Commissioned Agricultural Research Grant Scheme

Call for Project Proposal (PP)

Title of call
Strengthening Seed Systems Research and Development

Purpose of call
Implementation of Actions to Achieve Food Security and Reduce Poverty in West and Central Africa - Critical Attributes of CAADP Pillar 4

Financial support for call
This call is supported with funds from the Australian Agency of International Development (AusAID) under the Food Security and Rural Development Initiative of the Australian Government through the AusAID/CSIRO-CORAFWECARD partnership

1. Call identification number: CW/CP/02/PP/AusAID/01/2010

2. Publication date: 1st September, 2010

3. Total amount available for this call: US$ 1.3 million

4. Project period: 3 years

5 Submission of PP: Deadline for submission of PP is 15th October, 2010 at 17H00 GMT. PPs received after the deadline will not be considered for evaluation.

Signed and officially stamped printed hard copies of PPs could be sent by post, hand-carried, express courier or by e-mail to the CORAF/WECARD Executive Secretariat at the following address:

The Director of Programmes, CORAF/WECARD,
7 Avenue Bourguiba, BP 48 Dakar RP, Senegal
E-mail: secoraf@coraf.org
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Project Concept Notes sent by fax will not be processed.

6. Notification date of decisions resulting from evaluation process: 30 November, 2010, addressed to the Project Coordinator of each PP submission

7. Language: Project Proposal may be submitted in French or English.

8. Call Description

8.1. Broad research theme

Strengthening Seed systems in West and Central Africa

8.2. Focus of the proposed research call

The availability and adoption of high quality genetic material and relevant management information are key issues to improve production of key staple crops in West Africa. Various agencies have developed and are still developing new varieties of priority staple crops in the sub-region such as sorghum, maize, millet and groundnut. The adoption of these new varieties is, however, low and, therefore, needs to be improved. The reasons for such low adoption could be attributed to lack of awareness of their availability, untimely availability of seeds, farmer's perceptions that new varieties are no better than their traditional varieties, cost of seed, lack of knowledge on or lack of availability of other inputs such as fertilizer needed to achieve productivity benefit from improved seeds, lack of finance for purchasing seeds or other complimentary inputs, and lack of confidence that seeds purchased are viable.

The purpose of this commissioned project is to identify ways of strengthening farmers' capacities to assess new varieties and to be effective consumers of commercial inputs. The particular focus is on seed supply systems but must also consider the supply and use of other agri-inputs such as fertilizer, by farmers.

Research proposals should consider the following key areas of focus in an integrated manner:

1. Existing data sources and activities relevant to West African seed systems. It is anticipate that this would be published and would include a conceptual model of seed systems and analyses of key constraints and opportunities.
2. Building on the point above, exploring farmers' views of the key constraints to adoption including credit and farmer and market perceptions of varieties in alignment with their needs. This would include the key attributes sought by farmers and traders and questioning whether or not most/all new varieties do deliver those attributes.
3. Exploring where networks of agro-dealers, seed companies and financial institutions exist locally in the project region and assessing their views on opportunities and constraints to servicing smallholder farmers. If such services are scarce in the study region the reasons for this would also be explored.
4. Examining the delivery pathway of seed and information to farmers, and measure availability of varieties, the timeliness of that availability, the pairing of new varieties and appropriate information, how that information is delivered, and whether or not these mechanisms are aligned with how farmers prefer to get information and seed.
5. Quantifying the yield benefits of improved varieties at a range of sites and seasons across the semi-arid crop/livestock farming systems of selected regions in West Africa (through a combination of existing data synthesis, new data collection and seed systems modeling). This component will compare yields of new and traditional varieties of these crops, with and without complimentary inputs such as fertilizer, to demonstrate benefits as inputs vary.
6. Examining seed quality (viability and variety purity) along the value chain to determine critical points where seed quality is most vulnerable.

8.3 Approach

The project design should cover the following points:

- The proposed work needs to be designed within the context of past and current research and development programs on seed systems undertaken in West Africa. A thorough review of past and current seed systems investigations will, therefore, be a critical first step in the proposed study. The commissioned agencies should briefly describe what has been undertaken and explain how this proposal has learnt from and/or contributes to the domain of improved seed systems in West Africa.
- The study regions and their seed supply systems should be selected where farmers have a range of options for crop selection and where crops will respond to improved varieties and increased inputs. Studies that enable a comparison of maize/groundnut or maize/cowpea systems in the sub-humid zones with the sorghum-millet/groundnut or sorghum-millet/cowpea systems in the semi-arid regions could be established.
- While the particular focus is targeted at seed supply systems, the project must also consider the supply to and use of other associated key agri-inputs by farmers such as fertilizers and credit.
- The target farmers in the project should cover the range of production and marketing systems practiced in the region of study – from subsistence farmers to those interacting with markets. If some farmers in the region are engaged in markets, their experience and the services supplied to them need to be understood as an opportunity for other farmers.
- A project output will be an assessment of yield performance of current and improved varieties as influenced by variability in climate, soil type and management practices. A systems approach is recommended, whereby the impacts of possible manipulation within seeds systems are assessed in the context of farmers' livelihoods as well as the broader supply chain. There may be a role for cropping systems models to help in the interpretation of seed systems data, particularly in the assessment of risks of seed inputs.
- The project calls for socio-economic inquiry of both farmers and supply-chain participants. Expertise in socio-economic analyses is therefore required within the project team and it is recommended that the project be led by a social scientist with other inputs from agronomists/breeders and seed technologists.

The project should aim at developing new interventions/recommendations and should allot about 30% of its budget to implementation of these interventions in the final year of the study. This will encompass both capacity building of, and communication of the recommendations to key stakeholders such as agri-business, NGO and other extension services, farmer-based and community based organisations.

In addition to the NARS from Mali, Burkina Faso, Cameroon and Ghana, the project will also include CGIAR (ICRISAT), which has a strong team in Mali, and regional agencies such as the West African Seed Alliance (WASA), which is also in partnership with AGRA.

9. Eligibility

The following key criteria should be met for conformity and eligibility of submissions for the evaluation process.

9.1. General and administrative criteria

The research must be carried out in the following four countries in West and Central Africa: Mali, Burkina Faso, Ghana and Cameroon

The National Agricultural Systems (NARS) of the sub-region are expected to lead the projects and work in partnership with Base-Centres/Centres of Excellence, CGIAR centres, and other Advanced Research Institutions. Partnership with agricultural training institutions, especially Universities and/or Faculty and Colleges of Agriculture in the project consortia should be encouraged in order to respond to project actors' capacity strengthening needs.

The PP should comply with the format and content stipulated in the Competitive Grant Scheme Operating Manual [Annex A], including (inter alia)

- A letter of intent/commitment for collaborators
- A logical framework
- An outline budget

The prospective project coordinating institution should submit an organisational profile and should be judged to have the capacity and experience for implementing the proposed work.

9.2. Financial criteria

Expenditure should be linked to direct costs of research and indirect costs should not be more than 10% of the project budget.

The total budget of the project will not exceed the funding ceiling specified in the Call for Project Proposal.

The project budget should be clearly presented and the amount justified with respect to the scheduled activities in the technical proposal.

The project budget should indicate the amount requested from CORAF/WECARD and the amount contributed by other partners/stakeholders (matching funds).

Financial and scientific support will be provided if necessary to facilitate the development of PPs. The team leader would, therefore, need to submit a budget on this to CORAF/WECARD for approval.

10. Evaluation criteria

Proposals will be evaluated on the following criteria and sub-criteria:

- Relevance/pertinence: general context and rationale, and the general and specific objectives.
- Scientific and technical quality: state of knowledge, description of project activities, expected results, target groups and methodology.
- Potential impact: social, economic, environmental and gender issues
- Technical implementation plan: logframe and chronogram (Gantt chart)
- Implementation team: professional and technical experience and competence of the team, publication in the project area, and partnership mechanism.
- Budget: contribution of partners, use of funds requested form CORAF/WECARD,

11. Other relevant information

Applicants are requested to visit the Website (www.coraf.org) and refer to the CORAF/WECARD competitive grant scheme operating manual for more details on how to adequately prepare their PCNs.

Annex A. Guidelines for Preparing Project Proposals

The following notes provide information for completing a Project Proposal. The notes have been inserted in the appropriate sections of the CORAF/WECARD full proposal form.

SECTION A: KEY INFORMATION

Total Cost of Project:
Duration of Project:
Date of Submission:
Location of Project:
[NOTE: Section A1 should be submitted on a separate sheet]

A1	**Project Title**
The applicant should provide a title which describes the scope of the work and an abbreviated version of the project title for administrative purposes.	
Project Co-ordinator	This is the person with overall responsibility for the application and the implementation of the Project.
Address	Contact details for the Project Co-ordinator
Telephone	
Fax	
e-mail	
Collaborator[s]	

A2	**Project Summary** [Guideline of 100 words]
Please write a summary which briefly describes the development problems and how the project will help to solve them. The summary should identify the Project *Purpose*, proposed *Activities* and expected *Outputs*.	
A3	**Project Location**
The countries for the proposed project – a minimum requirement is for the project to be in at least 3 countries.	
A4	**Starting and Finishing Dates**
The duration of the project should be the minimum necessary to deliver the *Results* of the project set out in proposal. The fund will not support proposals requiring funding for more than three years, and objectives should be carefully defined with this in mind.	

**** Attach the Project Logical Framework ****
The logical framework is described, and guidelines for its construction are given, in Chapter 2 of the "CORAF/WECARD competitive grant scheme operating manual [page 13; www.coraf.org].

SECTION B: PROJECT INTRODUCTION AND PURPOSE	
B1	**Project's *Specific Objective***[Guide length - 50 words]
The project *Specific Objective* means the **impact, or change, which it is hoped to achieve by delivering the project Results**, provided certain key Assumptions hold. This should not be a reformulation of the *Results*.	
B2	**What problems or needs is the project aimed at?**
Applicants are asked to provide a brief description of the problems or needs which the project will help to resolve. This description should be as specific as possible and directed to practical problems. Evidence in economic and/or social terms should be provided.	
B3	**What is the evidence for the demand for the proposed work?**
Describe how the applicants have determined that demand exists for the proposed work. Is the project *General Objective* linked to that of CORAF/WECARD and the wider policy environment of NEPAD and CAADP/FAAP? Will the *Specific Objective* contribute to this *General* Objective in a meaningful way, and are the *Results*	

necessary and sufficient to achieve this *Specific Objective*? It is especially important that the role of *Target Groups* [see **B5**] in determining the nature of the proposed work is explained. How have they been involved in the preparation of the proposal, and do they have a sense of ownership of the process and results.	
B4	**Will the project contribute to resolving those problems [in B2] and over what timescale?**
What contribution will the successful conclusion of the project make to resolving the problems described in **B2**. Support your case with quantitative social and/or economic data. How will the *Results* be utilised?	

Continued...

B5	**Who are the target group?**

The *target group* are the people immediately involved in the implementation of the project, and who will be the first to use and benefit from the *Outputs.* Indicate which target/collaborating groups or intermediate users of project products [information, technology, methodology, materials, structures for example] have been identified and have explicitly agreed to the objectives of the project.

B6 Who will the beneficiaries be and are there any groups who will be disadvantaged by the application of the findings of the proposed work?

Beneficiaries are those outside the immediate project area, who will benefit in time from the project *Results*. This will be as a result of the spread or up-scaling of the processes, systems or technology developed by the project.

Explain who is likely to benefit from the successful conclusion of the project and, in particular, which communities will benefit, and why.

State whether there will be any group on whom project findings or *Activities* and application may have a **negative impact**, both immediately or in the longer-term. For example, when a category of person's labour is no longer required because of the development of a certain technology. With regard to both positive and negative impact, particular attention should be paid to the benefits of the project for women as well as for the poor.

Indicate whether representatives of the beneficiaries have participated in defining their needs such that they are commonly understood.

Explain how representatives of the intended beneficiaries have been involved in the preparation of the proposal, and so may have a sense of ownership of the project process and the results.

B7 How will the proposal contribute to sustained poverty reduction?

Explain how the project will contribute, directly or indirectly, to poverty elimination amongst the target groups and beneficiaries.

B8 What are the proposed promotion pathways for the uptake, or up-scaling, of the project *Results* to the intended beneficiaries?

If applicable, identify how the *Results* of the project will reach a wider set of beneficiaries.

- Have any market studies for the Results been produced?
- How will the Results be made available to intended users?
- What are the further stages that will be needed to develop *Results* such as testing and establishing manufacture of a marketable product?
- How, and by whom, will the further stages be done and paid for?
- Indicate the ownership of the promotion/up-scaling pathways?

If applicable, what mechanisms will be used in dissemination/up-scaling:

- personal professional contact;
- publications;
- hand-over of actual materials;
- training;
- technical internal report;
- other [please specify].

If the project is to produce intermediate products, list these and indicate the classes of beneficiaries, which should receive each type of product. Include the cost of dissemination. The project should cover all its own publication and distribution costs.

SECTION C: BACKGROUND TO WORK
C1 What work has previously been done or is currently being pursued towards the *Specific Objective, Results* and *Activities* of the project? [Guide length - 500 words]
For research focussed projects, describe briefly any relevant work which has either been done or is currently being done by your organisation or institution. Explain how this project will relate to that work. Provide a brief literature review in order to relate this project to other relevant research. Note that the aim of this review should be to provide the *scientific background* to the project. It is important to establish that previous knowledge has been adequately addressed and knowledge gaps properly identified. **For extension/development focussed projects**, describe the current farmer practice, and indicate what will change as a result of the project, what has been tested elsewhere, what is new and how local resources will be utilised in the *Result*.

SECTION D: OUTPUTS AND ACTIVITIES
D1 What are the project's intended *Results*?
What is the project to accomplish? These are the results and/or products appropriate to the project *Specific Objective*. The *Results* should be clearly stated and they should be necessary and sufficient to achieve the *Specific Objective* of the project. Expand on the *Results* given in the logical framework, giving detail of what lies behind those statements.
D2 What are the objectively verifiable indicators for the *Results*?
Please expand on your logical framework statement. Show the logical connection between these and the *Outputs* and why they have been selected as indicators.
D3 How will the *Result* indicators be measured?
Please expand on your logical framework statement. Explain any methodology that will be necessary in order to verify the indicators.
D4 What are the expected environmental impacts? [beneficial, harmful, neutral]
Yes or no answers will **not** be sufficient. Highlight any hazards arising from the implementation of the project itself and, briefly, any positive or negative impacts which the implementation of the project *Outputs* may lead to.
D5 What are the expected social impacts? [beneficial, harmful, neutral]
D6 What are the expected economic impacts? [beneficial, harmful, neutral]

Continued...

D7	Describe the project *Activities*

There should be an *Activity* or group of *Activities* associated with each of the project *Results*. The description of the *Activities* should explain how the project's *Results* will be delivered. This should include a discussion of the problems to be considered, the approach and **methods** to be adopted and the concepts or hypotheses to be examined or tested. A *Gantt Chart* should be prepared to summarise the *Activities* listed.

Where appropriate, the proposed methods of data collection and analysis should be set out and justified. Where field data are to be collected, attention should be given to sampling, sample size and bias and their possible implications for the wider applicability and validity of the results. Where a questionnaire survey is intended, a draft version should be supplied with the application. Any additional technical support [such as biometric or social science] should be described in this section with the appropriate *Activity* or methodology to be used.

D8 Attach milestones for the life of the project

A milestone is defined as a specific, significant, intermediate *indicator*, which is a necessary step towards delivery of the final *Results*[s]. These will assist in monitoring progress.

These milestones may be subject to review, and are only required for the first year. Subsequent milestones should be presented with each annual *Activity* plan.

SECTION E: COLLABORATION AND PARTNERSHIPS

E1 Internal Collaboration and Partnerships

Internal partners are those with whom agreements have been signed, and who are an integral part of the project implementation and *Activities*.

Indicate the mechanisms for collaboration between any partners within the project structure. Issues such as planning, monitoring, responsibilities, roles and reporting should be explained.

E2 External Collaboration

External collaborators are those who will interact with the project, such as target groups, but who are not directly involved with the implementation. They may be, for example, stakeholders invited to open days or training workshops.

Indicate how the project will liaise with these partners who are external to project funding and implementation. Who will these partners be, and what will be their role in the project implementation?

Indicate what role farmers will have in the planning, monitoring and implementation process.

SECTION F: FINANCIAL INFORMATION	
F1	**Total financial support requested from CORAF/WECARD**
Budgets should be presented by project *Activity*, and the budget for each *Activity* should be broken down separately to indicate how the final figure has been determined. Rates for travel and subsistence should be according to the institutional norms of the organisations involved with the application. Certified, documentary evidence is required that these are official rates. Management of funds will be according to CORAF/WECARD's financial rules. The budgets should be shown in US$ and by calendar year [1st January to 31st December]. Full allowance should be made for inflation. Reasonable administrative costs [overheads] may be included, but will need to be itemised and accounted for. Such costs may include the relevant proportion of the following: • general secretarial, administrative, accounting and computer costs; • rent, rates and other expenses of upkeep or offices, furnishings, equipment and supplies; • postage, telecommunications and other utilities. The purchase of capital equipment items will **not** normally be supported, but if requested will need to be fully justified. Contingency should be kept to a minimum and the total of contingency and overhead charges should not exceed 10% of the total budget.	
F2	**Other contributions**
Indicate any contributions, financial or in kind, that the applicant organisation[s] will make towards project implementation. This is especially important for *development* projects where sustainability of results after completion is an issue.	
F3	**Application elsewhere**
Please state if you have applied elsewhere for funding for this particular project proposal	

The size of the boxes on this form has been reduced for presentation purposes. Hard and electronic copies of the forms can be obtained from the CORAF/WECARD Secretariat, the electronic version may also be downloaded from the CORAF/WECARD Website

http://www.coraf.org