



BRIDGE SPARK FUND

Request for Proposals

Today's global challenges are massive and affect the planet and people's lives with equal impact. For example, headlines remind us of the increasingly rapid pace of climate change (the Ross Ice Shelf is melting 10 times faster than predicted) with its devastating impacts on people (deadly heat waves, fires and floods) and the massive decline of biodiversity (one million species at risk of extinction). Thousands of organizations work to address these challenges, each from their own sector's starting point. The pace and scale of global change, however, exceeds the collective efforts of these sectors working in individual silos: we are missing synergies and opportunities for efficiency, leaving solutions on the table and slowing progress through the unintended consequences of our narrowly focused actions. With the myopic view of solving global challenges one sector at a time, we will fail to achieve the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. To make bigger change faster, we need solutions that move more than one needle at a time.

Most organizations are not currently equipped to do this kind of cross-sector work, and only a few progressive funders are supporting it. Through the [Bridge Collaborative](#) and supported by Lyda Hill Philanthropies, we seek to change that and announce the Bridge Spark Fund as a catalyst to empower teams and demonstrate what is possible through solutions that drive cross-sector impact.

We are accepting pre-proposals addressing the following three challenges until October 4, 2019 (11:59pm U.S. Eastern Time):

- **Accelerating a low-carbon, clean air and environmentally-friendly energy future for all**
- **Transforming the global food system for health and sustainability**
- **Improving sanitation and wastewater management to benefit people and nature**

Fifty applying teams will be selected for an optional virtual "bootcamp," providing the opportunity to strengthen their ideas before full proposals are due (see *Timeline*). Those selected for the bootcamp will then be eligible to compete for one of the **four, one-year awards of US\$150,000. Awards will be announced in January of 2020.**

Powering the Pipeline of World-Changing Ideas

We see a need to augment funding to teams with ideas ready to move beyond primary research, but not yet achieving global impact. Any proposal to the Bridge Spark Fund should aim to advance multiple impacts for development, health and the environment (within the three *Integrated Challenge Areas* outlined below). In addition, competitive ideas will be strong on *each* of the following criteria (Fig. 1):

- **Strength of evidence:** there is strong existing evidence for at least one proposed impact (positive change) and a plausible theory for any other proposed impacts that do not yet have strong evidence.
- **Potential for global impact:** the problem the idea aims to solve is a major global challenge and the solution could be scaled to achieve globally meaningful impact by 2030.
- **Mechanism for scaling:** there is a plausible theory for how the idea will deliver global impacts on development, health and the environment by 2030, thus contributing to the achievement of the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals or other relevant agreements.
- **Implementation:** implementation of some kind (e.g. engagement with a corporation, government, community, practice organization or other decision-making entity) is a clear part of the proposed work.

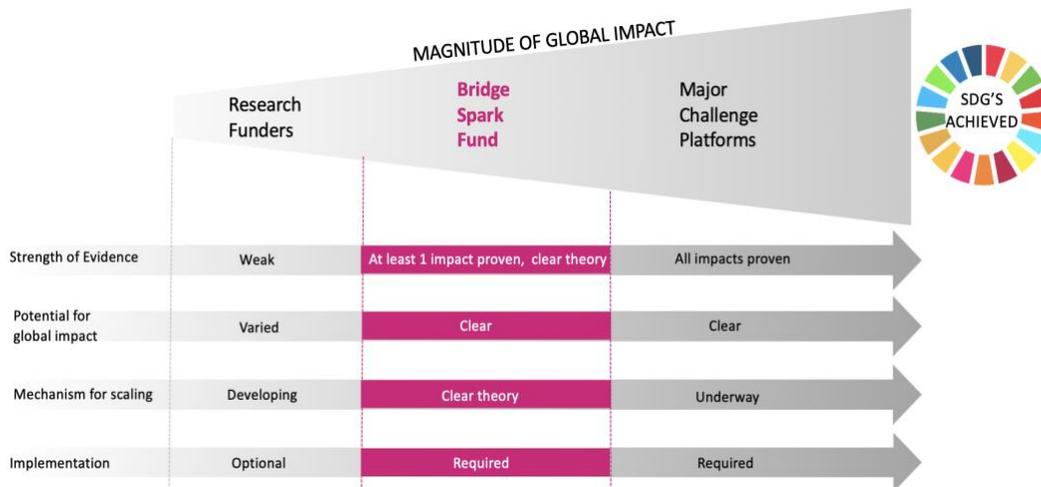


Figure 1. Despite substantial funding for multi- and transdisciplinary research and analyses, we see a paucity of cross-sector ideas transitioning from research understanding to global impact. The Bridge Spark Fund aims to strengthen this pipeline by better preparing cross-sector ideas for major challenge funding (e.g. MacArthur 100 and Change, Co-Impact, among others). We see this as a necessary step to advancing more ideas that can solve development, health and environmental challenges simultaneously.

Integrated Challenge Areas

We seek projects advancing solutions related to at least one of the following integrated challenge areas:

Accelerating a low-carbon, clean air and environmentally-friendly energy future for all

Access to modern energy is needed to reduce poverty and support rising living standards. The current global reliance on fossil fuels drives climate change, and air pollution from fossil and solid fuels creates a major health burden. The transition to low-carbon, renewable energy is necessary to improve development, health, and the environment, yet renewable energy infrastructure can damage important habitats that support biodiversity. In addition, few current solutions can be adopted at the speed needed to meet rapidly growing demand for energy services.

Challenge Elements:

- Greenhouse gas emissions
- Renewable energy access
- Health risks from air pollution
- Energy infrastructure risks for rivers, lands or oceans

Transforming the global food system for health and sustainability

Food is an essential human need and its production contributes to many livelihoods, but its production and consumption are at the center of some of the greatest sustainability challenges facing people and the planet. Food production is a leading driver of global biodiversity loss on land, in rivers and in the oceans through habitat conversion, irrigation water use, greenhouse gas emissions, and water pollution from fertilizers, other chemicals and erosion. At the same time, food systems are not meeting the full nutritional needs of billions of people, and unhealthy diets (from under and over-consumption and poor dietary diversity) are the leading global cause of poor health.

Challenge Elements:

- Malnutrition from over or underconsumption and/or poor dietary diversity
- Agriculture productivity (yields of crops, forage, livestock, fish, etc)
- Greenhouse gas emissions
- Health risks from air pollution
- Habitat conversion
- Freshwater biodiversity risks from water use (e.g. irrigation) and water pollution (e.g. agrochemical & sediment pollution)

Improving sanitation and wastewater management to benefit people and nature

Insufficient sanitation and wastewater treatment drive a major burden of pollution from human waste which contaminates water supplies, undermines human health from diarrheal disease, threatens nutritional security and antimicrobial resistance, and also poses a leading threat to freshwater and marine biodiversity.

Challenge Elements:

- Access to safely managed sanitation services
- Adequate wastewater treatment
- Health risk from unsafe water (especially water borne infectious diseases, antimicrobial resistance)
- Undernutrition from diarrheal disease
- Freshwater and/or marine biodiversity risks from sewage & untreated wastewater

Proposals need to identify which of the integrated challenge(s) they are addressing, identify a potential solution, and discuss *all* elements listed for the chosen challenge (see boxes above). If one of the elements is not relevant to your solution or context, explain why. If your idea will impact other elements in addition to these, please describe them.

As the SDGs aim to leave no one behind, we have a preference for proposals that address these challenges for the most underserved or vulnerable populations, describing how the proposed project will contribute to improving equity.

Timeline

The selection process begins with a pre-proposal stage open through 11:59pm U.S. Eastern Time on October 4, 2019. All submissions should be made at this website: <https://bridge-spark-fund.awardsplatform.com>. Figure 2 provides an overview of the timeline for proposal submission and selection.

Two cohorts (25 teams each) selected by the Bridge Collaborative Secretariat will be invited to participate in an optional virtual bootcamp facilitated by the Bridge Collaborative to help strengthen their concept. One cohort will include proposals that intend to deliver impact in the United States, and the other cohort will include proposals that intend to deliver impact in low- and middle-income countries (LMIC).¹ These cohorts will then be invited to submit full proposals and compete for one of four awards (2 for US impact, 2 for LMIC impact). Full proposals will be evaluated by a panel of interdisciplinary judges using the criteria included in the proposal template. Winning teams will be notified in January 2020 and must use funds by December 1, 2020.

The virtual bootcamps will consist of a combination of live webinars and iterative consultations with an expert coach matched with each team. The main areas of focus for these interactions will be to:

- **Expand expert networks.** We find that teams may be able to identify new outcomes that could be provided by an intervention but may lack connections to experts in that new area. For example, a health team may realize there is a strong environmental determinant for a disease but lack a network of environmental experts to engage in shaping an intervention. The bootcamp will provide teams with tips for identifying and reaching out to experts outside their normal networks.
- **Strengthen scalability.** Teams often think about scaling adoption of their idea after it has been tested in at least one place. This can make the initial test inefficient, and in some cases irrelevant, as thinking about future applications early may change ideas about how adoption will scale and who will drive further adoption. These and other elements of scalability will be explored with each team.
- **Funding pitch.** Given the paucity of funders willing to support cross-sector ideas today, gaining funding is a common challenge. The bootcamp will provide tips on how to pitch a cross-sector idea to a single-sector funder and will give cohorts a chance to have frank conversations with actual funders.

Teams will also benefit from an expanded network of peers within the cohort. Deliberate opportunities to share and collaborate will be offered after proposals are submitted.

¹ Please consult the following webpage for a list of countries defined by the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development as having low- and middle-income status: <http://www.oecd.org/dac/financing-sustainable-development/development-finance-standards/daclist.htm>

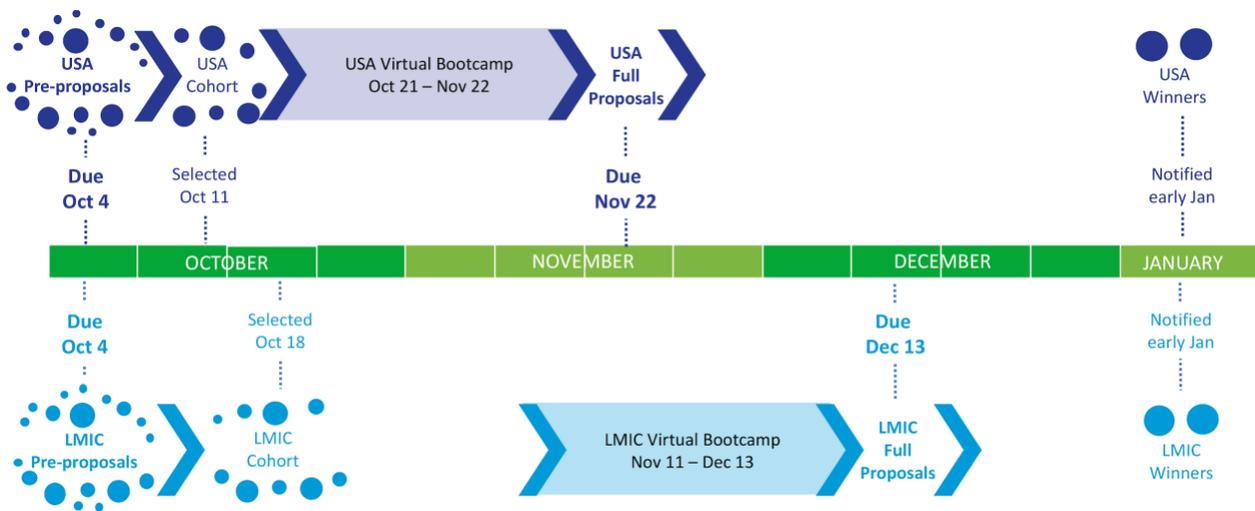


Figure 2. Overview of timeline. All dates listed refer to the US Eastern Time. Applicants from other time zones should adjust accordingly. Proposals should be submitted by 11:59pm US Eastern Time on the noted dates.

Who can Apply

Applicants must be from one of the following types of institutions:

- a non-profit organization (including non-profit institutions of higher education)
- a governmental entity or agency (including public institutions of higher education) or public multilateral organization

For-profit entities and individuals are not eligible to receive grants, but they are eligible to work as part of a project team on a limited contractual basis in support of project deliverables.

Aligned with our desire to powerfully advance the U.N. Sustainable Development Goals, we strongly value increasing the diversity of leadership. Therefore, we welcome and encourage applications from teams led by individuals from LMICs and/or led by individuals from historically underrepresented groups in the U.S. We also seek to further gender equity in accord with SDG 5, and thus encourage applications from gender balanced teams. Applicant teams can be based in any qualifying countries.

This Fund is executed under the laws of the U.S., and U.S. law prohibits terrorist financing and engaging with sanctioned country programs. No grants will be made or expenses incurred in contravention of OFAC Sanctioned Programs (<https://www.treasury.gov/resource-center/sanctions/Programs/Pages/Programs.aspx>), or to any individuals or entities that appear on the Specially Designated Nationals and Blocked Persons List maintained by the U.S. Treasury (<https://www.treasury.gov/resource-center/sanctions/SDN-List/Pages/default.aspx>), or the U.N. Security designation list (<https://www.un.org/securitycouncil/content/un-sc-consolidated-list>).

How Grant Funds can be Spent

Funds may be spent only in accordance with the approved funding request and budget. No funds from the grant may be used to carry on propaganda, influence legislation, influence the outcome of any specific public election, or carry on, directly or indirectly, any voter registration drive.

Budgets are not required for pre-proposals. For full proposals, the budget template available [here](#) should be used, and additional guidance will be given to those invited to submit full proposals.

Proposal Narrative

Pre-proposals will be judged by the Bridge Collaborative Secretariat, and full proposals will be evaluated by a panel of interdisciplinary experts in development, health and the environment.² The template below provides the required elements for pre-proposals and full proposals along with word limits, and it specifies how judges will be evaluating proposals in each round. The template may be adjusted slightly to fit the online submission platform, but proposal elements will remain the same.

For questions regarding expectations or the submission process, please contact the Bridge Collaborative team at info@bridgecollaborativeglobal.org noting “Bridge Spark Fund” in the subject line. In developing proposal ideas, applicants may wish to review the Bridge Collaborative [Practitioner’s Guide](#) or other [planning resources](#).

Proposal Element	Word Limit Pre-Proposal; Full Proposal	Judging Rubric Judges will score as Exceeds (3 points), Fully meets (2), Partly meets (1), Does not meet (0)
INTEGRATED CHALLENGE		
Which integrated challenge areas are you addressing?	Check box Check box	[Not judged]
PROPOSED SOLUTION		
What is your proposed solution, and how much will it impact each of the elements of the chosen challenge within the grant period? Describe the evidence or theory that supports your idea and proposed impacts.	500 800	Impacts are described and estimated for all elements identified for the integrated challenge area in the request for proposals (see elements listed in the <i>Integrated Challenge Areas</i> section above).
		It is clear that the solution can improve equity and intentionally targets underserved or vulnerable populations.
		There is strong evidence for at least one proposed impact, and a clear theory for all other proposed impacts.
		The available evidence and theories are relevant to the proposed context (e.g. similar geography, political setting, population, ecosystem, etc.)
How much impact do you expect your proposed solution to have on each of the challenge elements over the next 5 years, and what mechanism will drive this growth? Describe the evidence or theory that supports your assumptions about how impact will grow (i.e. scaling).	500 800	Impacts are described and estimated for all elements identified for the integrated challenge area in the request for proposals (see elements identified in the <i>Integrated Challenge Areas</i> section above).
		All expected impacts are large compared to global needs or goals.
		Scaling mechanism is clear, and work within grant period will initiate scaling or set clearly necessary enabling conditions for scaling (including support from key stakeholders) after the grant period.
		The available evidence and theories are relevant to the proposed context (e.g. similar geography, political setting, population, ecosystem, etc.)
How does your idea compare to other existing solutions to the challenge?	Not Applicable (NA) 200	Solution is compared to other existing solutions, and comparative advantage is clear (e.g. cheaper, greater impact, more feasible, etc.)

² The Bridge Collaborative Secretariat Chair will retain the right to reject any proposal recommended for funding by the panel of judges if the proposal fails to meet any stated criteria or poses undue risk to The Nature Conservancy as the fiscal agent of the supporting funds. In the case that a recommended proposal is rejected by the Secretariat Chair, the award will go to the next highest scoring acceptable proposal.

KEY ASSUMPTIONS		
What key assumptions are being tested in your project and how are they being tested?	500 500	Assumptions are clearly stated and address clear gaps in the existing evidence base.
		Testing of assumptions will be done through implementation. The project is not solely a lab/computer/theoretical research project.
		Testing of assumptions will happen in a diversity of contexts that is representative of the contexts where the solution is expected to scale. For example, if impact is expected to scale through corporate adoption, a representative set of adopting companies is included in the project. If impact is expected to scale through non-profit work in multiple countries, a representative set of countries is involved in the project.
PROJECT TEAM		
Describe the team and why they are well suited to conduct the proposed work.	600 600	Team composition is well matched to proposed work.
		Applications from teams that are gender balanced are encouraged.
		Applications from teams that are led by individuals from LMICs or led by individuals from historically underrepresented groups in the U.S. are encouraged.
Give an example of how this team or key team members have adjusted quickly in the past to improve an idea. (<i>pre-proposal only</i>)	200 NA	The story shows team flexibility, open mindedness, and ability to incorporate new knowledge.
Does your team lack some essential skill set to conduct the proposed work? If yes, describe how this gap will be addressed.	50 150	[Not evaluated for pre-proposals but used to match teams with coaches if selected into the cohort.] The team recognizes weaknesses and has practical, sufficient plans for addressing them.
RISKS		
If this project fails, what do you expect will have caused the failure?	NA 100	Response demonstrates critical thoughtfulness about risks. All projects face real risks, so at least one substantive risk is identified.
How will you mitigate these risks of failure?	NA 100	Mitigation approaches are likely to actually reduce risks.
PROJECT DETAILS		
Describe the major activities you will conduct over the term of the grant and identify key deliverables.	NA 300	The work plan is clear and well matched to expected deliverables.
		The timeline is well matched to expected impacts, budget and team.
Complete the provided budget template and discuss how funds will be used.	NA 300	Breakdown of expenses is clear and well-matched to proposed work.
WORKS CITED		
Insert a list of works cited in the proposal.	NA NA	[While this element will not be evaluated on its own, it will be considered by judges as support for the elements above.]

About the Bridge Spark Fund

The Bridge Spark Fund is supported by **Lyda Hill Philanthropies**. Lyda Hill Philanthropies encompasses the charitable giving for founder Lyda Hill and includes her foundation and personal philanthropy. Our organization is committed to funding transformational advances in science and nature, empowering nonprofit organizations and improving the North Texas and Colorado Springs communities. Because Miss Hill has a fervent belief that “science is the answer” to many of life’s most challenging issues, she has chosen to donate the entirety of her estate to philanthropy and scientific research. For more details visit: lydahillphilanthropies.org

The Bridge Spark Fund is implemented by the **Bridge Collaborative**, a global change agent driving a fundamental shift in how we think, plan, fund and work across sectors to make bigger change faster. Founded in 2016, the Collaborative is a partnership spearheaded by The Nature Conservancy, Duke University, the International Food Policy Research Institute, and PATH. We unite people and organizations from across the health, development and environment sectors with shared evidence and tools to make a greater impact at the speed the world needs now. Our growing global alliance of scientists, practitioners and organizations is moving beyond business as usual with the aim of creating a more equitable and sustainable world. For more information, please visit: www.bridgecollaborativeglobal.org