IREX is pleased to announce a Request for Applications (RFA), that seeks to recruit 1 (one) partner based in Marsabit County, Kenya. The partner will be engaged to conduct youth-led implementation research to strengthen youth engagement and employment in agriculture, food and water systems in the context of the global food security crisis and other shocks and stressors.

Youth Excel will award one subaward for this activity with a funding range of 130,000-150,000 USD for a performance period of 10 Months.

Please see full information in the following request for applications.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>RFA Information</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Request for Applications (RFA) Number</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Issued under USAID Youth Excel Cooperative Agreement</td>
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<tr>
<td>Number 7200AA20CA00024</td>
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<td><strong>Website</strong></td>
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<td><strong>Application</strong></td>
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<p>| RFA Timeframe | |
|----------------| |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Issue Date</th>
<th>16th June 2023</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Info-session webinar Held</td>
<td>4th July 2023</td>
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<tr>
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<td>10:00 AM to 12:00 PM EAT Nairobi</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Register in advance for this meeting: <a href="https://irexorg.zoom.us/meeting/register/tZ0pdOGsqz0tEtZPhxaCuMP7gDqJKfWvcfFt">https://irexorg.zoom.us/meeting/register/tZ0pdOGsqz0tEtZPhxaCuMP7gDqJKfWvcfFt</a></td>
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<td>After registering, you will receive a confirmation email containing information about joining the meeting.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Questions Due</td>
<td>30th June 2023</td>
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<td>Answers Posted</td>
<td>7th July 2023</td>
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<td>Close Date</td>
<td>14th July 2023</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Anticipated Grant Start Date</td>
<td>15th August 2023</td>
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**Definitions**

- **Activity Adaptation**: Youth Excel’s Research-to-Change approach helps organizations turn what they learn into what they do. During the Research-to-Change process, you will use data to make decisions about how to change, or adapt, your programs so that it is stronger and better for the people you are supporting. Then, you will implement these new adaptations and continue collecting data.

- **Capacity development**: an approach for youth-led and youth-serving organizations to strengthen their skills and leverage opportunities in different areas.

- **Collaboration, Learning and Adaptation** (CLA): Collaborating, learning, and adapting (CLA) is a set of practices that help USAID and partners improve development effectiveness. The systematic application of CLA approaches enables USAID - and partners! - to be an effective learning organization and thereby a more effective development organization.

- **Gender equality and social inclusion (GESI)**: an approach that helps us to understand the importance of equal rights and opportunities for all individuals regardless of their social identity.

- **International Research and Exchanges Board (IREX)**: IREX is a global development and education organization. We strive for a more just, prosperous, and inclusive world—where individuals reach their full potential, governments serve their people, and communities thrive. IREX and its Our Knowledge, Leading Change consortium lead the Youth Excel program managing this RFA.

- **Intersectionality**: Interaction of an individual’s identities (race, gender, disability status, age, and other aspects) in ways that can intensify the inclusion or exclusion they experience. Intersectionality is the understanding that a person may enjoy advantages, or suffer disadvantages, based on multiple identities rather than just one.
• **Implementation Research**: an approach that allows organizations to gather data, take what they learn, and turn it into what they do in real time.

• **Knowledge Product**: a product for sharing learning and enabling the audience to act based on that learning from the research-to-change process.

• **Knowledge Mobilization**: Knowledge mobilization refers to the strategic dissemination of learnings through knowledge products with a focus in driving change through the dissemination of information and data that are the result of different research and learning activities and are made openly available to the public for further use, re-use, or re-distribution.

• **Learning Agenda Implementation Plan (LAIP)**: Learning Agenda Implementation Plan involves developing Learning Questions; reviewing, analyzing and/or synthesizing data against learning questions; and preparing data visualizations and other knowledge products, such as Learning Briefs.

• **Learning Goal**: a goal for information that you need to decide in the near future. Learning goals help your team to identify learning needs that will guide your research-to-change plan.

• **Local Organization/Local Partner**: an organization that is legally organized under the laws of a country that is receiving assistance from USAID; has its principal place of business or operations in that country; is majority-owned by individuals who are citizens or lawful permanent residents of that country; and is managed by a governing body, the majority of whom are citizens or lawful permanent residents of that country. This definition comes from [USAID’s New Partnership Initiative](https://www.usaid.gov/partnership-initiative) and [ADS 303.6](https://www.state.gov/ads/003036.html). This grant RFA is open to local, registered youth-led and/or youth serving organizations in Kenya.

• **Marginalized groups**: Those who have traditionally been excluded from power and access to resources, and may include indigenous peoples, ethnicities, religious groups, LGBTQI+ populations, women and girls, youth, individuals with disabilities, or other groups.

• **Positive Youth Development (PYD)**: A framework which USAID applies through employing integrated, multi-sector approaches that reflect the complexity of helping young people grow, develop, and succeed.

• **Protection**: an approach that helps us understand and prepare for protection concerns for youth, which can be digital, physical, and psychosocial.

• **Bureau for Resilient Food and Security**: The Bureau is home to USAID’s Centers for Agriculture-Led Growth, Resilience, Nutrition, and Water Security, Sanitation and Hygiene. These Centers coordinate and lead efforts across the Agency to provide strategic, programmatic, analytical and global leadership within their respective areas.

• **United States Agency for International Development (USAID)**: USAID leads international development and humanitarian efforts to save lives, reduce poverty, strengthen democratic governance, and help people progress beyond assistance. USAID funds the Youth Excel program and this RFA.

• **Youth**: Youth Excel defines youth as people between the ages of 10 and 35. USAID defines youth as people between the ages of 10-29. Youth Excel has expanded this definition to include youth leaders in countries where the definition of youth extends beyond age 29.

• **Youth Excel**: Youth Excel is a global program funded by USAID and implemented by IREX and its Our Knowledge, Leading Change consortium. Youth Excel empowers young people and youth organizations to use implementation research to strengthen local, national, and global development solutions. Youth Excel is managing this RFA.

• **Youth-Led Organization**: Youth Excel defines youth-led organizations as those whose Chief Executive Officer or other leaders are under the age of 35, and whose Board of Directors are
predominantly under the age of 35. This RFA is open to both youth-led and youth serving organizations.

- **Youth-Serving Organization**: Youth Excel defines youth-serving organizations as those who have a mission, mandate, or programs with an expressed priority of serving or supporting youth under age 35. This RFA is open to both youth-led and youth serving organizations.
I. What will the selected partner(s) do?

Overview

About Youth Excel: The USAID-funded Youth Excel: Our Knowledge Leading Change program implemented by IREX and its consortium supports young leaders and youth-led and youth-serving organizations around the globe to conduct quality “research-to-change” (implementation research); use data and learnings to improve their own cross-sectoral, positive youth development programs; synthesize data and learning; and engage in intergenerational dialogue with adult decision-makers so that together youth and adults can shape and advance data-informed development policies, agendas, and programs. Youth Excel currently supports activities in countries across Africa, MENA, LAC, and Asia through core funding and buy-ins. The 5-year program is in its third year of implementation.

Youth Excel operates in Kenya to support Kenya-based youth-led and youth-serving organizations and to provide global support, guidance, and leadership to Youth Excel’s regional and global activities. A major component of Youth Excel’s work in Kenya has supported advancing learning and cooperation on youth workforce opportunities in Kisumu County.

Under the Youth Excel RFS Youth and the Global Food Crisis activity to be undertaken in collaboration with USAID Kenya and some of its implementing partners, Youth Excel will engage a local, youth-led or youth-serving organization to conduct youth-led research that is aligned with current USAID Kenya Mission priorities for youth engagement and employment in agriculture, food and water systems in the context of the global food security crisis and other shocks and stressors.

The RFS Youth and the Global Food Crisis activity will take place in Marsabit County

The Local implementing partner in Marsabit will do the following:

- Identify intersectional gender issues in food and water systems in Marsabit
- Map current stakeholders in food and water systems in Marsabit
- Engage with youth and YLOs/YSOs, using implementation research to understand youth engagement and experiences in food systems in relation to program interventions and responses to the food crisis.
- Organize internal and external stakeholder events.
IREX will do the following:

- Train the partner in conducting a rapid gender analysis and implementation research.
- Provide subgrants support and technical support during the award period.
- Onboarding of the partner to the project and Youth Excel approaches.
- Work with the partner to convene stakeholders for external-facing events e.g., co-creation, learning events and the data summit.
- Hold regular check ins to support the partner during implementation.
- Provide capacity development support based on partner’s priority need areas.
- Onsite monitoring visits to provide technical support as needed.

The **Local Implementing Partner** will co-lead the activities, with support from IREX’s Youth Excel. Co-leadership includes finalizing selection of specific implementation localities in the Marsabit, facilitating the co-creation process when developing and selecting learning questions, engaging youth and team members to carry out implementation research (including and intersectional rapid gender and protection analysis) and conducting data management, analysis, and synthesis, creating learning products, preparing and executing learning events, and general activity management.

The local partner will engage young researchers in unearthing gender issues affecting youth’s ability to access food and water in Marsabit. The local partner will further engage youth and local food system actors to co-create learning questions that will seek to address the overarching question: what is currently being done by development actors in response to the food crisis, and how are these interventions and activities engaging youth and addressing their needs? Once the learning questions are developed, the partner will further support youth-led research and inquiry through implementation research into these questions. From the results of the implementation research, we shall share knowledge products that contain learnings and insights from the research and recommendations, in a learning brief format, with the relevant stakeholders, including the USAID mission team, local USAID implementing partners, private sector actors and relevant government institutions. The knowledge products will be disseminated through a planned data summit and potentially through webinars, social media and the Youth Excel web page.

The partner should have:

- Demonstrated commitment to youth engagement and positive youth development principles
- Experience or expertise in resilient food systems, food security, climate change, livelihoods
- Active networks with youth and youth-led or youth-serving organizations in Marsabit County
- An active presence in Marsabit County
- Experience working with and working through stakeholders such as county governments, other NGOs, donor agencies, etc.
- Skills and experience in facilitation and/or hosting and convening workshops or other types of events
- Experience with research including drafting surveys, convening focus groups, and drafting written reports
This RFA will fund youth-led and youth-serving organizations who are addressing the global food crisis, food security and drought mitigation. Youth Excel will fund either of the following:

- Your organization has a project model that addresses the youth and the global food security crisis. Youth Excel funding will enable you to start and implement this project and conduct research and learning activities as you implement it to make your project better.

- Your organization is currently implementing a project that addresses the youth and the global food security crisis with funding from another donor. Youth Excel funding will enable you to add research and learning activities to your existing project to make the project better and learn more from it as you continue with implementation.

The selected local partner will set their workplan based on their activities, experience, expertise and context.

Youth Excel offers approaches, methodologies and tools which the selected local partner will use as part of their project implementation and will help to determine the appropriate project structure and design around research, gender, inclusion, protection, and knowledge mobilization. The first month of the project will be used for onboarding and preparation for project kick-off, such as the rapid gender analysis and designing the implementation research plan. The last month of the project will be used in dissemination of the knowledge products based on the approved knowledge mobilization plan.

**Youth Excel's key technical areas of support for the local partner include:**

- **Gender equality and social inclusion (GESI)** is an approach that helps us to understand the importance of equal rights and opportunities for all individuals regardless of their social identity. This concept addresses unequal power relations between different social groups that cause exclusion.

- **Protection** is an approach that helps us to understand and prepare for protection concerns related to Youth Excel, which can be digital, physical and psychosocial. Youth Excel partners take local protection measures to prevent, mitigate and respond to risks and threats that Youth Excel can unintentionally exacerbate (risks associated with programs, operations, and people). Youth Excel aims to understand the specific risks, but also the protection capacities, the available resources and the right to protection of participants.

- **Research-to-Change (implementation research)** involves collecting data to inform decision-making to strengthen programs while they are being implemented. By using data alongside implementation, Research-to-Change provides an opportunity to gain insights that can help you maximize program benefits before the implementation concludes. It does not involve a one-time research project, but a continuous process of using data to learn and adapt while implementing. Your Research-to-Change engagement with Youth Excel will look like the following: 1.) Set a learning goal focused on a decision you need to make and develop a research plan, 2.) Gather data to achieve this learning goal, 3.) Share findings with your fellow grantees in a learning workshop while gathering recommendations for decision-making, 4.) Adapt your implementation and set a new learning goal, 5.) Repeat steps 1-4.

In the following **Table 1**, we have provided an example of how an organization used Research-to-Change to make one data-informed decision.
Table 1.

| Activity: | Develop a comic book to build knowledge and influence norms about menstrual health and hygiene management for secondary school students |
| Learning Goal: | We need to know whether school administrators and students see our comic book strategy as relevant for education around menstrual health and hygiene so that we can modify our strategy to better meet their needs. |

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Data collected through:</th>
<th>Key Findings:</th>
<th>Data-informed decisions:</th>
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<tr>
<td>- Key informant interviews with school administrators.</td>
<td>- Several school administrators had recommended that the comic books would be more effective if paired with peer-to-peer learning.</td>
<td>- Used comic book strategy as majority of students and administrators saw this as relevant.</td>
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<tr>
<td>- Surveys with students.</td>
<td>- 80% of students felt that comic books would be a relevant method for communicating educational material.</td>
<td>- Complemented comic books with school champion approach and peer-to-peer education to engage those who do not currently read comic books.</td>
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<td></td>
<td>- 62% of students read comic books.</td>
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- **Knowledge mobilization** is Youth Excel’s ‘rebrand’ of knowledge management and dissemination. It includes creating knowledge products that are easily accessible by users, making them openly available to the public for use, and sharing them in a strategic and dynamic way that promotes dialogue and two-way communication (including events and social media, for example).

- **Knowledge Products** share learning and enable the audience to act based on that learning from the Research-to-change process. Knowledge products can have different formats, such as manuals, best practices briefs, or data-based recommendations. Knowledge products can be created using different methodologies, like summaries, storytelling, and digital visualizations and take different forms, such as printed documents, podcasts, radio, videos, etc.

- **Capacity development** supports youth-led and youth-serving organizations to strengthen skills and leverage opportunities in the following areas: using implementation research to strengthen positive youth development programs; applying gender, inclusion, and protection so that programs are more inclusive of diverse youth groups; strengthening opportunities for meaningful youth engagement and intergenerational dialogue; synthesizing, disseminating, and using findings from research more effectively; and managing subawards, including planning, budgeting, reporting, and compliance.

*Issuance of this request for applications does not constitute an award commitment on the part of Youth Excel, nor does it commit Youth Excel, IREX, or USAID 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.*
Scope of Work for the RFS Youth and the Global Food Crisis activity Marsabit Based Partner.

1. **Youth Excel Kenya RFS Youth and the Global Food Crisis activity – Objective and Scope**

Under the Youth Excel RFS Youth and the Global Food Crisis activity to be undertaken in collaboration with USAID Kenya and some of its implementing partners, Youth Excel will engage a local, youth-led or youth-serving organization to conduct youth-led research that is aligned with current USAID Kenya Mission priorities for youth engagement and employment in agriculture, food and water systems in the context of the global food security.

The **Local Implementing Partner** will co-lead the activities, with support from IREX’s Youth Excel. Co-leadership includes finalizing selection of specific implementation localities in the Marsabit, facilitating the co-creation process when developing and selecting learning questions, engaging youth and team members to carry out implementation research (including and intersectional rapid gender and protection analysis) and conducting data management, analysis, and synthesis, creating learning products, preparing and executing learning events, and general activity management.

2. **Partner and stakeholder engagement**

The **Local Implementing Partner** will engage with stakeholders during the implementation of their activities. The stakeholder engagement will be critical to understand what other partners are doing in relation to the global food crisis and identify opportunities for working together during the implementation research. This will be through stakeholder meetings, co-creation sessions, learning events and at the Data Summit. The partner will be expected to engage USAID funded partners working in the Resilient Food Systems sector.

3. **Activities**

**Activity 1:** **Co-facilitate the co-creation process with IREX, and develop updated, youth-led understanding of youth priorities, opportunities, and barriers from a gendered, intersectional lens.** (2 Months)

**USAID and stakeholder meetings:** The local partner with support from the IREX team will organize 2 stakeholder meetings as part of entry meetings before implementation starts. The entry meeting with the stakeholders will serve as a briefing on the project to the stakeholders, and an opportunity to get their input and identify areas of participation and/or collaboration. The meetings with USAID will be to inform them of the progress and get to know the local partner and their plan for activities.

**Co-Creation Process:** Through a facilitated meeting and discussion, the local partner will jointly develop the learning questions for this project with select USAID Implementing Partners, and USAID Mission representative(s). This will be the second engagement with USAID and the local stakeholders. This meeting is proposed to be a physical meeting to encourage relationship building and engagement during the development of the learning questions. In the same co-creation workshop, the local partner will facilitate a stakeholder mapping exercise to help identify stakeholders in Marsabit working on food and water systems who could also be potentially engaged in the implementation of the project. and invited for dissemination workshops once

**IRGPA:** The local partner will conduct an *(IRGPA)* in the implementation county. The IRGPA is done to have a better understanding of the current context, identify gaps and recommendations that will be used when the partner is planning for the implementation research activities. The IRGPA process includes youth-led research question identification, secondary data review, identification of gaps, and primary data
collection if needed. Youth researchers will draw from existing data, including any data from USAID’s Feed the Future activity and other USAID programs.

**Activity 1 Deliverables:**

- Plan and execute Stakeholder meetings and share summary report of the meetings
- Finalized Learning questions document
- IRGPA draft report
- IRGPA Final Report

**Activity 2: Implementation Research Preparation Activities (2 Months)**

In preparation for the implementation research/research-to-change, the local partner will conduct a scan or desk review of policies and programs underway in Marsabit County and Kenya to address global food security crisis and the extent to which they aim to engage and meet the needs of youth. This exercise will help the local partner have a good understanding of the current landscape as they plan for their implementation research activities. This will help know which existing activities and partners to reach out to during implementation.

The IREX IR advisor and IR mentor will support the Local partner to develop the draft Planning for Ethical and Effective Research (PEER) workbook. The PEER workbook, which is Youth Excel’s tested planning tool to develop youth-inclusive research protocols, helps to ensure that the research is conducted according to the research ethics code, and to help plan the research so that it achieves its stated objectives. Specifically, the PEER workbook outlines the learning questions, schedule of activities, identifies the data collection methodologies and data collection tools they will use. The IR advisor and IR mentor will lead the review of the Peer Workbook and submit it for approval by the IREX Ethical Review Committee if indicated.

**Activity 2 Deliverables:**

- Policy Scan and existing programs summary report
- Draft PEER 1 Workbook
- Finalized PEER 1 Workbook

**Activity 3: Implementation Research Activities - Implementation Stage (5 Months)**

After receiving approval from the Youth Excel Ethical Review Committee, the Local partner will conduct the 1st round of research as per the PEER workbook. The local partner will be supported day-to-day by the local IR Mentor, in consultation with IREX’s IR Advisor, as they carry out their implementation research activities, using the finalized PEER 1 workbook described in activity 2 as a research guide. The local partner will engage researchers to carry out the research in the identified locations. Once the first round of implementation research is complete, the IR Mentor will support the Local partner to conduct data analysis and prepare initial report/presentation will be prepared.

The Local partner with support from IREX will plan and execute the 1st Learning Event which will be held virtually, and this is proposed to be an internal event between the local partner and IREX. In this learning event, the local partner will share the findings from the first round of implementation research as well as share challenges and lessons learned f and their plans for the 2nd round of implementation research.

The Local partner will conduct the 2nd round of implementation research. After the research is complete, data will be analyzed with support from the IR Mentor, synthesized and presented in a draft final report is generated.
Activity 3 Deliverables:

- Draft PEER 2 Workbook
- Finalized PEER 2 workbook
- Draft Learning Brief from 1st round of research
- Conduct 1 Learning event
- Draft Implementation Research report
- Final Implementation Research Report

Activity 4: Knowledge Mobilization (1 Month)

Youth Excel will support the local partner to prepare a final Learning Brief and disseminate it through social media, Mission contacts, and through a Data Summit where adult allies, including USAID, commit to specific actions based on the data.

Youth Excel will support the local partner to create a final learning brief summarizing data and findings from each round of research and overall learnings from this program.

The Local partner will share their implementation research and solutions in a Data Summit with USAID and key stakeholders, open to the broader youth development community in Marsabit county.

Following the showcase, Youth Excel will finalize the learning briefs and together with the local partner, disseminate them publicly leveraging the partner's networks, YouthLead.org and Mission/in-country youth networks.

Activity 4 deliverables:

- Conduct Local Data Summit
- Design, Develop and share knowledge products
2. Who can apply?

This RFA is open to local organizations, registered youth-led and/or youth-serving organizations, including new recipients of USAID funding, that meet the following minimum criteria and share Youth Excel objectives. Organizations led by and/or serving youth from marginalized groups, which may include age, gender, disability, ethnicity, and other identities, are encouraged to apply. The RFA is not restricted to certain technical sectors or to research organizations.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Eligible</th>
<th>Not Eligible</th>
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<tr>
<td>✓ Legally registered, local organization in the country of activity implementation:</td>
<td>× Unregistered organization, group, or individual</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Is legally organized under the laws of Kenya</td>
<td>× International organization</td>
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<tr>
<td>• If undergoing registration process, it will have been fully registered by the anticipated date of signing the grant agreement.</td>
<td>× Consortium of multiple organizations</td>
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<td>• Has its principal place of business or operations in Kenya</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Is majority-owned by individuals who are citizens or lawful permanent residents of Kenya</td>
<td>× Government institutions or political parties</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>✓ Non-governmental or private organization of any legal type</td>
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<tr>
<td>A. Youth-led and/or youth-serving organizations</td>
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<tr>
<td>o Youth-led organization whose Chief Executive Officer or other leaders are under the age of 35, and whose Board of Directors are predominantly under the age of 35.</td>
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<tr>
<td>o Youth-serving organization that has a mission, mandate, or programs with an expressed priority of serving or supporting youth under age 35.</td>
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<tr>
<td>✓ Eligible to accept and receive USAID funding:</td>
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<tr>
<td>o Has or willing to register for <a href="#">UEI Number</a></td>
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<tr>
<td>o Able to sign <a href="#">ADS 303mav</a> Certifications, Assurances, Representations, and Other Statements of the Recipient</td>
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<tr>
<td>× Not eligible due to appearance on certain watchlists or exclusions from receiving U.S. Government funding:</td>
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<tr>
<td>o Appears on Treasury Department’s Office of Foreign Assets Control list</td>
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3. **What type of grants are available?**

- **Purpose:** Conducting youth-led research to strengthen youth engagement and employment in agriculture, food and water systems in the context of the global food security crisis and other shocks and stressors.
- **Location:** Marsabit County, Kenya
- **Number:** 1 (One). Subject to the availability of funds, Youth Excel reserves the right to fund any or none of the applications submitted.
- **Type:** Fixed amount subaward. Payments set based on the negotiated budget will be made upon the successful completion of project milestones. [ADS Reference 303mat](#) Mandatory Standard Provisions for Fixed Amount Awards to Non-Governmental Organizations apply.
- **Amount:** A total funding pool of USD $130,000- USD $150,000 is allocated for this RFA. Cost share is not required.
- **Start:** August 2023.
- **Length:** August 1, 2023, to May 31, 2024 (10 Months)

4. **What types of costs can you request funding for?**

As per the scope of work, you can cost your activities for the project timeframe using the recommendations provided in the table below, and within the $130,000-$150,000 funding range.

IREX will assess and negotiate cost allowability, realism, and effectiveness in alignment with the scope of work.

**Cost Recommendations**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Overall</th>
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<tr>
<td>Leadership of overall project activities: Your organization is encouraged to identify a Project Manager to manage and coordinate the overall project, project coordinator to support the Project Manager, M and E person with research experience, Finance and Admin person with subgrants experience, Communications person with graphic design experience plus other administration, logistics, data, and communications support for your specific project needs.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Protection focal point: identify a team member responsible for ensuring adherence to the protection policy and reporting on protection issues. The recommended level of effort is 20% or approximately 8 hours per week.</td>
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</table>

- **Cost Recommendations:** compensation, standard benefits, supplies, communications.
- Other Direct Costs to cover Implementation Research Activities

- **Cost Recommendations:**
Hiring of 2-4 young researchers to conduct iRGPA and IR activities

1 in-person co-creation workshop

1 in-person stakeholder meeting; other engagements will be virtual

Zoom Subscription Costs

Data analytics software costs

Knowledge Products costs

1 hybrid in-person Data Summit Event with virtual engagement component

Communication and Data

Local Travel

Protection Fund: Budget 5% of the total direct costs to address the main protection challenges and risks facing young people, staff/partners, programming, and operations throughout their participation in the Youth Excel program, including but not limited to sociocultural, emotional/mental health, physical, legal, political, financial, gendered, digital risks, and more. The protection fund will support appropriate and existing risk prevention and mitigation measures and protection mechanisms to ensure the safe and inclusive participation of youth in the Youth Excel program.

Accommodation Fund: Budget 3% of the total direct costs to support the inclusion of participants with disabilities. The accommodation fund for participants with disabilities will cover the costs of reasonable accommodations, which may include adaptation of materials for participants with visual impairments, sign language interpretation for participants with hearing impairments, and other assistive technology/support services.

Capacity Development Fund: Budget 5% of the total direct costs for potential capacity strengthening in identified priority areas through self-led approaches and Youth Excel support. You may budget for capacity strengthening resources related to your priority area. IREX will review with you what type of financial support and/or direct technical support and other resources that Youth Excel can provide.

Cost Restrictions: the RFA cannot fund the following types of costs:

- International travel
- Subawards to other organizations
- Organizational costs, such as executive and administrative salaries, rent and utilities, and bank fees. However, you may request 10% of the budget as Youth Excel's contribution to your organizational
costs. **All organizations are eligible for the standard 10% de minimis indirect cost rate of modified total direct costs per 2 CFR 200.414(f) or may provide a negotiated indirect cost rate agreement with the U.S. Government.**

- **Profits and fees**
- **Limitations on equipment/supplies**
  - Items with a unit cost of $5,000 or more and a useful lifespan of 1 year or more are defined as **“equipment”** and will **not be funded** by this grant RFA.
  - **Ineligible and restricted commodities listed below, including motor vehicles, will not be funded by this RFA, regardless of their cost and classification as supplies or equipment.**

- **Other cost restrictions and prohibitions in accordance with [ADS Reference 303mat](https://www.usaid.gov/funding-opportunities/programs-and-grants/ads-reference-guidance)**:
  - Mandatory Standard Provisions for Fixed Amount Awards to Non-Governmental Organizations and other applicable regulations.
    - Ineligible commodities: military equipment, surveillance equipment, commodities, or equipment for the support of police or other law enforcement activities, abortion equipment and services, luxury goods, gambling equipment, weather modification equipment.
    - Restricted commodities: agricultural commodities, motor vehicles, pharmaceuticals, contraceptives and condoms, pesticides, used equipment, fertilizer.
    - Unallowable costs per **2 CFR 200 Subpart E**: including, but not limited to, alcoholic beverages, bad debts, contributions and donations, fines and penalties, fundraising, lobbying, and other costs that are not allowable, reasonable, and allocable to the project.

5. **How can you apply?**

Apply by filling in the [online application form on FormStack](https://www.formstack.com) and submit together with the requested attachments by 14th July 2023 11.59P.M EAT.

**IREX reserves the right to accept late and incomplete applications when it is in the best interest of Youth Excel objectives; otherwise, late, and incomplete applications will be automatically disqualified.**

6. **How will the local partner(s) be selected to receive funding?**

1. **Eligibility screening:** An IREX grants team will conduct an initial review of the applications, based on the following eligibility requirements, and disqualify applications that are not eligible for consideration.
   - Does application satisfy the basic parameters of the RFA?
   - Does the application fulfill the eligibility criteria?
   - Is the application complete and submitted on time?

2. **Shortlisting:**
a. **Shortlisting:** An IREX technical team will conduct a merit review of all eligible applications, based on the selection criteria.

3. **Finalist Selection:** The Youth Excel review panel, comprised of IREX and partner staff, Global Youth Advisory Council members, other youth representatives, and USAID staff, will use the selection criteria to select one (1) finalist in July 2023.

In addition to the selection criteria specified below, Youth Excel staff will carry out due diligence checks as part of the selection process. The checks will include in-person interviews with the selected finalist at their physical location in Marsabit, an on-site review of the documents listed in the due diligence questionnaire, and background vetting checks on the following 3 watchlists:

- [https://sam.gov/SAM/](https://sam.gov/SAM/)
- [https://sanctionssearch.ofac.treas.gov/](https://sanctionssearch.ofac.treas.gov/)
- [https://scsanctions.un.org/search/](https://scsanctions.un.org/search/)

The final subaward will be subject to the satisfactory completion of the due diligence process by the finalist.

**Selection criteria:** applications will be holistically reviewed and scored on the following equally weighted factors:

1. **Learning and Adapting (CLA) process approach:** approach to fostering a learning facilitation culture, introducing new concepts, and facilitating learning events with diverse stakeholders; ability to conduct research and/or experience managing, synthesizing and data visualization. Including experience designing creative, youth-inclusive data visualizations as well as other knowledge products and evidence so that programs and policies better serve beneficiaries.

2. **Partnership and collaboration approach:** A clear approach to building partnerships and networks with other stakeholders, YSOs, YLOs, and CSOs addressing positive youth development issues and resilient food systems and food security issues in Marsabit County.

3. **Feasibility:** understanding of requirements and proven capacity to successfully implement.

4. **Protection:** awareness of potential risks for participating youth and consideration of mitigation strategies.

5. **Inclusion:** commitment to diversity and inclusion, especially regarding work with and/or support to vulnerable or marginalized groups such as girls and women, youth with disabilities, youth from ethnic or religious minorities, and other identities.

6. **Marsabit County Experience:** Demonstrated experience of working in Marsabit County and having a Physical and staff presence in Marsabit County with projects or programs focusing on Youth Development.

*Notifications to all applicants will be made to the point of contact who submitted the application. The selection of an application in accordance with these established criteria and processes does not guarantee an award. Awards are contingent on successful workplan-budget negotiations, risk assessment, and IREX and USAID approval.*
Annex 1. Application Template

A complete application includes responses to the following questions in English and required attachments. An asterisk (*) indicates that a response is mandatory; others are optional.

Required attachments include:

1. Budget using the template provided. (Attachment I, Excel)
2. Budget Notes using the template provided. (Attachment II, Word)
3. Signed Letter of support for your organization from a local partner or stakeholder applying for a new activity/program or provide a letter of support from current donor using the template provided with this application. (Attachment III, Word).
4. Signed due Diligence Questionnaire using the template provided. (Attachment IV, Word)
5. Your organization’s local registration certificate.
6. Sample(s) of similar work if available such as learning products, data visualizations and communications products.

You may draft responses in a Word document or directly in the online form, which enables you to save and resume your work as you go. You must submit your responses and attachments online here: https://irexorg.formstack.com/forms/fy23_youth_excel_kenya_2

A. Your organization:

Please provide the following information about your organization:

1. What is your organization’s name? * (Short answer)

2. a. Required: Is your organization locally based in Kenya (Legally registered, local organization in the country of activity implementation)? *

   □ Yes
   □ No

   b. Do you have physical presence (e.g. an office) and staff presence in Marsabit County? *

      □ Yes
      □ No

3. Required: Is your organization legally registered in Kenya * This will be verified by your local registration certificate provided in Attachment 3.
4. Required: Are you a Youth Led Organization or Youth Serving Organization? *
   - Youth-led organization whose Chief Executive Officer or other leaders are under the age of 35, and whose Board of Directors are predominantly under the age of 35.
   - Youth-serving organization that has a mission, mandate, or programs with an expressed priority of serving or supporting youth under age 35.
   - No

5. Please provide links to your organization’s website and social media pages if available. (Short answer)

6. Provide a brief 2-sentence description of your organization. This description should capture your organization’s founding date, size, location, mission, technical focus areas, and target geography. It may be used for future publications on IREX’s website or social media.

7. What is/are the main youth demographic(s) that your organization focuses on? * Please choose all that apply.
   - Young Women
   - Young Men
   - Adolescent Girls
   - Adolescent Boys
   - Youth with Disabilities
   - Youth from Indigenous Populations
   - Youth from Marginalized Ethnic Group
   - Youth from Marginalized Religious Group
   - Youth Identifying as Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer, and Intersex (LGBTQI+)
   - Youth Affected by Crisis or Conflict
   - Youth Living with HIV/AIDS
   - Other: Please specify.

Please specify the age range(s) and group(s). * (Short answer)
8. What is the approximate total number of youth participants that your organization has supported in the past year, across all your work? * (Number)

Please provide breakdown by gender identity if available.

- Female: (number)
- Male: (number)
- Non-binary: (number)
- Choose not to disclose: (number)

9. What are the primary sectors that your organization currently focuses on? * Please choose all that apply. Please note that organizations working in any sector are eligible.

- Youth economic opportunity/youth livelihoods/employment
- Gender, inclusion, equity & girls/women's equality
- Youth mental health & psychosocial support
- Youth digital leadership, technology & innovation
- Youth civic or political engagement & advocacy
- Youth peacebuilding
- Education
- Reproductive Health
- Agriculture
- Environment and Climate Change
- Other: Please specify.

10. How do youth, including members of marginalized groups, participate in the leadership of your organization and programming? * (500 characters)

11. Which 1-2 capacity development area(s) would your organization and its leaders and members like to prioritize for strengthening with Youth Excel technical assistance?* Please choose 1-2 areas. Please describe why the area(s) is/are important for your organization.* (500 characters)

- a. Gender Equality and Social Inclusion and Protection
- b. Research-to-Change
- c. Knowledge Mobilization
- d. Grant Management
12. **Past Performance Reference**: list 3-5 ongoing or complete donor-funded projects of similar size and scope within the past 5 years that demonstrate your organization’s capacity to successfully co-lead the activities listed in the scope of work.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Project Name*</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Contract Number*</td>
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<td>Funder*</td>
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<tr>
<td>Prime Recipient*</td>
<td><em>(Please list the prime recipient organization that received funding directly from the donor. The prime recipient could be your organization or another organization if your organization was a sub-recipient.)</em></td>
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<td>Funding Amount in USD*</td>
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<td>Project Country*</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reference Name*</td>
<td><em>(Please provide the name of a reference from the donor or prime recipient who can speak to your organization’s performance on this project.)</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reference Title*</td>
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<tr>
<td>Reference Email Address*</td>
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<tr>
<td>Reference Phone Number*</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Description*</td>
<td><em>Please provide an overview of activity, objectives, and key results and accomplishments, with focus on relevance</em></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
to the activities described in the scope of work. (1,000 characters)

B. Technical Questions*

1. **Understanding of the RFA**: Please describe what particularly draws you to this RFA. What key strengths does your organization have that will enable you to successfully complete the tasks outlined in this RFA? Describe your experience fostering a learning culture, conducting research, introducing new concepts, and facilitating learning events with diverse stakeholders, citing **examples** of any such events your organization has facilitated and **knowledge products developed**: Describe your approach to creative youth-focused communications and advocacy. Describe your experience, giving examples of relevant tasks undertaken in this area. Describe your technique or approach to data management, analysis, synthesis, and visualization, including your experience designing creative, youth-inclusive data visualizations and other knowledge products. *(5000 characters)*

2. **Program**: Describe your program, approach, objectives, and expected results. How will your proposal address the problem and promote positive youth development? How will your proposal contribute to the local and national cross-sectoral knowledge base?* (2,500 Characters)

3. **Project Description**: Is this a new project that your organization wants to implement or is it an existing project? *(New project = means you are proposing to implement a project that is not currently running , therefore your budget should reflect the funds needed to start and implement the project and conduct Research-to-Change.)* *(Existing project = means you are currently implementing this project and so you will primarily be adding a learning component to the current project through this funding, therefore your budget should only reflect funds needed from Youth Excel to conduct Research-to-change.)*

   - [ ] New project
   - [ ] Existing project

3a. If it’s an existing project, indicate the start date: MM-DD YYYY

3b. If it’s an existing project, indicate the end date: MM-DD-YYYY

4. For Existing project, please provide the below information:

<table>
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<tr>
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<th>Prime Recipient*</th>
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* (New project = means you are proposing to implement a project that is not currently running , therefore your budget should reflect the funds needed to start and implement the project and conduct Research-to-Change.)* *(Existing project = means you are currently implementing this project and so you will primarily be adding a learning component to the current project through this funding, therefore your budget should only reflect funds needed from Youth Excel to conduct Research-to-change.)*
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<td>Description*</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Please provide an overview of activity, objectives, and key results and accomplishments, with focus on relevance to the activities described in the scope of work. (1,000 characters)

5. **Learning Priorities:** What are you passionate about learning from your program through Research-to-change component? Select one primary learning priority and explain why it is important to your proposal and organization* (2,000 Characters)
Explore solutions before investing time and resources: You are currently exploring different potential solutions for an issue facing your community. You have an idea of how the program could achieve change, but are relying on some assumptions. Research-to-change can use information to determine whether a program would be practical to implement in a certain context.

Address gaps between program expectations and realities: You have explored different solutions to address a particular issue in your community and are confident that your program will work. However, when the program is being implemented, you are not seeing the impact that you had expected. When programs fall short of their expected impact, it is often due to contextual issues. Research-to-change focuses on understanding implementation and contextual issues so that programs can be adapted to reach their full potential.

Help your organization learn and thrive: Your organization has been implementing solutions in your community for some time now, but you have noticed that mistakes are being repeated and successes are not being built upon. A key driver of strengthening quality of programs is the learning capacity of organizations. Research-to-change better places organizations to anticipate problems, develop responses, and become more effective when approaching new challenges.

Share learnings and become a leading organization: You have finished implementing a program and your team has learned so much about what works and what does not work. You might want to share this information with other organizations doing similar work so they can build on your successes and learn from your mistakes. Research-to-change also involves creating knowledge products (i.e., presentations, reports, publications) to spread learning to other organizations, strengthen credibility, expand reach, and sustain funding.

6. **Context:** Describe the geographic context where you will implement your proposal. What are key power dynamics, norms, social customs, and policies in the context, and how will your proposal be sensitive to them? What factors may enable or disable the implementation and impact of your proposal in the context? Please describe the key global food security issues affecting the population in Marsabit*(4000 Characters)*

7. **People, Inclusion and Protection:** Describe whom your proposal will engage and impact. What are the characteristics of the marginalized or vulnerable youth? Which groups of youth aged between 15 and 29 years will your proposal include (e.g., age, gender, youth with disabilities, ethnic or religious marginalized groups, rural/urban areas, socioeconomic background, level of education, other identities etc.), and how will your proposal identify and respond to their priorities? Which groups of stakeholders will your proposal engage to support youth and their priorities? What are some of the risks that diverse youth may face while participating in your program? explain how your organization will ensure that participating youth do
not experience additional harms through your program or any mitigation strategies. (e.g., What strategies, policies, approaches, trainings, and/or other processes)* *(4,000 Characters)

C. Attachments
1. **Budget**: * Please use the budget template provided (Attachment 1, Excel) to come up with an indicative budget for the proposed activities. [ADS Reference 303mat Mandatory Standard Provisions for Fixed Amount Awards to Non-Governmental Organizations apply. Please refer to the detailed guidance in the budget and budget narrative templates provided.]

2. **Budget Narrative**: * Please use the budget narrative provided (Attachment 2, Word) to justify the allowability, allocability, and reasonableness of each line item of the budget.

3. **Letter of Support**: Please upload a signed letter of support for your organization from a local partner or stakeholder. If implementing an existing project, please upload a signed letter of support from the donor using the provided letter of support template (Attachment 3, Word). *

4. **Due Diligence Form**: * Please use the due diligence form provided (Attachment 4, Word) to describe your organization’s structure, systems, and policies demonstrating responsibility to manage funding.

5. **Registration Certificate**: Please upload your organization’s Kenyan registration certificate. *

6. **Sample(s) of similar work** if available such as learning products, data visualizations and communications products.

D. Certifications
Required: As an authorized signatory of the applicant organization, I certify that the information provided is complete and accurate, to the best of my knowledge. By signing this application, I authorize IREX to verify information. Any willful false statements in this application will be grounds for disqualification of application or termination of grant if issued.

Signature:
Your name (person submitting the application):
Your role with the applicant organization:
Your email: