U.S.-Philippines Partnership for Skills, Innovation, and Lifelong Learning (UPSKILL)

Transformation Accelerator Program
Request for Expressions of Interest (EOI)

The U.S.-Philippines Partnership for Skills, Innovation, and Lifelong Learning (UPSKILL) Program is a five-year initiative funded by the United States Agency for International Development (USAID)/ Philippines that will strengthen Philippine higher education and address growing issues of quality, access, and relevance of higher education programs. UPSKILL is implemented by RTI International in partnership with a consortium of U.S. universities, including Arizona State University (ASU) through its University Design Institute (UDI).

UPSKILL invites public and private Philippine higher education institutions (HEIs) including technical-vocational institutions to submit responses to this Expression of Interest (EOI) to participate in the Transformation Accelerator Program, which is a unique and comprehensive capacity-strengthening opportunity for HEIs in the Philippines to engage in current design thinking practices and develop a high-impact project that addresses critical challenges in higher education. HEIs that are accepted to participate in the Transformation Accelerator Program have the opportunity to apply for a Transformation Accelerator Grant.

Summary

EOI No.	UPSKILL-EOI-001
Title	Transformation Accelerator Program
Objectives	UPSKILL will strengthen the Philippine higher education system to support broad-based and inclusive growth. The Transformation Accelerator will support HEIs to engage in a critical higher education problem, proactively collaborate, and initiate high-impact interventions.
Submission Instructions and Requirements	A complete submission will include the following: - EOI Cover Letter - Accomplished Annex C: EOI Form Instructions on how to complete the EOI, along with other important information are highlighted in Annex A.
Release Date	July 15, 2024 (Monday)

Deadline for receipt of Questions and Virtual Q/A Session	UPSKILL will host two virtual information sessions to answer questions about the Transformation Accelerator EOI on July 23 and July 26, 2024, 8:00 AM - 9:00 AM Philippine Standard Time (PST). Those attending the Virtual Information Sessions need to pre-register through this link: **https://bit.ly/3RHnnPD** to receive the Zoom Link credentials. Applicants may submit questions in advance to Carlo Fernando, ASU Senior Manager for Higher Education Design via jferna97@asu.edu before July 19, 2024 (Friday), 12:00 NN PST.
Deadline for Applications	Submit the EOI response by email to **upskillgrants@upskill.rti.org** by **August 9, 2024 (Friday) / 5:00 PM PST.** Applications received after this time may not be accepted.
Anticipated Acceptance	UPSKILL anticipates notifying 10-12 applicants of their acceptance into the Transformation Accelerator by **August 19, 2024 (Monday).**

UPSKILL will protect and securely store EOI responses in line with RTI's code of business conduct, ethics, confidentiality, and non-disclosure policies. Issuance of this EOI does not constitute a commitment on the part of UPSKILL nor does it commit UPSKILL to pay for costs incurred in the preparation and submission of responses. UPSKILL reserves the right to accept any or no submissions.

If you are interested and think you are eligible, we look forward to receiving your application.

Annex A: Important Program and EOI Information
UPSKILL Transformation Accelerator Program

1. About UPSKILL

The U.S.-Philippines Partnership for Skills, Innovation, and Lifelong Learning (UPSKILL) Program is a five-year initiative funded by the United States Agency for International Development (USAID)/ Philippines that will strengthen Philippine higher education and address growing issues of quality, access, and relevance of higher education programs. UPSKILL is implemented by RTI International in partnership with a consortium of U.S. universities, including Arizona State University (ASU) through its University Design Institute (UDI).

UDI, established in 2019, advances transformative change in higher education - within ASU and around the world - with the vision that universities emerge as powerful engines of social transformation and economic impact. The mandate of UDI aligns with USAID's Higher Education Program Framework,[1] which envisions "higher education as a central actor in development" through the provision of quality and relevant education and training, advancement of knowledge and research, and engagement and strengthening of networks and communities. For UPSKILL, UDI at ASU leads four key activities in higher education capacity strengthening, which includes the **"Transformation Accelerator."**

2. About the Transformation Accelerator

The advancement of Philippine higher education requires a deep investigation into the sector's challenges and identification of high-impact projects and appropriate interventions. In addition, there is a need to share practices across regional contexts and to encourage the participation of higher education designers, leaders, and project implementers in a continuous and reflective process of project refinement. The Transformation Accelerator provides the opportunity for HEIs across the Philippines to work on a critical higher education problem, proactively collaborate, and propose interventions with guidance from each other and from ASU.

The **"Transformation Accelerator"** is an immersive multi-month program for Philippine HEIs to design, ideate, and prototype transformation projects that enhance the broader higher education community, their regions, and the country to resolve critical challenges in higher education. The Transformation Accelerator offers a unique and comprehensive capacity-strengthening opportunity for HEIs in the Philippines to engage in current design thinking and receive support from ASU. The program utilizes UDI's IMPACT Framework to anchor the work undertaken. The IMPACT Framework includes the following steps: Imagining (I), Magnifying (M), Proposing (P), Assessing (A), Creating (C), and Testing (T). It also uses ASU's Principled Innovation Framework to ensure that people affected by the issue or problem under consideration are at the center of the proposed solution.

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[1] USAID Higher Education Learning Agenda: Summary and Recommendations for Implementation (November 2020). https://pdf.usaid.gov/pdf_docs/PA00X71W.pdf

At the conclusion of Phases 1 and 2, selected applicants will have developed:

- A project design for impactful implementation;
- An increase in their capacity to collaborate, solve complex challenges, and identify innovation opportunities;
- A learned process for accelerating innovation that they can share within their HEI and in the sector; and
- Frameworks and materials that can support in launching other innovation projects.

Participants who successfully complete Phases 1 and 2 will receive a Certificate of Completion signed by USAID, ASU UDI, and RTI.

2.1. Phases of the Transformation Accelerator
The Transformation Accelerator has three phases:

Phase 1: Access	Phase 2: Refine	Phase 3: Implement
Transformation Accelerator Roadmap Sessions	**Transformation Accelerator Project Sessions for Refining**	**Transformation Accelerator Grant Funding and Documentation**
Applicants will submit an Expression of Interest (EOI) response for consideration for acceptance in the Transformation Accelerator. Successful applicants will then attend Roadmap Sessions aiming to shape a transformation project in their institution utilizing UDI's **IMPACT Framework**[2].	Participants proceed with design workshops and coaching sessions with ASU UDI experts and mentors and receive additional support where appropriate.

In this phase, they will focus on Assessing, Creating, and Testing their project ideas. | HEIs that participate in Phases 1 and 2 are eligible to apply for USAID grant funding, which will enable them to receive additional support in developing and implementing their proposed Transformation Accelerator projects.

See Annex A, Section 3 for initial details on grant funding. |

For more details on the detailed timeline of the Transformation Accelerator, see Annex B.

3. The Transformation Accelerator Grant Fund (Phase 3)
UPSKILL intends to release a Request for Applications (RFA) for those who participate in Phases 1 and 2 to apply for funding to implement their projects. Subject to availability of funds, UPSKILL estimates that each Transformation Accelerator grant may be up to USD 35,000. Grants will be

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[2] ASU UDI Design Accelerator Program IMPACT Framework: https://udi.asu.edu/solutions/design-programs/design-accelerator

administered in accordance with applicable RTI policies and USAID regulations. More information on the RFA will be provided to Transformation Accelerator participants during Phase 3.

4. Potential Project Themes

As part of the EOI, interested participants should submit the accomplished EOI Form providing an overview of the challenge they want to explore to address local, regional, and/or national imperatives. Institutions are encouraged to focus on challenges that have the potential for significant community impact, which include but are not limited to:

- Integrating technology innovatively to increase academic quality, higher education access and enrollment, and student success practices;
- Building research capabilities;
- Connecting to local industry needs;
- Reaching underserved youth and rural communities;
- Expanding digital capabilities to increase the institution's ability to facilitate greater flexibility to meet students' needs while delivering quality programs;
- Bringing an entrepreneurial mindset into an institution to increase employability and encourage transfer of technology;
- Evolving programming to better serve learners across their lifespan, including workforce development, upskilling, and reskilling.

An ideal project proposal should:

- Support the vision and strategic direction of the Philippine Development Plan (2023-2028), the Philippine Commission on Higher Education (CHED), the HEI, and its community, region, and/or sector;
- Align with institutional priorities and strategic initiatives;
- Address a challenge that demands new and innovative solutions;
- Have potential for significant impact on the higher education sector or its immediate community;
- Be able to form an effective project team, and dedicate resources to team efforts; and
- Be able to design a maximum of 18 months launch-ready plan for immediate implementation with identifiable and measurable progress.

5. Eligibility

Any Philippine HEI included within the parameters of the 2018 USAID Education Policy[3] definition of a "higher education institution" may apply to the Transformation Accelerator.

"A higher education institution is an organization that provides educational opportunities that build on secondary education, providing learning activities in specialized fields. It aims at learning at a high-level complexity and specialization. Higher/tertiary education includes

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[3] 2018 USAID Education Policy - https://www.usaid.gov/sites/default/files/2022-05/2018_Education_Policy_FINAL_WEB.pdf

what is commonly understood as academic education but also includes advanced vocational or professional education. This may include public or private universities, colleges, community colleges, academically affiliated research institutes, and training institutes, including teacher training institutes."

Eligible applicants should be:
- Any public or private higher education institutions following 2018 USAID Education Policy definition
  - UPSKILL will follow the list of Philippine HEIs recognized by CHED or TESDA to determine whether the institution has a unique institutional status. The allocation for the Transformation Accelerator will be limited to one project team per unique institution.
- Able to select a Team Lead who:
  - Has relevant project management experience
  - Is a staff member or official of the HEI
- Able to form a Project Team with members who:
  - Have the requisite experience, expertise, and authority to advance the initiative
  - Understands or can hold the perspectives of the stakeholders in the innovation
  - Have the permission and support of their direct supervisors to make time for the work of the innovation and fully attend and participate in UDI-led sessions
  - Demonstrate diversity through representation, cross-disciplinarity, and cross-functionality
  - Are willing to collaborate and learn with and from each other.

Note that other eligibility criteria for the Transformation Accelerator's Phase 3 on grant funding will be described in a separate Request for Applications (RFA).

6. EOI Submission Guidelines for the Transformation Accelerator

All interested HEIs must **submit a written and signed EOI** to enter Phases 1 and 2. Submitted EOIs must be in English and in digital format (either in Microsoft Word or PDF). Please do not attach any other documentation, other than those listed below:

- **EOI Cover Letter.** Include the name of the participating HEI, and the name and contact details of the proposed key personnel who will receive correspondence regarding the status of the submission. The cover letter must be signed by the HEI President, and addressed to:

    Dr. Richard Abendan
    Chief of Party
    U.S.-Philippines Partnership for Skills, Innovation, and Lifelong Learning
    RTI International

- **EOI Form**. This document must briefly outline a possible proposed Transformation Accelerator project *(See Annex C. Expression of Interest Form)*:
  - **Transformation Accelerator Title:** What is the title of your proposed project? State in 10 words or less.
  - **Transformation Accelerator Challenge Overview**: What challenge does your proposal aim to address? Kindly explain the situation concisely including why it needs to be addressed by a higher education institution and its partners. What is at stake?
  - **Transformation Accelerator Impact:** If the Transformation Accelerator Challenge gets addressed, what are the potential measurable impacts? What could be achieved?
  - **Proposed Partners:** List the key stakeholders to be considered for possible engagement. Include both HEI and non-HEI actors and illustrate the importance of engaging these stakeholders. Of these stakeholders, indicate who you intend to have as partners.
  - **Resources:** What people, technological, and/or physical resources do you imagine will be needed to bring the Transformation Accelerator project to implementation?
  - **List of Proposed Team Members:** This provides the list of HEI faculty and/or staff members who will participate in the Transformation Accelerator Sessions.

Kindly note that all applications must be submitted by an HEI and not by individual HEI personnel. The EOI Form must be signed by the proposed Team Lead, approved by the Team Lead's direct supervisor, and endorsed by the HEI President.

A confirmation email will be sent by the UPSKILL team to confirm that your submission has been received. Use this email subject template to submit your applications: **"[EOI]_Name of Institution_MMDDYYYY"** to the UPSKILL Grants Team via **upskillgrants@upskill.rti.org.**

All editable forms may be accessed through this link **https://bit.ly/45BOhht**. All additional questions will only be entertained through **upskillgrants@upskill.rti.org.**

7. Selection Criteria for the EOI
All EOI Forms submitted within the deadline shall undergo a selection process set below:
1. EOIs are subjected to initial screening, which includes verifying the eligibility and confirming the completeness of required documentation. Late or incomplete EOI Forms will not be considered for review.
2. EOIs that pass the initial screening will undergo review and evaluation by a selection committee, utilizing the rubric below.

Criteria	Description	Points
Importance of Identified	Able to explain how the identified challenge supports the vision and strategic direction of the Philippine Development	5

Challenge	Plan (2023-2028), CHED, the HEI, its students, its community, region, and/or sector.	
Strength of Proposed Partners and Proposed Team	Able to list key stakeholders, and explain the importance of engaging these stakeholders. Able to identify a potential strong team who will attend Phases 1 and 2.	3
Potential Impact	Able to project the possible measurable impact of the Transformation Accelerator on the higher education sector or the institution's immediate community	2
Maximum Points		10

3. The selection committee will shortlist the highest-rated EOI submissions.
4. UPSKILL will notify all successful and unsuccessful applicants by email by August 19, 2024.

8. Participant Limits

UPSKILL anticipates shortlisting approximately 10-12 HEI Teams for this first Transformation Accelerator cohort, given the nature of the program and level of support provided to each HEI Team. Applicants that are not accepted are strongly encouraged to respond to future Transformation Accelerator EOIs, which may be released as early as July 2025.

9. Important Dates for the EOI

Item	Date and Time
Release of the Call for the Expression of Interest	July 15, 2024
Virtual Information Sessions for the Transformation Accelerator	July 23 and July 26, 2024 8:00 AM - 9:00 AM PST
Deadline for Submitting Expressions of Interest	August 9, 2024 / 3:00 PM PST
Selection and Notification of Selected Participants	August 19, 2024

Those who want to attend the Virtual Information Sessions need to pre-register through this link: **https://bit.ly/3RHnnPD** to receive the Zoom Link credentials. Applications must be submitted electronically to the contact information shown below no later than **August 9, 2024 (Friday), 3:00 P.M. PST**. Applications received after this time may not be accepted.

A confirmation email will be sent by the UPSKILL team to confirm that your submission has been received. Use this email subject template to submit your applications: **"[EOI]_Name of Institution_MMDDYYYY"** to the UPSKILL Grants Team via **upskillgrants@upskill.rti.org.**

All questions will only be entertained through **upskillgrants@upskill.rti.org.**

Annex B: Detailed Timeline of the UPSKILL Transformation Accelerator

Month	The Transformation Accelerator	
August 2024	**PHASE 1: ACCESS** *Successful applicants will be invited to attend Phase 1 Sessions. The Roadmap Sessions aim to support Philippine HEIs in shaping a transformation project for their institution utilizing the UDI's IMPACT Framework.[4]*	
	• Session on Team Composition and Challenge Identification (TBD) • Session on Design Thinking (TBD) • Kick Off Session (August 27, 2024, Time: 7:00-10:00am PST)	
September 2024	Imagine Sessions (Sessions 1&2) • September 10, 2024, Time: 7:00-10:00am PST • September 24, 2024, Time: 7:00-10:00am PST	
October 2024	Magnify Sessions (Sessions 3&4) • October 8, 2024, Time: 7:00-10:00am PST • October 22, 2024, Time: 7:00-10:00am PST	
November 2024	Propose (Sessions 5 and Office Hours) • November 5, 2024, Time: 7:00-10:00am PST • Week of November 11 and 18 Time: TBD	
	PHASE 2: REFINE *Participants proceed with design workshops and coaching sessions with ASU UDI experts and mentors before the implementation phase of their projects. During the refinement of their project, they will focus on Assessing (A), Creating (C), and Testing (T) their project.*	**PHASE 3: IMPLEMENT** *HEIs that participate in Phases 1 and 2 are eligible to apply for USAID grant funding which will enable them to receive additional support in developing and implementing their proposed Transformation Accelerator Projects.* **NOTE: Release of Request for Grant Applications is in November 2024.**
December 2024	Assess Sessions (Sessions 6&7)	RFA preparation & application period
January 2025	Create Sessions (Sessions 8&9)	RFA closes end of the month
February 2025	Test Session (Session 10)	• Evaluation of submitted grant applications • Review and selection
March 2025	Accelerator Month 7 Test (Session 11) Awarding of Certificates of Completion for the Transformation Accelerator Program, signed by USAID, ASU UDI, and RTI.	• Technical and budget negotiations with potential grantees • Confirmation of grant awardees and final approval by USAID/Philippines • Pre-award in-person assessment with potential grantees
April 2025	Start of grant implementation	Awarding of grants

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[4] ASU UDI Design Accelerator Program IMPACT Framework: https://udi.asu.edu/solutions/design-programs/design-accelerator

Phase 1: ACCESS - Transformation Accelerator Roadmap Sessions (15 hours)

The five sessions in Phase 1 focus on shaping a university transformation project connected to a local or regional need:

- Roadmap Sessions 1 and 2: IMAGINE (6 hours total). These sessions will allow participating HEIs to establish a vision for transformation, explore the current Philippine higher education landscape, and identify areas for potential engagement.
- Roadmap Sessions 3 and 4: MAGNIFY (6 hours total). These sessions will focus on magnifying needs and identifying constraints, including identifying the stakeholders who will be impacted by the transformation and establishing plans to bring their voices into the process.
- Roadmap Sessions 5: PROPOSE (3 hours total). In this session, the problem that will be addressed by the project will be finalized, informed by the work done in the previous two sessions and the homework in between sessions. Participating HEIs will produce project proposals with 2-3 potential strategic directions for the project.

Phase 2: REFINE - Transformation Accelerator Project Sessions for Refining (18 hours)

The additional design workshops and coaching sessions in Phase 2 will focus on refining proposed solutions toward a more concrete implementation plan.

- Refinement Sessions 6 and 7: ASSESS (6 hours total). These sessions will support participating HEIs to develop a pilot plan and generate feedback. By the end of these sessions, they will have mapped their ideas in line with success criteria and impact statements.
- Refinement Sessions 8 and 9: CREATING (6 hours total). These sessions focus on supporting participants to integrate feedback and finalize their plans. By the end of these sessions, participating teams will have developed a refined implementation plan.
- Refinement Sessions 10 and 11: TESTING (6 hours total). As the final stage of Phases 1 and 2, participating teams will present their projects. Those who complete Phases 1 and 2 will receive a Certificate of Completion signed by USAID, ASU UDI, and RTI.

Phase 3: IMPLEMENT - Transformation Accelerator Grant Funding and Documentation

The Transformation Accelerator Grant will support HEI Teams in implementing their proposed interventions with funding from USAID/Philippines. UPSKILL intends to issue a Request for Applications (RFA) for the Transformation Accelerator Grant Fund to HEI Teams who participate in Phases 1 and 2. HEI Teams will compete for grants in accordance with eligibility criteria, submission instructions, and selection criteria to be detailed in the RFA. Note that this will include an explanation of Grant Cost Share requirements. Grants will be administered in accordance with RTI grant policies and USAID regulations. This includes, for example, the requirement for organizations to secure a Unique Entity Identification Number (UEID). UPSKILL reserves the right to fund one or more projects resulting from the RFA, or reject any or all applications.

I. Institutional Profile	
Name of HEI	
Institutional Type	[ ] State University / College (SUC) Main [ ] SUC Satellite [ ] Local University/ College (LUC) [ ] Private HEI [ ] Technical-Vocational Institute
Institutional Accreditation	[ ] Autonomous [ ] Deregulated [ ] Regulated
Name of the Proposed Team Lead from the Institution	
Formal Designation	
Primary Email Address	
Alternate Email Address	
Office Phone Number	
Mobile Number	
PART ONE: Project Concept Note	
Transformation Accelerator Title What is the title of your proposed project? State in 10 words or less.	
Transformation Accelerator Challenge Overview What is the challenge that your proposal aims to address? Kindly	

explain the situation concisely including why it needs to be addressed by a higher education institution and its partners. What is at stake? State in 500 words or less.	
Transformation Accelerator Impact If the Transformation Accelerator Challenge gets addressed, what are potential measurable impacts? What could be achieved? State in 500 words or less.	
Proposed Partners List the key stakeholders to be considered for possible engagement. Include both HEI and non-HEI actors, and illustrate the importance of engaging these stakeholders. Of these stakeholders, indicate who you intend to have as partners. State in 300 words or less.	
Resources What people, technological, and/or physical resources do you imagine will be needed to bring the Transformation Accelerator Project to implementation? State in 300 words or less.	

PART TWO: Names of the Participating Members
This provides the list of faculty and/or staff members who will participate in Phases 1 and 2 who may compose the initial Team Composition.

	Name	**Designation**	**Primary Email Address**	**Secondary Email Address**	**Contact Number**
1					
2					

3				
4				
5				

I hereby submit our Expression of Interest and likewise commit to active and consistent participation of our faculty/staff to the Transformation Accelerator Phases 1 and 2 including activities to be undertaken before and after, especially in the terms and conditions stated in this program.

Prepared and Submitted by:	
Signature over Printed Name of Proposed Team Lead	
Date	

Approved by:	
Signature over Printed Name of the Proposed Team Lead's Direct Supervisor	
Date	

Endorsed by:	
Signature over Printed Name of the HEI Chancellor or President	
Date	

Who is eligible to participate in the Transformation Accelerator?	Any Philippine higher education institution included within the parameters of the 2018 USAID Education Policy definition of a "higher education institution" may apply to the Transformation Accelerator. *"A higher education institution is an organization that provides educational opportunities that build on secondary education, providing learning activities in specialized fields. It aims at learning at a high-level complexity and specialization. Higher/tertiary education includes what is commonly understood as academic education but also includes advanced vocational or professional education. This may include public or private universities, colleges, community colleges, academically affiliated research institutes, and* *training institutes, including teacher training institutes."* Applications to the Transformation Accelerator must be submitted by an institution and not individual HEI personnel.
What if the university has multiple campuses?	UPSKILL will follow the list of Philippine HEIs recognized by CHED or TESDA to determine whether the institution has a unique institutional status. The allocation for the Transformation Accelerator will be limited to one project team per unique institution.

Who is NOT eligible to apply for the Transformation Accelerator?	The following are NOT eligible to apply for the Transformation Accelerator:
	● An individual
	● A government entity (except higher education institutions)
	● National government agencies or local government units
	● Accrediting bodies
	● Higher education associations
	● U.S.-based HEIs
	● Political parties, groupings, or institutions or their subsidiaries and affiliates
	● Any person or entity who appears on any of the following lists:
	   ○ System for Award Management (SAM) Excluded Parties List
	   ○ The US Treasury's OFAC List

	○ The United Nations (UN) list; and ○ The US State Department Terrorism List
What is the responsibility of the participating universities?	Each participating university should demonstrate commitment to the end-to-end program and the project selected. Each university should be able to: ● Identify an institutional priority aligned with a community, regional, or higher education sector priority; ● Identify participating teams; ● Serve as an institutional sponsor; and ● Support their teams to engage in the process In addition, those awarded with USAID grant funding in Phase 3 are expected to: ● Submit complete and high-quality milestone deliverables to the UPSKILL team in a timely fashion; ● Flag and communicate to the UPSKILL team challenges that might impact the smooth and efficient delivery of the grant; ● Follow the communications and branding guidelines of UPSKILL in communicating their grant accomplishments, for engaging, and promotion purposes; and ● Monitor own progress and participate in virtual and face-to-face grant-related activities administered by UPSKILL.
What is the ideal team composition?	The ideal team composition includes 4 to 6 members who: ● Have the requisite experience, expertise, and authority to advance the initiative. ● Hold or can hold the perspectives of the stakeholders in the innovation. ● Have the permission and support of their direct supervisors to make time for the work of the innovation, and fully attend and participate in UDI-led sessions. ● Demonstrate diversity through representation, cross-disciplinarity, and cross-functionality. ● Are willing to collaborate and learn with and from each other. ● Can commit to the full program. ● Will commit to articulated team roles including a Team Lead. All team members should be HEI faculty or staff.
How many participants from each team can attend the sessions?	Accepted teams will be given a maximum of 5 slots to attend Phases 1 and 2 sessions.

Can an HEI be awarded more than one team project in the Transformation Accelerator?	No. HEIs will only be eligible for one chosen project for the Transformation Accelerator per cohort.
Can one HEI submit multiple applications for the Transformation Accelerator?	Yes. However, UPSKILL would appreciate it if the HEI can undertake an initial review of potential projects and submit just one proposal.
Can there be a team with people from different universities?	Yes. Collaboration among HEIs is encouraged for a successful Transformation Accelerator experience. However, for efficient monitoring and project implementation purposes, the team working on one project should decide who among themselves will serve as the Lead Institution.
Can there be two or more HEIs as Lead Institutions?	No. Only one institution will be the Lead Institution per project. This Lead HEI is required to coordinate with their team members/partners. Funding will be provided to one (1) HEI, and that HEI will be accountable for the milestones of their project.
What is the role of the Team Lead?	The Team Lead, who should come from the Lead HEI, will serve as a main point of contact with the UPSKILL team to share feedback and needs of the innovation team, respond to surveys, communicate preferences for support and mentoring, etc. Further, the Team Lead will be the lead facilitator of the team's work and they (or their office) are responsible for ensuring that team members meet, produce deliverables, etc.
What is the delivery modality for Phases 1 and 2 sessions?	All sessions in the Transformation Accelerator Phases 1 and 2 are primarily delivered live, synchronously, via Zoom.
Will the sessions be recorded and made available?	Yes, they will be. However, at least two team members should attend per synchronous session.
What is the time commitment for each team?	For Phase 1, teams will be asked to commit to five 3-hour virtual sessions for a total of 15 hours. For Phase 2, Teams will be asked to commit to six 3-hour virtual sessions for a total of 18 hours.

	Additional time, roughly 2 hours/month, will be required from each Team outside of live engagements to complete discovery activities and advance their project. Those who finish Phases 1 and 2 will receive a Certificate of Completion signed by USAID, ASU UDI, and RTI.
How do we know which project to submit?	The challenge will initially be identified by the HEI and relate to the community, region, and/or sector. Each institution and its leadership will determine an opportunity that best fits institutional goals and context.
When considering a potential project, what should the teams consider?	Teams should consider a project, which: ● Supports the vision and strategic direction of the Philippine Development Plan (2023-2028), CHED, the HEI, and its community, region, and/or sector; ● Aligns with institutional priorities and strategic initiatives; ● Addresses a challenge that demands new and innovative solutions; ● Has potential for significant impact; ● Can form an effective project team, and dedicate resources to project team efforts; and ● Can design a launch-ready plan for immediate implementation with identifiable and measurable progress. See Section 7 above on the selection criteria that will be used to review the EOI responses.
Who might we consider engaging as potential partners in the project?	● Other HEIs, either based in the Philippines, in the U.S., or abroad; ● Industry, private sector, and/or community stakeholders who are critical to success; ● Regional or higher education sector consortiums who are addressing a similar issue, problem, opportunity, or societal need; ● International partners who can contribute expertise or resources; and ● Relevant public agencies
Can we completely rescope the project or even change to another project during Phases 1 or 2?	Yes, the work done in Phase 1 to identify and magnify the problem you are seeking to address may uncover a need to redesign the project or identify a project with more meaningful impact.
What does grant funding entail?	The value of grant funding may be up to USD 35,000. Grants will be administered in accordance with RTI policies and applicable USAID regulations. Grant Cost Share will be strongly encouraged.

How many projects will be given grant money?	Depending on the availability of funds, up to 12 grants may be given during the Transformation Accelerator Program's first run.
If we are unsuccessful in acquiring grant funding from UPSKILL, can we continue with the additional Transformation Accelerator into implementation?	Yes. Not getting a grant in Phase 3 does not prevent you from completing the Transformation Accelerator. You are welcome to utilize funding from other sources or your own university's resources. You are welcome to seek funding or the project may be funded by the HEI itself.
Can my institution apply for a Transformation Accelerator Grant in Phase 3 if my institution does not attend Phase 1 and 2 sessions?	No. The Transformation Accelerator starts at Phase 1 and it is 1 of the 3 phases in the program. Participation in Phase 1 and 2 is required to apply for a Transformation Accelerator Grant.
If we have funding from other sources, do we need to continue in the Transformation Accelerator?	Yes. Regardless of funding source, teams are encouraged to complete all sessions of the Transformation Accelerator as they may still benefit from the capacity building and support provided.
What if the team needs to replace a team member mid-program?	UDI will support the Team Lead in thinking about who the new team member should be and in onboarding the new team member. In cases where the Team Lead needs to be replaced, UDI will work closely with the HEI's Head of Institution to properly endorse the new Team Lead.
For Grant Awardees, how will project teams be held responsible for participation and achieving program milestones?	UPSKILL acknowledges the complexity and intensity of the context in which teams work.. Milestones are likely to be missed, and there will be times when not all team members will be able to attend all sessions. In their initial session, teams will form accountability agreements for themselves. Team Leads will support the team in upholding these agreements and help identify what's not working and why and look for solutions. If the team or UPSKILL determines that the team is unlikely to succeed or persist after all interventions have been tried, the sponsoring institution will be notified.

It's my first USAID Grant Funding. What support can be expected from UPSKILL?	First-timers of USAID grant funding will receive additional support to help them adhere to processes and requirements.
I am part of the ASU Fellowship. Can I apply for the Transformation Accelerator?	The ASU Innovation Fellowship and the Transformation Accelerator have different objectives. This means that Innovation Fellows may be part of an institution's application to the Transformation Accelerator as part of a project team or as a Team Lead. All Innovation Fellows must still undergo Phases 1 and 2 in order to be part of an eligible team for Phase 3.
Will the Transformation Accelerator run again?	Yes, it is anticipated that the Transformation Accelerator Program will run again during the UPSKILL Program.
Can one institution have a team per year in the Accelerator?	Yes. An HEI can apply to future Transformation Accelerator programs. The goal of the Transformation Accelerator is to strengthen the capacities of HEIs to ideate and refine interventions.
If I have completed the Transformation Accelerator Sessions, but do not receive grant funding, can I apply again next year for grant funding?	Yes.

Should you have any inquiries about the Transformation Accelerator, you may contact the UDI Team through **upskillgrants@upskill.rti.org**