



PROJECT PROFILE

Using Open Innovation to Drive Bold New Solutions



PROJECT NAME

Catalyst

CLIENT

USAID U.S. Global Development Lab's
Center for Development Innovation
(Lab/CDI)

PRIME CONTRACTOR

Resonance Global

IMPLEMENTING PARTNERS

The Kaizen Company, Moonshot Global,
Global Knowledge Initiative (GKI)

COUNTRY

Global

TIME PERIOD

Aug. 2018 – Sept. 2023

TEAM

Stephen Rahaim,
Chief of Party, Catalyst
Chelsea Keyser,
Program Director, Catalyst
Ben Amick, *Inclusive Markets*

Challenge

Around the world and across every major development challenge—from food security to gender empowerment—open innovation is emerging as an important tool for sourcing and launching bold new solutions. In this context, open innovation means competitions, challenges, and prizes that support promising new solutions to persistent and/or complex development problems.

Here's how it works: Each open innovation competition outlines a problem in need of unconventional solutions. This problem is then posed to the global community to crowdsource bright new ideas, tools, and approaches. Global and local entrepreneurs, academics, civil society organizations, businesses, and others—we'll collectively call them "innovators"—are invited to apply by describing and proposing solutions and why they think their solutions will work. The best innovations with the most promising models for success, sustainability, and scale are selected. Innovators receive funding or other types of prizes and support, to recognize their work and help them launch, pilot, prove, or scale their new solutions.

This is exciting territory, but it is also new. The development field is still learning how best to deploy open innovation for lasting impact.

Solution

With USAID, Resonance leads the Catalyst project to enhance and spread the use of open innovation across the Agency's global portfolio. We are working with USAID to identify and implement best practices for finding innovators, evaluating their concepts and business models, and then financing and accelerating their impact. Open Innovation can also help USAID engage new private sector partners in its development activities around the world.

Our services:

- **Catalyst designs, launches, and manages new innovation competitions for USAID.** Our team facilitates co-design sessions with USAID and partners to articulate competition objectives and outline evaluation and eligibility criteria. We plan communications and outreach – building and tapping relevant networks to reach a large and diverse pool of innovators – to better source high-quality applications. We then launch the Challenge, oversee the innovator evaluation process, and, if requested, manage innovator grants and awards.
- **We connect innovators to a range of specialized acceleration services,** to help them address key business challenges at each stage of their establishment, growth, and scale;
- **We improve monitoring, evaluation, and learning within innovation programming,** including designing monitoring plans, supporting data collection, and conducting research into innovator impact and open innovation best practices;
- **We craft effective communication campaigns** that help USAID source innovators in target countries and sectors; raise awareness with key stakeholders and potential partners; and share USAID's innovation impact story with the broader development community.

Key Results

As the project enters Year 2, the Catalyst Team has: For USAID/Guatemala, Resonance conducted the final performance evaluation of USAID's Lifelong Learning project in Guatemala. During the evaluation, the team identified project impacts and provided insight into challenges and opportunities for future education activities.

- Co-designed and launched five Open Innovation competitions to help USAID identify and support 12 innovators working across a range of pressing development challenges and sectors.
- Identified and established a network of 20 specialized acceleration service providers ready to meet innovator needs across 12 acceleration service categories.
- Provided key support to relaunch the USAID Development Innovation Ventures (DIV) program, one of the first and largest publicly funded global social impact investing funds. Catalyst has improved outreach, sourcing, and evaluation of DIV innovators; created an updated key performance indicator framework to monitor innovator impact; and built a backend platform to house and manage innovator data.
- Designed and procured acceleration support for four DIV innovators. Acceleration services included market identification to scale a maternal health technology; social marketing and sales skills for three social enterprises; and technical specifications for a new processing plant for a sanitation social enterprise.

Catalyst-Supported Innovation Challenges

Inclusive Health Access Prize

Catalyst designed, launched, and managed the Inclusive Health Access Prize, in partnership with USAID's Global Health Bureau's Office of Health Systems Strengthening. We received 386 applications from innovators around the world, and the Prize is now funding five promising new solutions, including an online blood bank in Cameroon, a health digital payments app in Senegal, and community outreach and telemedicine services for underserved populations in India.

[Visit Website](#)

The RISE Challenge

For USAID's Environment Gender Development team (E3/GenDev), Catalyst designed, launched, and managed the RISE challenge, seeking innovative solutions and models for preventing and responding to gender-based violence in environmental development programming. The RISE Challenge awarded five projects—including funding innovations in Colombia, Democratic Republic of Congo, Uganda, and Fiji.

[View Website](#)

Kosovo Open Data Challenge on Air Quality and the Energy Use Prize

For the Millennium Challenge Corporation (MCC) Kosovo team, Catalyst is supporting the design and launch of two Challenges intended to improve access to and use of open data in sectors key to the economy: the Kosovo Open Data Challenge on Air Quality and an Energy Use Prize. As of February 2020, the Air Quality Challenge is evaluating innovator applications and will make awards in the coming months. The Energy Use Prize began design processes in January 2020 and will launch later in the year.

Water and Energy for Food ASIA Edge Prize

The Catalyst project supported the design, planning, and execution of the Asia Enhancing Development and Growth through Energy (EDGE) Ag-Energy Prize which seeks business owners and entrepreneurs in Southeast Asia with game-changing innovations operating at the nexus of renewable energy and agriculture. The prize competition will spur, recognize, and reward outstanding enterprises from both youth innovators and mid-stage businesses in the Southeast Asian footprint.

[Visit Website](#)

BetterTogether

For USAID and the Inter-American Development Bank, Catalyst is the primary implementing partner for the design and management of an innovation challenge to address the regional migration crisis resulting from the political and economic turmoil in Venezuela. In 2019, Catalyst designed and launched the Challenge. In 2020, Catalyst will make and manage grants awards and help accelerate innovators' models, lead communications, monitor innovator and Challenge impact data and begin design of new calls for innovation under the program.

[Visit Spanish Website](#) | [Visit English Website](#)