

CALL FOR CONCEPT NOTES

AGRA-PIATA GHANA STRATEGY 3.0

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A. SYNOPSIS OF THE RFA

RFCN No.	RFCN/GH/01/2023
Issue date	August 3, 2023
Title	Call for Concept Notes - AGRA PIATA Ghana Strategy 3.0
Issuing organization	Alliance for a Green Revolution in Africa (AGRA) Head office: CSIR Complex No. 6 Agostino Neto RD Airport Residential Area PMB KIA 114, Accra, Ghana
Submission of questions & Concept Note application	We only accept online submission at AGRA's online portal AMIS (the link for online submission will be live on AGRA's website upon the RFA launch on August 3, 2023)
Deadline for Responding to the questions (for AGRA)	August 16, 2023
Grantee (Implementing Partner Information session)	August 16, 2023
Deadline for submission of application	Aug 23, 2023

B. SCOPE OF WORK

1.0 Background

Agriculture continues to play an essential role in the provision of food security, supply of raw materials for industry, creation of employment, generation of foreign exchange earnings, and contribution to national GDP. There is a strong government commitment to agricultural-led economic development demonstrated by well-structured policies and investment plans (NAIPS); which have translated into strong sector growth, moving from 2.3% in 2015 to an impressive 7% in 2020. Yet, Ghana does not seem to be optimizing the progress made in its inclusive agricultural transformation journey, failing in its potential to adequately link production to processing and markets, and drive the integration with other sectors. Productivity remains low while fragmented high-cost crop production is unable to support a strong processing sub-sector.

Founded in 2006, AGRA is a farmer-centered, Africa-led, and partnerships-driven institution that is transforming Africa's smallholder farming from a solitary struggle to survive to business that thrive .

AGRA has been working with actors in the Ghanaian public and private sectors to build and strengthen core agricultural systems (seed, soil health, markets, agricultural finance, extension, and input distribution systems) investing over US\$60million since 2007. From 2017 to 2021, AGRA worked with private sector operators and the Ministry of Agriculture to integrate these systems through agribusiness consortia and flagships that provided a suite of services to 2 million smallholder farmers.

1.1 Program Objectives and Outcomes

AGRA Ghana's strategic choices draw from the in-depth analysis of the persisting challenges hindering inclusive agricultural transformation an analysis of interventions of development partners operating in the space, and unmet needs. The strategy responds to a weak agro-processing sector resulting from misalignment between production and the post-harvest management system, which disincentivizes technology adoption keeping smallholder farmers from effectively participating in agri-food markets. AGRA's strategy therefore seeks to unlock productivity and trade through agro-processing and value addition.

The overall goal of the strategy is to catalyze an inclusive transformation of the Ghanaian agriculture and food system through a competitive agro-processing industry that drives farmer productivity, resilience and job creation. By 2030, AGRA's support will enable 1,200,000 smallholder farmers to graduate from subsistence to market-oriented and diversified farming systems, contributing to increased incomes and food security.

This will be delivered through our three (3) mutually reinforcing strategic objectives (SO):

SO1: Strengthen Institutional capacity for an enabling environment for the transformation of agri-food systems. Successful delivery of this objective will result in strengthened state and non-state institutional capacity at the national, regional, and district levels for coordination, mutual accountability, data, and analytics- for better implementation and monitoring of agricultural policies, programs, and flagships.

Planned outcomes :

- Improved state capability for policy and program planning and implementation
- Increased public, private, donor investment in IAT, food systems, youth ag. employment
- Inclusive policy/programming environment to advance IAT, healthy food systems, and youth employment

SO2: Enhance the competitiveness of SMES in agro-processing value addition to create shared value. The achievement of this objective will result in a more inclusive and resilient agri-processing sector, which will expand work opportunities and availability of nutritious food.

Planned Outcomes:

- Increased finance, domestic and regional trade
- Increased output and finance market competitiveness, esp. for SMEs and value chains that engage women/youth
- Stronger enabling environment for inclusive trade and finance and youth ag. Entrepreneurship

SO3: Strengthen resilience of raw material supply chains for the agro-processing sub-sector. Achieving this objective will result in enhanced capacity of Agri-food systems to natural, climate, and economic shocks, and better integration of smallholder farmers into agri-food value chains, ultimately contributing to increased incomes and food and nutrition security for SHF households.

Planned outcomes.

- Resilient supply of nutrient-dense, climate-smart varieties
- Increased seed market competitiveness, including seed company revenues
- Resilient supply of extension and sustainable farming inputs
- Increased SF input market competitiveness
- Inclusive sustainable frameworks fully institutionalized

Target Value chains:

Maize, rice, cassava, soybean, Cowpea, Groundnuts and vegetable

Call for Grant Applications

To support the delivery of the strategy, AGRA Ghana is inviting potential and eligible organizations to submit concept notes to manage sub-awards in four work packages (in whole or part), as summarized below:

Work Packages and Interventions

WP 1: Strengthened capacity of thriving and inclusive agribusinesses to drive resilient and competitive output markets and agro-based industries (Inclusive Markets & Trade)

- Facilitate the development of a sustainable Business Development Services (BDS) ecosystem, and technical assistance framework for MSMEs to improve management, operational & financial capability and bankability, making them investment ready.
- Support the design and development of a program that improves quality efficiency and competitiveness key value chains, including contributing to a favorable policy environment for inclusive sourcing models.
- Support the operationalization and scaling of digital and physical platforms - that enhance the coordination between agro-processors, producers and other market actors.
- Expand the use of innovative value chain finance and trade finance models leveraging on digital technology, for risk sharing, and de-risking instruments to improve last mile SHF and SMEs' access to affordable financing.
- Support regulations to enhance trade facilitation for domestic and regional markets through post-harvest management systems, traceability systems, food safety enforcement and price discovery mechanisms,

WP 2: Enhanced resilience of Agri-food systems to natural, climate and economic shocks for increased income, and food and nutrition security for SHF households. (Sustainable Farming)

- Scale out a pluralistic extension system including the C/VBA model to support expanded, timely and sustainable access to quality inputs including climate smart and nutrient dense varieties, sustainable farming practices, and delivery systems to farmers.
- Support digital extension capacity and content upgrade for climate change adaptation and resilient food systems using Tech4Ag platforms.
- Facilitate public -private sector partnership for expanded access to quality organic and inorganic fertilizers within a framework of diversified integrated soil health and water management technologies
- Facilitate development of strategic documents (action plan and strategy) for the fertilizer and soil health, aligning with the regional and continental commitments.

WP 3: Increased adoption of improved agricultural inputs and technologies, including high quality seeds of climate smart, nutrition dense varieties, to drive productivity and competitiveness of small holder farmers. (Seed System Development)

- Strengthen institutional architecture for planning and coordination of the seed industry
- Support increased adoption of certified seeds by farmers through facilitating the increased production and supply of early generation and certified seed, enhanced business capacity of seed companies and enhanced farmer awareness.
- Facilitate the deployment of a robust infrastructure for seed testing, processing, and storage, as well as seed certification

and quality control.

- Technical assistance to strengthen capacity for research, development, and innovations

WP 4: Strengthened institutional capacity at the national, regional and district level to implement and monitor agricultural policies, programs and flagships (Policy and State Capability)

- Strengthen government capacity for coordination and inter-ministerial collaboration.
- Support state capacity for mutual accountability, and timely evidence-based decision making through better streamlining of the CAADP BR mechanism, as well as better capacity for data and analytics, and M&E
- Support development and dissemination of targeted strategies and regulation to support youth in agro-processing and value additions including the development of agricultural marketing policy, sub-sector or value chain specific strategies, and development plans
- Support strengthening of policy and regulatory framework for agro-processing, and increased domestic and regional trade

OTHER KEY CONSIDERATIONS

AGRA will consider catalytic and transformative proposals focusing on the priority value chains. Priority will be given to proposals that demonstrate strategic collaboration across the whole value chain of the crops mentioned above through working consortium approaches and catalytic to transform Ghana's agriculture.

Proposed projects must clearly demonstrate how interventions will contribute to enhancing youth and women inclusiveness, capacity, and participation in Ghana's agricultural transformation and to create opportunities for dignified work opportunities for the youth in the agri-food and adjacent sectors

C. ELIGIBILITY REQUIREMENTS

Organizations interested in submitting applications in response to this call for request for concept notes (RfCN) must determine whether they meet the following requirements to be eligible for AGRA financial assistance:

- Unless specifically stated otherwise in this section, must be operational in Ghana with valid registration documents.
- Organization's primary business activity must be in Ghana.
- Organization's registration to do business in Ghana must be current.
- Organization must be in a sound financial condition.
- Organization must have sufficient existing capability/capacity to perform new work. AGRA may consider limited financial assistance to fund capacity building only if the proposal is determined to be of interest to AGRA.
- Organization must have demonstrated favorable past performance record.
- Must demonstrate adequate capability, understanding and track record in a particular Work Package or intervention areas the organization proposes to deliver.
- Organization must have accounting systems acceptable to AGRA and corporate integrity/ethics.
- Organization must not be excluded from the eligibility to receive AGRA's donor-provided funds.
- Can be a governmental, non-governmental or private institution.

If an institution/organization meets the above eligibility criteria, AGRA will 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 and its donor strict accountability and audit requirements.

No promise explicit or implicit is made to any Institutions/organizations/firms submitting a concept note to AGRA on making any funds available (including reimbursement of document preparation costs).

NB: Organizations with capability can submit individual grant application. However, organizations are encouraged to jointly submit grant applications as consortia. Private for-profit companies are eligible as collaborating or strategic partners but not direct grant recipients and are therefore encouraged to partner with other public or not-for-profit partners. Where applicable after receipt of grant applications, AGRA has a chance to ask the organizations to jointly implement at award stage.

This is a two-stage process and only applicants with successful Concept Notes will be invited to submit Full Proposals.

PERIOD OF PERFORMANCE

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

D. HOW TO APPLY

If eligible and interested in this Request for grant concept note Application, please provide the following via AGRA's online portal AMIS by/before, **August 23, 2023 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);

1. Request a new account from here: <https://agra.synisys.com/>
2. Create an account as an applicant
3. Log in to the system with your credentials: <https://agra.synisys.com/portfolio/requests>
4. Choose the request and submit your application via Create New Response section of the form before or by **August 23, 2023**.
5. Detailed organization profile with CVs of project implementation team.
6. Technical proposal - At this stage, applicants are expected to submit a brief concept note only. Once short-listed, AGRA expects submission of a detailed technical proposal from short-listed applicants clearly stating an understanding of the Scope of work and elaboration of the methodology including how each of the tasks will be executed. Additional details will include;
7. Financial Proposal - At this concept stage, applicants are expected to provide a brief budget of the project only. Once short-listed, AGRA will request a detailed financial proposal from short-listed applicants.

E. TECHNICAL EVALUATION CRITERIA

Evaluation Criteria	Points
Relevance: relevance of the proposal to the objectives and priorities of the call for proposal, AGRA Ghana strategy and to the particular needs and constraints of the target beneficiaries	10 Points
Technical Approach – Description of the methodology and approach which meet or exceed the stated technical specifications or scope of work, coherence of the overall design, activities clearly defined and strategically chose, and contain specific added-value	40 Points
Effectiveness and Feasibility: Proposed activities are appropriate, practical, and consistent with the objectives and expected results. The plan is clear and feasible	15 points
Management approach: the grant 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).	15 points
Sustainability: demonstrates catalytic investments and clear linkage to cross cutting areas	10 points
Past Experience: Evidence of working experience in delivering similar assignments in Ghana in the activities stated on the Scope of work ; either independently or as a member of a consortium.	10 points
Total	100 points

