

# REQUEST FOR CONCEPT NOTES (RFCN)

## CATALYZING AND SUSTAINING AGRICULTURAL TRANSFORMATION IN KENYA

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### A. SYNOPSIS OF THE RFA

RFCN No.	<b>Autogenerated</b>
Issue date	<b>Autogenerated</b>
Title	Request for Concept Note Application - Catalyzing and Sustaining Agricultural Transformation in KENYA
Issuing organization	AGRA – Sustainably growing Africa's Food Systems Head office: West End Towers, 4 <sup>th</sup> Floor Kanjata Road, off Muthangari Drive, Off Waiyaki Way P.O. Box 66773 Westlands, 00800 Nairobi, Kenya
Submission of questions & Concept Note application	We only accept online submission at AGRA's online portal AMIS <a href="https://agra.synisys.com/portfolio/requests">https://agra.synisys.com/portfolio/requests</a>
Deadline for Receipt of Questions	By Friday June 30 2023
Deadline for Responding to the questions (for AGRA)	By Wednesday July 12 2023
<b>Deadline for Receipt of Concept note Applications</b>	<b>Monday, July 31, 2023, before 11:59 pm, Eastern Africa Time (EAT).</b>

### B. SCOPE OF WORK

#### 1.0 Background

##### 1.1 AGRA

Founded in 2006, AGRA, is an African-led African-based organization that seeks to catalyze Agriculture Transformation in Africa. In Kenya AGRA aims to support the country **Improve food sufficiency and incomes of Small Holder Farmers by strengthening market systems and resilient production systems** for 2 Million men, Women and Youth through strategic country support, counties and national government engagement towards developing a better enabling environment for private sector as well as targeted and catalytic downstream investments that aim to unlock systemic bottlenecks around Kenya's food systems. AGRA Strategy in Kenya will seek to achieve Zero Hunger, Improved Nutrition, End of Poverty, and climate adaptation. At an intermediate level, we hope to have;

- Enhanced farmer resilience, especially for women and youth.
- Greater food security and nutrition.
- Increased (and more stable) production and yields.
- Increased farmer surplus, sales, and profits
- Dignified and fulfilling work for young men and women.
- Increased revenues for women/youth-led SMEs and women/youth entrepreneurs

##### 1.2 Kenya Strategy of AGRA

AGRA's investments in Kenya will be implemented together with its alliance of partners that include national and County governments. Interventions will aim to support the country **Improve food sufficiency and incomes of Smallholder farmers by strengthening market systems and resilient production systems**. Interventions will be community-based and will be implemented through the following four complementary and integrated business lines: **Seed Systems, Sustainable Farming, Inclusive Markets and Trade, and Policy and State Capability**.

**Seed Systems:** AGRA's aim for this business line is to build strong, efficient, and robust seed systems that give farmers access to appropriate, affordable varieties with traits for better yields, pest and disease tolerance, and more. Seeds are an anchoring

system around which to strengthen the “backbone” of sector research, quality assurance, extension, and distribution – as well as the trigger point to create more productive, commercial farmers able to shift to more sustainable farming practices. AGRA’s approach to seed systems will be tailored for each country and shall generally focus on five main components of seed system, namely (i) Policy and regulatory framework; (ii) National quality assurance; (iii) National planning and coordination; (iv) Seed companies and national agricultural research systems; and (v) Marketing, awareness, and distribution. AGRA activities on seed systems will be delivered through its Center of Excellence for Seed Systems in Africa (CESSA).

**Sustainable Farming:** under this business line AGRA will identify, validate, and catalyze Sustainable Farming models which tackle policy and systemic constraints and therefore enable smallholders to achieve sustained yields and profitability and adapt to climate risks. AGRA has a strong record in strengthening extension and input distribution systems to build on while promoting sustainable farming across the continent. Our approach will therefore build on the following components: (i) Sustainable model of downstream delivery; (ii) Crop diversification and intensification; (iii) Soil fertility and health restoration; (iv) Community-based land restoration; and (v) Climate-smart partner models.

**Inclusive Markets and Trade:** through this business line, AGRA will help build inclusive markets and trade at domestic, regional, and continental levels; ensuring that increased on-farm productivity is matched by post-harvest “pull” opportunities for aggregators, traders and processors, as well as the access to finance required to pursue these opportunities. AGRA will reach beyond small & medium Enterprises (SME) support and consortia to invest in systemic changes through market institutions and mechanisms (e.g., market platforms and industry associations) and improved trade policies and corridors. Tailored to each country, AGRA’s approach will focus on the following components: (i) Access to finance; (ii) Market linkages; (iii) Market-oriented policy; (iv) Agri-SME competitiveness; and (v) Market institutions and platforms. AGRA will build on its successes from the previous strategy on strengthening access to finance and output market, as it advances new activities under this business line.

**Policy and State Capability:** AGRA will build upon its credibility and track record in improving policy and state capability, leveraging proven approaches for supporting governments in evidence-based policy reforms and investments planning. As AGRA helps foster the foundational enabling environment for sustainable food systems, we will use our position as an honest broker to convene and coordinate in the sector and target our investments towards better data and M&E tools and (selectively) towards implementation capacity. AGRA approach on PSC will focus on (i) Data analytics for evidence generation; (ii) sector prioritization and planning (iii) Policy reform and implementation; (iv) Flagship design and investment advisory; (v) Delivery and accountability capacity; and (vi) Regional and continental engagement and coordination.

Besides the above four business lines, AGRA deliberately selected the following three cross-cutting areas: a) Inclusivity (enabling women and youth to contribute to agriculture for their economic empowerment); b) Climate change adaptation (equipping farmers and strengthening food systems to absorb and recover from shocks); and Nutrition (improving nutrition outcomes by diversifying crops and ensuring food availability).

**Inclusivity (Women & Youth):** Across every area of its work, AGRA recognizes an urgent need for intentional inclusivity. Women and youth face structural barriers across the food system that AGRA must deliberately tackle. AGRA’s inclusivity work adopts intentional strategies to eliminate the barriers to participation for women and youth, enabling them to contribute to – and benefit from– agricultural transformation.

**Climate Change Adaptation:** “Business as usual” will not be enough in the face of climate change. Efforts to intensify agricultural productivity must be complemented by commitment to preparation, protection, and restoration. AGRA’s climate change adaptation work equips farmers and strengthens food systems to absorb and recover from shocks.

**Nutrition:** Sustainable food systems not only produce enough food, but the right nutritional content as well. AGRA’s nutrition work strives to improve nutritional outcomes – both for farmers and for the wider population – by diversifying crops and ensuring the widespread availability of nutritious foods..

### 1.3 Call for Grant Applications

To support the implementation of AGRA interventions in Kenya, AGRA is seeking potential partners, to manage the necessary sub-awards, to deliver the three Strategic Objectives (SOs) of the program:

- Enhanced domestic and export markets that provide the incentives to stimulate production and adoption of resilience building approached and products
- Increased adoption of diverse, nutritious, and climate-smart crops and production approaches,
- Strengthened seed regulatory framework, seed inspection & certification.
- Enhanced policy predictability and enhanced state capability to sustain agricultural transformation

AGRA Kenya will at the national level work with the Ministry of Agriculture and Livestock development and related agricultural sector line Ministries. AGRA will also work in the following Counties and value chains:

Counties	Value Chains
1. Nyandarua	1. Potato
2. Nyeri	2. Maize
3. Meru	3. Rice
4. Tharaka Nithi	4. Pulses (Beans, Green grams, Cowpeas, Pigeon pea, Chickpea, soybean)
5. Machakos	5. African Leafy Vegetables
6. Makueni	6. Sorghum
7. Muranga	
8. Nakuru	
9. Kiambu	
10. Isiolo	
11. Samburu	
12. Laikipia	
13. Kakamega	
14. Siaya	
15. Vihiga	

- 16. Nandi
- 17. Uasin Gishu
- 18. Bungoma
- 19. Elgeyo Marakwet
- 20. Embu

The potential partners will include, but not limited to, the following:

- i). Relevant departments/units of Ministry of Agriculture and other ministries, with respect to Provide an enabling environment for sustainable productivity of food;
- ii). The different institutions involved in capacity building & extension systems
- iii). The private sector member organizations and agro-dealers or farmers' organizations that are involved in enhancing sustainable food production through innovative initiatives and advocating for increase investment into the Kenya agriculture sector
- iv). NGOs or private firms providing BDS and other consultancies.
- v). Youth, women and peoples with disability organizations/ associations and cooperatives

AGRA therefore invites submission of concept notes from interested and qualified organizations operating in the agricultural value chain for projects that contribute to the achievement of AGRA's stated intended outcomes. Priority will be given to applications that demonstrate strategic collaboration and innovations across the various value chains.

## 2.0 Key Work Packages

To achieve these desired outcomes AGRA Kenya will pursue three priority objectives as follows.

- **Strategic Objective 1: Strengthened and inclusive agriculture market systems and trade.** Staple output markets are weak, fragmented and largely unstructured. They are constrained by, high transport costs, High storage costs which have led to high production losses, lack of affordable and easily accessible finance, Lack of relevant and timely market information, inappropriate policies and Limited value addition and lack of non-food uses of food commodities. This objective will seek to implement the intergrated value chain development/Consortia model in selected and underserved value chains of Rice, Pulses, iron rich beans, Africa Leafy vegetables. Engagements in the maize sector will largely focus on policy. Agribusiness, farmer organizations, farmers, Youth, and women groups will also be supported to access finance through the Rural Kenya Financial Facility that AGRA will be implementing with IFAD and Ministry of finance. All these will be in support of flagship one of the ASTGS 2018-2028) that aims to **Target ~0.8mn farmers, pastoralists and fisherfolk in an initial 40 zones served by ~1000 farmer-facing SMEs** that provide inputs, equipment including for irrigation, processing, and post-harvest aggregation.
- **Strategic Objective 2: Increased adoption of sustainable farming practices (specific investments will be based on different agroecological zones).** Sustainable Farming in Kenya is constrained by degraded soils, use of inappropriate seed varieties not compatible to different agroecology's, wrong application of fertilizers and other soil conditioners. Climate change is also a threat to sustainable farming. As such, this objective will partner with county governments to strengthen public and private sector last mile delivery systems to ensure that small holder farmers have access to appropriate knowledge of the right seed varieties that are best for their agroecology's, support farmers access the right inputs, soil harvesting technologies. The VBA model will be promoted and will be linked to each SME or consortia that will be formed under objective one. Innovations on how to build incentives for agrodealers to provide services vis- a- vis trading to smallholder farmers and backward linkages to VBAs will also be considered. This objective will also introduce iron-rich beans, Africa leafy vegetables and pulses to enhance dietary diversity. Focus on seeds will be toward production of drought, disease tolerant varieties. Intentional emphasis will be placed on engagement with women and the youth to better access resources for economic development.
- **Strategic Objective 3: Improving the enabling environment for inclusive agriculture transformation.** Policy making process is often long and time consuming, often taking 50-10yr cycles. AGRA will seek to apply its MIRA approach to various policy areas with a view of helping reduce the policy development time. Evidence will also be generated through the HAPA initiative, while CALA will be used as a platform to build the capacity of agricultural leaders. Activities will also follow the SPICA Model; Strategy development, Policy selection, Institutional capacity strengthening, sector coordination and Mutual Accountability. Activities will also help Kenya improve her score in the CAADP Biennial review process. Besides this, AGRA will seek to support the development of youth and women friendly policies

## 3.0 Period of performance

The overall period of performance is estimated to be 3 years' maximum, from August 2023 to August 2026.

## 5.0 Period Grant Applications will be Accepted

This Request for applications will remain open for a period of 30 working days, from June 30<sup>th</sup> 2023 to 31<sup>st</sup> July 2023 11.59pm East African Time (EAT). Interested organizations/ institutions must submit before the final deadline; applications will be evaluated on a rolling basis as indicated above in the synopsis. Applications made after the final deadline 31<sup>st</sup> July 2023 of will not be considered.

### A. TECHNICAL EVALUATION CRITERIA

Evaluation Criteria		Points
1.	<b>Technical Approach:</b> Description of the methodology and approach which meet or exceed the stated technical specifications or scope of work- in either one or a combination of the following given your application; (a) Innovative last mile delivery systems (b) innovative lead firm engagement (c) Advocacy and policy engagement	50 Points
2	<b>Management approach:</b> the application should describe how the proposed team members have the necessary experience and capabilities to carry out the scope of work (attach the team member's CVs).	30 Points

3.	<b>Past Experience:</b> Evidence of working experience in delivering assignments in Kenya in the activities stated on the Scope of work ; in either one or a combination of the following given your application; (a) supporting farmers increase productivity and incomes (b) Engaging lead firms by showcasing opportunities for backward integrations of supply chains (c) Engagement of government to develop and enabling environment for sustainable food production and private sector investment (d) Industry member engagement to develop self regulation and innovations to support and engage smallholder farmers	20 points
<b>Total</b>		<b>100 points</b>

### Evaluation Criteria

NB. For financial proposals to be considered the organization technical proposal must score 70points and above. The financial proposal will be reviewed against the proposed approach and methodology, and cost negotiations held if applicable.

## B. ELIGIBILITY REQUIREMENTS

Organizations contemplating submission of applications in response to this request for Concept Note applications (RFCN) must determine whether they meet the following requirements to be eligible for AGRA financial assistance:

- a). Five (5) years of demonstrable organizations working experience in either one or a combination of the following; (a) Market Systems interventions in potato, pulses, Africa Leafy vegetables,
- b). Demonstrable experience working with county governments in Kenya.
- c). Demonstrable working experience in programs supporting women and youth as stakeholders in implementation activities.
- d). Demonstrated working experience, staffing and logistics in priority counties. A team with experience in seed systems development in any of the following value chains of crops; maize, beans, soybean, Irish Potato
- e). The organization should hold a valid Registration in Kenya
- f). Provide evidence of existing relationships working with county governments in Kenya
- g). Provide CVs of key staff proposed for this assignment.
- h). Provide 3 recommendation letters from donors that have provided support in the last three years.

If an institution/organization meets the above eligibility criteria AGRA may request additional documentation to be submitted as part of the pre-award process. Organizations are advised that any funds made available are subject to AGRA's accountability and audit requirements..

## E. HOW TO APPLY

If eligible and interested in this Request for concept note Application, please provide the following via AGRA's online portal AMIS by/before, **31<sup>st</sup> July 2023 before 11:59 pm Eastern Africa Time (EAT)**. Additionally, applicants at proposal-stage once AGRA has communicated to the applicant of the approved concept, are expected to make submission of following documents (at AGRA AMIS online system for which applicant will be informed by AGRA);

21. Request a new account from here: <https://agra.synisys.com/>
22. Create an account as an applicant
23. Log in to the system with your credentials: <https://agra.synisys.com/portfolio/requests>
24. Choose the request and submit your application via Create New Response section of the form before or by 31<sup>st</sup> July 2023.

Details to be submitted via the portal include;

- a). A copy of your organization's registration certificate
- b). Detailed organization profile
- c). **Technical proposal** (AGRA template provided)- stating an understanding of the scope of work and elaboration of the methodology including how each of the tasks will be executed. Also detail;
  - **Past performance:** Demonstrated evidence of undertaking at least three similar assignments done. The information shall include the legal name and address of the organization for which services were provided, a description of services provided and a current contact phone number and email address of a responsible and knowledgeable representative of the organization.
  - Demonstrate availability of appropriate skills among staff in sufficient numbers and experience in Kenya and attach their CVs.
- d). **Financial Proposal** - Budget (AGRA template provided) - activity cost generation, the organization should provide the options they consider in determining the total cost including the expected milestones and schedule of payment.
- e). Two (2) years Audited financial statement (send a signed copy by the auditor).
- f). Requisite documents from the National NGO Board

