U.S. GLOBAL DEVELOPMENT LAB

CREATING AN ENABLING ENVIRONMENT FOR TECHNOLOGY EXCHANGE

Women of Takalafiya-Lapai village (Niger State) are beneficiaries of Nigeria's Fadama II project. Photo credit: Arne Hoel

Booz & Company has predicted that the 'digitization' of the economy could yield as much as $4.1 trillion in GDP for the world's poorest people. This would create 64 million new jobs and help lift 580 million people currently living under $4/day above the poverty line. Any transfer of technology to help spur quicker digitization is greatly limited by the absence of a foundational enabling environment.

Through a combination of increased **human capacity, improved physical infrastructure,** and the **establishment of innovation networks,** we can sustainably promote the effective adoption of technologies. Investing in science and technology talent ensures that countries will have increased capacity to create and apply technological innovations. This includes attention to secondary and tertiary STEM education, research and development, and a legal framework that encourages investment, innovation, and entrepreneurs.

Equally critical is adequate investment in physical infrastructure, ensuring, for example, that all people have access to affordable broadband internet. Finally, by convening communities of cross-functional experts — from the deeply scientific to policy masterminds to community organizers — we can iterate ensure that technology exchange happens organically, between communities. Enabling people to utilize technology how they want to use it, and involving all relevant players in technology exchange, helps build the necessary capacity to apply technology in diverse contexts.

Current Initiatives at USAID Reflecting these Ends

CAPACITY

Partnerships for Enhanced Engagement in Research (PEER) PEER is a competitive grants program administered by the U.S. National Academy of Sciences that invites scientists in developing countries, partnered with USG-supported collaborators, to apply for funds to support research and capacity-building activities on topics with strong potential development impacts. This innovative program is designed to leverage the investments other USG-supported agencies have made in scientific research and training while supporting the initiatives of developing country scientists.

USAID FROM THE AMERICAN PEOPLE

ENABLING ENVIRONMENT

The African Broadband Partnership (ABP) is a partnership between USAID's Lab, the Bureau for Africa, USAID partners and select African governments. The purpose of the ABP is to facilitate economic growth by building regulatory ecosystems and alleviating bottlenecks to sustainable achievement of universal access to broadband services in sub-Saharan Africa. ABP will facilitate this achievement by working in partnership with African governments, the private sector and the USG, concentrating on the enabling environment key bottlenecks, and when the opportunity is there to leverage partnerships to invest in key, proof-of-concept infrastructure.

Alliance for Affordable Internet (A4AI) is a coalition of private sector, public sector, and civil society organizations that have come together to advance the shared aim of affordable access to both mobile and fixed-line Internet in developing countries. Created by USAID and the State Department, A4AI works to catalyze policy change to drive down the cost of broadband in Burma, the Dominican Republic, Ghana, Mozambique and Nigeria, and plans to be in 10 countries by the end of 2015.

Global Broadband Initiative (GBI) works with governments on legal and regulatory issues and on rural buildout of broadband through new, low cost "last mile" technologies. Specific policy focus areas include: creating an enabling environment that catalyzes expanded access to low cost broadband through technical assistance to build the capacity of Universal Service Funds. GBI creates partnerships with host governments and private sector technology providers, including Microsoft and Cisco Corporations, in the deployment of new broadband technologies through joint financial and technical cooperation. The "Women on the Web Alliance," part of GBI program and in partnership with Intel, builds gender literacy.

FUNDING

The Global Innovation Fund (GIF) was launched in 2014 by the United States, United Kingdom, Swedish, and Australian Governments, in partnership with Omidyar Network. The $200 million Global Innovation Fund will invest in social innovations that aim to improve the lives and opportunities of millions of people in the developing world. The Global Innovation Fund uses a venture capital-like approach to investing in a wide range of social innovations, drawing on the success of the industry to discover and support innovative ventures that have the potential to scale across the developing world.

USAID's **Development Innovation Ventures (DIV)** holds a year-round grant competition for innovative ideas, pilots and tests them using cutting-edge analytical methods, and scales solutions that demonstrate widespread impact and cost-effectiveness. DIV's tiered-funding model inspired by the venture capital experience, invests comparatively small amounts in relatively unproven concepts, and continues to support only those that prove they work. Approximately 33% of DIV grant recipients are from developing countries.

USAID's **Grand Challenges for Development** initiative remove critical barriers to international development by calling on the global community to discover, launch, test, and accelerate science, technology, and innovation solutions to reduce poverty and improve lives. Of the six Grand Challenges launched to date- from saving lives at birth to fighting Ebola, 30% of the awardees hail from developing countries.