusted actors within them.

II. PURPOSE:

This RFA invites applicants to propose effective approaches for developing partnerships under the Digital Growth and Security Cluster, leveraging its role as a cross-cutting enabler to drive digital transformation within the Faith-based Tourism vertical. This RFA focuses on fostering collaboration between private-sector stakeholders and higher education institutions to enhance graduate readiness through industry-aligned curricula, work-based learning opportunities, and experiential placements across the Faith-based Tourism value chain, or advance applied research and development initiatives that drive innovation in heritage site digitization, digital marketing and destination promotion, visitor experience technologies, data-driven tourism management, digital inclusion and accessibility, and secure tourism operation.

III. LOCATION OF ACTIVITIES:

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

IV. PROGRAM OBJECTIVES:

- Establishing effective and sustainable platforms for collaboration among HEIs, the private sector, youth, community, and government stakeholders, through the establishment of a Partnership Incubator, a Partnership Incubator Fund (PIF), and a series of sector-focused Catalytic Collaboration Clusters.
- Strengthening the performance of HEI's core functions (teaching and learning, research, engagement) in selected sectors through provision of material and technical assistance.
- Supporting the development of a supportive and aligned policy environment that promotes HEI collaboration for innovation and growth.

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 in Jordan and working in compliance with all applicable local laws. An applicant can show proof of effort to secure registration.
- Be operational in Jordan for at least 2 years.
- Meet the program's technical objectives and principles.
- Contain expected outcomes and results consistent with and linked to the program's objectives.
- Applicant is not a debarred organization.
- Must demonstrate financial and operational capacity to manage funds.
- Received a U.S. government Unique Entity ID (UEI) from SAM.gov or receive a UEI prior to the expected start date of the subaward, if selected (see more information in the RFA).

VI. Cost share Requirements:

Cost share is required, which means that applicants are expected to exhibit vested interest by committing significant cash or in-kind investments towards the implementation of proposed activities. This investment is a cost share contribution, i.e. a percentage of the budget covered by the applicant or from other demonstrable sources. **The minimum acceptable cost share is 30%.** See the RFA for more information on cost share requirements.

VII. Award Information

Subject to the availability of funds, IREX expects to award two (2) cost reimbursable subawards, ranging from \$100,000 to \$150,000. The total amount available is \$300,000. The expected duration of IREX's support or the period of performance is a maximum of 16 months.

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.

VIII. CONTACT INFORMATION:

Please send an electronic version of your application packet to 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/003/2026 – [Your Organization Name] Application Submission.

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