

LAB EVALUATION, RESEARCH, AND LEARNING PLAN

## DEEP DIVE

# Supporting Innovators, Entrepreneurs, and Researchers

SUMMER 2019 UPDATE



### QUESTION 3

## Maximizing Development Impact via Support to Innovators, Entrepreneurs, and Researchers



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*This Evidence Deep Dive is a companion to the Question 3 Evidence Brief, produced as an output of the U.S. Global Development Lab's Evaluation, Research, and Learning (ERL) Plan - a utilization-focused learning agenda supporting evidence-informed decision making in Lab operations and science, technology, innovation, and partnerships (STIP) programming. A process and set of products, the ERL Plan facilitated Lab learning and adaptation around four bureau-wide areas of inquiry: uptake of products, services, and approaches; adaptive management tools and practices; support to awardees and partners; and sustainability of results.*

*Insights from the ERL Plan are shared here as a record of emerging opportunities for evidence-based adaptation that could be acted on by USAID and other development actors. This work also contributes to the evidence base for the Agency-wide Self-Reliance Learning Agenda - an effort to support USAID as it reorients its strategies, partnership models, and program practices to achieve greater development outcomes and foster self-reliance with host country governments and our partners.*

## INTRODUCTION

The Lab provides substantial non-monetary<sup>1</sup> assistance to the innovators, entrepreneurs, and researchers it funds. Staff at the Lab do so because their awardees are often not entrepreneurs or policymakers by training, but innovators and researchers with interesting ideas. These ideas and their potential for societal impact, however, have pushed the Lab's awardees into these new roles. In this context, Lab staff have supported awardees to increase their likelihood of success and so that they might increase the societal impact of their work.

The provision of non-financial support provided by donors in the international development sphere — typically called technical assistance (TA) — goes back decades. The primary goal of TA has traditionally been to transfer knowledge and skills to an individual or group with whom the TA provider worked.

If the TA provider was successful, they would no longer be needed (Williams, 1964). Yet, the use of TA by donor agencies has been controversial in practice (e.g., see Loomis 1968; Blase 1968; Godfrey et al, 2002; Brautigam and Knack, 2004; Easterly 2007).<sup>2</sup> Critics of TA argue that it distorts local labor markets, undermines local ownership and capacity, biases donor assistance toward standardized training at the expense of on-the-job learning, and simply

pays for programs local actors do not value enough to pay for themselves (Godfrey et al, 2002; Brautigam and Knack, 2004). Others view outside perspectives and neutrality as factors that enable dispute resolution within specific contexts, two factors associated with TA.<sup>3</sup>

Moreover, recent research highlights that entrepreneurs in developing countries could in fact generate large impacts on employment, firm size, and other factors that lead to economic growth, simply by providing them with financing (McKenzie 2017). Nonetheless, the proportion of overall foreign aid spent on non-financial support in the form of TA has remained constant for decades (Easterly 2007).

The non-financial assistance provided by the Lab, however, has important differences with the TA outlined in the international development literature. While much of the literature on TA describes mechanisms for “teaching up” recipients from a base level of knowledge to a higher level of expertise within their own field or subject-area, Lab support recognizes that each awardee brings their own knowledge, expertise, and unique ideas to the partnership - but may have gaps in other areas, such as business acumen or stakeholder engagement.

<sup>1</sup> Non-monetary assistance is defined as non-fungible support - as opposed to the provision of capital, funds, or other interchangeable assets - provided directly to the awardee. It often it takes the form of staff sharing their specialized expertise, providing a service, or other intangible support tailored to an individual awardee. Note, USAID and other funders do incur costs for non-monetary support; however, the funds used to purchase this support are not provided directly to awardees themselves - but rather, are incurred as central program staffing costs or core implementing funds.

<sup>2</sup> For TA criticisms outside academia, see Action Aid's “Making Aid Work” report

<sup>3</sup> The Overseas Development Institute ([link](#))

As a result, Lab staff have focused on providing support in areas in which their innovators and researchers have gaps. This could mean, for example, helping innovators strengthen the internal structure of their businesses, arranging opportunities for researchers to present their results to relevant policymakers, or working with innovators to do economic analysis prior to expansion into new markets.

Drawing on Lab documents; semi-structured interviews with staff across the Lab Center for Development Research (CDR), Center for Development Innovation (CDI), and the Center for Transformational Partnerships (CTP); and the international development literature on technical support, this section examines if non-financial support to awardees can be effective within the Lab's unique context at USAID.

## **“TRADITIONAL” TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE (TA) VERSUS LAB TA PRACTICES**

The distinction is clearer with an example. Traditional TA might involve funding an expert in education to provide support to staff in the Ministry of Education of a partner country. The recipient of the TA (Ministry staff) already have some base knowledge about education systems and education policy more broadly; though they may lack a high level of technical expertise in a particular area they are seeking to reform. Therefore, TA is needed to strengthen skills and knowledge within their field.

In contrast, the Lab might work with an engineer who invented a technology that saves water in agriculture. The engineer also wants to profit off of this new technology, but doesn't have business skills to do so, because they spent their life mastering engineering. The Lab would provide support to the engineer - not to teach them how to improve technical aspects of their technology - but to assist them with creating a sufficient revenue base to facilitate the growth of their business.

Much of the support provided by the Lab is meant to fill gaps in the awardee's capacities outside their area of expertise; not to strengthen their skills in their own field.

## **INNOVATORS AND RESEARCHERS**

The two principal recipients of Lab assistance produce a wide range of products. CDR funds several university-based Labs via the Higher Education Solutions Network (HESN) and individual researchers through the Partnerships for Enhanced Engagement in Research (PEER) program.<sup>4</sup> These awardees produce data, research, and analysis for consumption. In contrast, CDI funds a wide range of innovators and entrepreneurs via Development Innovation Ventures (DIV) and several challenge and prize programs. Many of these innovators have created some form of technology that they sell

via firms within the private sector or models of development interventions, which can be scaled by governments or NGOs.

The majority of CDR's researchers sit within academic institutions, so one of their primary professional incentives is to publish their work in peer-reviewed journals. On one hand, this ensures that work produced from research funded by CDR is of high quality. On the other hand, there is no direct incentive to ensure that this work impacts the countries in which it is produced, and

<sup>4</sup> Information on PEER can be found here ([link](#))

the effort required by researchers to ensure their research is seen by relevant policymakers might be prohibitive if left unsupported.

CDR realizes this, and thus, focuses its efforts on lowering this cost. The Lab arranges for researchers to present their results at USAID missions, relevant government agencies, and to others in-country that might be able to use the information produced by CDR-funded research. Moreover, CDR helps researchers reformat their work into policy briefs and other forms that will be more digestible for non-technical experts. Given the incentives faced by CDR's researchers, a significant focus of the Center is to support the "consumption" and use of the results of the research they fund.

USAID encouragement, however, is not the only way to ensure research impacts policymakers. A study by the Knowledge Sector Initiative<sup>5</sup> interviewed policymakers across various ministries in the Indonesian government to better understand how they used research to solve problems they faced as government officials. They identified a number of interesting findings, including that policymakers tended to use their informal in-country networks to – often in local universities – identify sources of expertise and research. Procurement rules make formally procuring research difficult, and many ministries without a budget for this may not be able to do so.<sup>6</sup>

Moreover, ministries with direct budget allocation authority rely on statistical data, not focus groups or other types of qualitative research. Those ministries that provide high level policy guidance were more likely to accept conclusions from qualitative policy research. The most common reason policy makers engaged with research was to provide context, which the authors define as outlining the underlying problems facing a particular place. This helped them defend decisions, develop strategy, and provide objective reasoning for what are ultimately political decisions. For example, if one person asks why the Ministry gave more resources to a different area, then the policy maker can point to objective data that demonstrates a greater need in that area.

The three key take-aways from this report however, are that (1) **identifying researchers who are already connected to local policymakers is likely to increase the usage of that research**, (2) **that research should focus on fundamental issues relevant to the country so policymakers better understand the context** - a specific project aimed at understanding whether something "worked" is not useful unless it provides insight into the underlying causes of the problem. For example, the report indicates M&E research was only used by those policymakers allocating funds directly, not those trying to develop high-level policies. (3) Given procurement difficulties within many ministries, **there is an unmet demand for research**. The key, however, may be to engage with policy-makers in the selection process so that they get the data they need.

CDI and CTP take a broader view of support as their innovators and entrepreneurs produce a wider range of products. Lab supported innovators might need legal assistance, help with market analysis, financial technical assistance, or any other number of business advisory services. Although, these awardees might — in theory — be incentivized to seek each of these things themselves, they may face up-front budget constraints or they may lack sufficient information about competing advisory service firms to ensure they get the best possible business support. Given the wide variety of possible services needed and how idiosyncratic those services may be, the Lab works with firms over time directly or via financial (i.e. investment funds, banks, Monetary Financial Institutions) and non-financial (i.e. incubators, accelerators, consultancies)<sup>7</sup> intermediaries to strengthen weaknesses in each firm's structure and growth strategy.

5 [http://www.ksi-indonesia.org/files/1480577570\\$I\\$WFZL\\$.pdf](http://www.ksi-indonesia.org/files/1480577570$I$WFZL$.pdf)

6 CDR has created two mechanisms for procuring research that could fill this gap. Namely, RTAC for short term research projects ([link](#)) and LASER for long-term research projects ([link](#))

7 For example, CDR works with University-based accelerators, such as SEAD at Duke University ([link](#))

# SUPPORT TO RESEARCHERS AND FIRMS: WHAT THE LITERATURE SAYS

## Researchers

The author is not aware of any academic research that examines the effectiveness of multilateral or bilateral donor agency support to researchers.

CDR's primary form of support is to encourage researchers to present their results in formats more accessible to policymakers and there is literature on evidence-use by policy makers more broadly. However, that literature is conceptual, theorizing why policymakers should incorporate evidence when making decisions and suggesting models of how and when policymakers use evidence.

Davies (2015) — which exemplifies this literature — outlines three models of evidence use. The first, named the Passive-Diffusion Model, assumes that publishing research findings is sufficient for policymakers because they actively seek out research and are able to understand its implications. Further, policymakers understand their respective fields well enough to know which journals are credible and how to interpret theory for applied uses. This model assumes a high level of technical knowledge by policymakers — one that doesn't comport with typical experiences.

If this model (Passive-Diffusion) were correct, then USAID would only need to fund research; its publication would be sufficient since the researcher's incentive to publish is internal to their home institutions' promotion structures.

The second model, called the Active-Dissemination Model, assumes that the volume of research is so vast that synthesis is required. Moreover, the synthesis needs to be written using non-technical language so any lay person could understand it. This allows policymakers to better access the research, which can increase the likelihood of its use.

CDR's use of "evidence-to-action" grants exemplify this. These grants are provided to researchers to hold

meetings or workshops to discuss their findings with policymakers or mission staff, and to encourage them to write policy briefs that summarize their research to a broader audience. It should be highlighted that this model of evidence-use assumes that policymakers both want the best evidence and can distinguish this evidence from other sources, which may be of lower quality but also have face validity.

The final model, known as the Coordinated-Implementation Model, assumes that evidence is in competition with other factors often political in nature. It states that academic research may be more rigorous than other sources of information, but not "marketed" effectively to overcome competing interests. This model assumes that evidence needs to be actively pushed via networks and intermediaries with connections to key decision-makers for serious consideration by policymakers.

These three models of evidence-use have been outlined because they nicely highlight the types of support that could be provided by the Lab to ensure that the research they fund is used by policymakers. On one end of the spectrum, research is simply funded, and it is assumed that policymakers will actively search it out and use it. On the other side of the spectrum, research is seen as one possible source of information that has to compete with politically-backed information.

In the middle of this spectrum sits the approach CDR has taken to this point, which is to lower the cost to policymakers of using research through policy briefs that summarize findings and workshops that make researchers and their work more readily available to policymakers. This approach tries to make it as simple as possible for research to be consumed and used without entering into the realm of domestic politics in the home countries of the various principal investigators (PIs) funded via CDR programs.

The question remains as to whether there are additional strategies that the Lab can utilize, such as dissemination beyond current policymakers so as to expose a broader audience in a given country to policy-relevant results more systematically. Possibilities include ensuring that civil society organizations are provided with USAID-funded research briefs and encouraging the presentation of results in local academic conferences.

Alternatively, the Lab could do more at the start to

identify which types of projects and/or researchers are more likely to share ideas with policymakers at any level. Requiring sharing with a variety of policymakers as a precondition of funding could increase the influence of USAID-funded research. Surveying PIs from completed projects could help identify variables associated with researchers more likely to pursue opportunities to present their findings to policymakers; that information can then be incorporated into the selection process for Lab-funded research grants.

## Entrepreneurs and Innovators

In contrast to the previous section, there is a robust literature on how supporting entrepreneurs improves their performance. Its original premise explored whether entrepreneurs were simply a self-selected group of motivated individuals who needed little, if any, assistance to be successful or whether entrepreneurship could be taught (e.g., Karlan and Valvidia, 2011).

The thinking went: if entrepreneurship were solely an innate characteristic, then business training would prove ineffective. Recent research, however, demonstrates that assistance targeting entrepreneurs can improve firm-level outcomes (e.g., Drexler, Fischer, and Schoar, 2014; Campos et al. 2017); although the level of such improvement differs across studies (Forss and Schaumburg-Mueller, 2009).

In other words, support to entrepreneurs works sometimes, but fails at other times for a different set of people. Drexler and his colleagues found that training using 'rule-of-thumb' rather than more traditional business accounting training improved small business performance. However, this improvement was only realized by entrepreneurs who entered with the lowest levels of financial literacy.

In a related, but somewhat discouraging finding, Karlan and Valvidia (2011) find that business training impacted entrepreneurs with *low levels of interest* in the training prior to receiving it.<sup>8</sup> Note that both of these studies used a standardized curriculum to teach entrepreneurs a

set of business skills that program designers thought every business would need, regardless of the product, such as basic accounting.

Since a substantial portion of entrepreneurs likely have these skills or have been exposed to these concepts at a minimum, it shouldn't be surprising that impacts are only with entrepreneurs who have low ability or interest. These skills are relatively standard regardless of context, so finding information would not be difficult for highly motivated entrepreneurs.

Campos and his colleagues test a different kind of standardized program (Campos et al, 2017). Rather than focusing on a particular skill needed by all entrepreneurs, they partner with a psychologist to see whether a psychology-based curriculum targeting motivation can improve entrepreneurial outcomes. Assuming each business operates in idiosyncratic contexts and faces unique challenges, the training focuses on bolstering psychological traits that help individuals overcome adversity, increase levels of creativity, and risk; thus, the training should be more applicable to a broader audience of entrepreneurs than one aimed to instill a specific set of hard business skills.

The study finds this approach to entrepreneurial training is effective: entrepreneurs increased profits. The authors then examined different causal pathways connecting the training to the outcomes and found the initiative-based training increased labor inputs, capital inputs, and

<sup>8</sup> These entrepreneurs received the training as part of a loan package so went through the training to access capital, which allowed the study to capture both entrepreneurs who were enthusiastic about receiving training and entrepreneurs who attended solely because it was a requirement to access capital.

innovation, measured as the number of distinct products sold and the number of products that were the entrepreneur's own idea. Finally, individuals who received this training didn't take out more loans, but the size of those loans were larger (i.e., they increased the risk they took on). Although this training was standard in its delivery, it was aimed at encouraging entrepreneurs to tackle their individual problems head on and resulted in improved outcomes regardless of entrepreneur type.

Bruhn, Karlan, and Shoar (2018) evaluate a program in Mexico that subsidized management consultants to work with individual firms. The authors aimed to explore how investing in what they termed "managerial capital" rather than traditional capital could support small and medium sized firms grow more rapidly. To these authors, managerial capital is the combination of skills and drive to address obstacles to a firm's growth. In this study, firms were paired with consultants whose job was to work with the firms to identify impediments to growth and suggest changes that would address these impediments.

The findings are striking. Employment within firms and wages increase across the entire sample of firms and find heterogeneous impacts on managerial practices across

areas including marketing, long-term business planning, and accounting. The authors note, however, that given the wide variety of pathways to improved performance, it is impractical to test each of these individual areas as the methodological framework of these economists — randomized controlled trials — would require too many treatment arms and the samples to power each area are impractical.

To explore these various pathways, theory-based methods of evaluation and research, such as process tracing or contribution analysis, are more appropriate in highlighting the causal chain of events connecting individualized consulting to individual business outcomes.

Finally, the Lab's own Securing Water for Food final evaluation finds success with their model of technical assistance support, which provides vouchers to awardees to 'pay' for services from a TA facility. Within the context of USAID, this approach is innovative and flexible. However, the final evaluation recommends even further flexibility within the system, so that innovators can match with services they need in a timely manner (SWFF Final Evaluation, p. 35).

## Building Networks

Geographic clustering of firms can enable innovation and entrepreneurship when positive spillovers exist. While more research is needed to understand whether policy can effectively shape clusters and ultimately entrepreneurial behavior, two conclusions are possible. First, local universities can impact local development and innovation, and second, focusing on large scale employers can crowd out startups (Chatterji, Glaeser, and Kerr 2014).

Networks can provide various types of resources to entrepreneurs: money, information, credibility in new markets, and emotional support to encourage risk. However, there are tradeoffs between their structure and size. Larger networks produce better outcomes in terms of accessing resources from others in the network, but there are diminishing returns if the network is too large. Moreover, a firm's centrality to the network impacts outcomes, with more central firms accessing

more resources. Networks that have lots of weak ties between a larger number of firms, however, allow firms to access more diverse information. These information spillovers are particularly prominent when the entrepreneurs come from multiple localities (Hoang and Yi 2015).

The Lab supports both types of networks. Activities, like Global Innovation Week, bring together hundreds of innovators across numerous fields to facilitate conversations and potentially information spillovers. This is an example of a larger network with weaker ties. The Lab also supports activities like the Resilience Africa Network (RAN), an innovation cluster headquartered in Kampala, Uganda. RAN supports innovation by an acceleration program, holding innovation challenges, and a co-creation program.<sup>9</sup> While successful innovation clusters have historically been anchored by universities

9 Makerere University School of Public Health Resilient Africa Network, "Innovation Projects under Incubation - Funded".

(Tan 2006, Saxenian 1996), such clusters are rare in sub-Saharan Africa (Brautigam and Xioayang 2011).

As a result, RAN itself is an innovative network-building activity supported by USAID. The Lab has also supported

attendance at regional conferences to researchers and meetings for grand challenge awardees. In the latter instance, USAID staff stated that awardees like talking to and learning from each other, consistent with the academic research on this topic.

## DOCUMENTING LAB SUPPORT TO AWARDEES

EIA interviewed teams from across the Lab in the Center for Development Innovation (CDI), Center for Transformational Partnerships (CTP), and Center for Development Research (CDR) to document the types of non-monetary support they provide to their awardees.

These interviews took place between December 2017 and March 2018 and included interviews with staff from the Development Innovation Ventures, Securing Water for Food, and Scaling Off-grid Energy teams in Lab/CDI, the Partnering to Accelerate Entrepreneurship team in Lab/CTP, and the Higher Education Solutions Network and Partnering for Enhanced Engagement in Research teams in Lab/CDR.

Innovators, entrepreneurs, and researchers at the Lab work across many contexts to tackle a wide variety of issues and thus awardee support takes many forms. The most common forms of support revealed from these interviews can be generally categorized as follows:

- Business development and market analysis
- Building networks of innovators and researchers
- Marketing support and information dissemination
- M&E to demonstrate broader development impact
- Technical design
- Reducing the administrative burden of working with USAID

## Business Development and Market Analysis

Business development and market analysis can be briefly summarized as the building up of the internal structure of the business, so it has a foundation to grow and/or the analysis of current and potential customers, competitors, and policies that affect the firm's strategy and operations. This type of support is generally targeted toward innovators and entrepreneurs, not researchers.

Examples from the Lab include:

- Encourage innovators to move from hand-written account books to computerized accounts, a necessity for growth (CDI, CTP, CDR)
- Think about product diversification (CDI, CTP)
- Help innovators identify new market segments they can target (CDI, CDR, CTP)
- Standardize acceleration support for entrepreneurs with little business experience (CTP, CDI)
- Prepping entrepreneurs for investment and developing financial models (CTP)
- Agricultural extension services (CTP)



# Building Networks of Innovators and Researchers

Building networks of innovators and researchers can be briefly summarized as both identifying awardee needs and locating potential partners or officials that could help meet the awardee's needs, as well as supporting institutions that bring innovators and researchers together to share information, present ideas, and even assist with additional funding. This type of support is geared toward all awardees.

Examples from the Lab include:

- Matching researchers — via buy ins — with missions so researchers have supporting infrastructure in-country and potentially additional funds for their work (CDR).
- Introducing awardees with implementing partners who can incorporate research or innovations into programming (CDI)
- Acceleration programs using a cohort model (CDI, CTP)
- Matching awardees to additional funding sources (CTP, CDI)
- Building investor networks (CTP)

# Marketing Support and Information Dissemination

Marketing support and information dissemination can be briefly summarized as assisting awardees with advertising their products to both consumers and potential funders or investors, providing a platform for innovators and researchers to speak with consumers of their work, and helping innovators and researchers translate their innovations and research for a broader audience. This type of support is geared toward all awardees.

Examples from the Lab includes:

- Small grants and general guidelines/toolkit to encourage researchers to summarize their research or innovation for a broader audience (CDR, CDI)
- Arranging for results to be presented to local policy makers (CDR)
- Marketing and communications support for innovators (CDI)

## M&E to Demonstrate Broader Development Impact

M&E to demonstrate broader development impact can be briefly summarized as assisting awardees to more fully specify a theory of change and more robust data collection plan associated with that theory of change. Awardees are required to have an M&E plan, but many are new to these activities so this requires assistance from Lab staff to more clearly specify broader development goals. This type of support is geared toward all awardees.

Examples from the Lab include:

- Helps awardees identify learning questions and a theory of change geared toward impact beyond profit (CDI)
- Helps develop M&E plans to show socially conscious investors broader impacts (CDI, CTP)

## Technical Design

Technical design can be briefly summarized as the only type of support through which the Lab provides direct assistance to improve technological prototypes (i.e., where the Lab helps innovators improve the design of their products). This is done by CDR's HESN awardee Resilient Africa Network and select CTP grantees.

Examples from the Lab include:

- Redesign products so they can be mass produced; some innovators created their technology in a metaphorical — but sometimes literal — garages. The production of these innovations can sometimes be substantially increased with changes (CDR, CTP).
- Suggest modifications — especially by using different materials — to decrease the cost of the innovation and increase the length of its useful life (CDR).

## Reducing the Administrative Burden of Working with USAID

Reducing the administrative burden of working with USAID can be briefly summarized as collating information about USAID requirements for awardees in one place so awardees are aware USAID requirements to ensure compliance. This type of support is geared toward all awardees.

Examples from the Lab Include

- Welcome packets for awardees with expectations and requirements laid out (CDI)
- Introduction to USAID webinar (CDI)

# Improving the Technical Design of Educational Institutions

Improving the technical design of educational institutions. While this type of support is not listed in the opening typology, it is worth noting that the HESN team within CDR also speaks with administrators in universities in developing countries to help them design how they manage their own faculty better.

Examples for the Lab include:

- Funded Michigan State University to hold meetings with a university in Malawi to encourage them to provide grants to faculty for their own research rather than trying to micromanage faculty research and teaching (CDR).

## HOW SUPPORT IS PROVIDED

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Non-financial support at the Lab takes place through both formal and informal channels. Two Grand Challenges nicely exemplify each end of this spectrum. On one side, the Securing Water for Food (SWFF) Grand Challenge uses a formal model of awardee support. SWFF set up a technical assistance (TA) facility - funded by the Lab and its partners - whose purpose is to diagnose gaps in an innovator's business model.\* Once gaps have been identified, the TA Facility connects each innovator to an advisory services firm to assist the innovator in addressing those gaps. Approximately 105–110 SWFF innovators have been offered this support, including every innovator in every cohort since the opening of the TA Facility.

On the informal end of the spectrum, the Scaling Off-Grid Energy (SOGE) Grand Challenge provides support services with fewer formal channels. The SOGE team works with its awardees on a one-on-one basis to identify obstacles. Then, they either provide direct support or look across the Lab and other SOGE Partners for the support that meets the need of the awardee.

Compared to SWFF, SOGE is a much younger Grand Challenge at the time of writing with two cohorts of seven innovators each (14 total awardees), who have been directly funded and managed by the SOGE team at USAID. SOGE is a platform for its partners to coordinate resources and share expertise, and SOGE leverages its partners and their connections across the off-grid solar market to provide the different kinds of support that companies need. This less formal approach works with 14 awardees; however, it raises the question as to whether a more formal structure for procuring TA would be needed were the SOGE portfolio to expand in scope or scale.

The key takeaway from these examples is that Lab support is quite idiosyncratic. Even formal mechanisms, such as the SWFF TA facility, diagnose specific issues with individual firms and create individualized work plans to address these issues. In a sense, this type of support resembles private consulting more than it does traditional business training. In SWFF's case, the use of this model was intentional as prior attempts to provide general business training was deemed less useful by their awardees.

\* For more information on the SWFF TA facility, see the 2015 SWFF Annual Report.

# FURTHER READING

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