**Leadership Initiative Implementation Partner – Responses to Questions from Prospective Firms**

**Question 1: How can we participate in the scheduled pre-bid conference with bidders?**

*Response: A conference call meeting link will be shared by Friday April 24th 2020 for the conference call on Monday April 27th 12-1pm EAT.*

**Question 2: Can we partner with another organization to bid for this project?**

*Response: AGRA prefers to partner directly with an organization that has the technical competencies and capabilities outlined for design, implementation, operational management of the leadership initiative. This will make for a lean, cost effective team and minimize any emergent bureaucracies to simplify the administration of the Leadership Initiative. That said, wherever institutions would choose to partner with others to deliver this scope most effectively, we welcome to know who, why, and how the implementation partner will go about it.*

**Question 3: The partner needs to be able to co-invest with AGRA to secure development funding. What is the volume (amount) of co-investment in USD that is expected? Can this co-investment be in-kind? In which phase will the co-investment be needed?**

*Response: The “co-investment” required is in the program design phase which is expected to last from June 2020 when the implementation partner is on-boarded to Oct/Nov 2020 when the funding partner will hopefully release funding upon successful evaluation of the jointly designed proposal. This is largely expected to be an in-kind contribution in terms of business development, as it is important to stress that being selected as the winner of this RFP does not guarantee funding. Instead, it means that the implementation partner will need to work hand-in-hand with AGRA to finalize a proposal for submission to the funding partner for final consideration.*

*The co-investment is therefore required in terms of:*

1. *Staff time for proposal development*
2. *Financial resources and staff time in terms of carrying out a training needs assessment in a sample of the proposed cohort ideally in July to inform the curriculum design. The assessment was anticipated to require travel but given COVID-19 travel restrictions, this may be organized via conference calls which would also minimize the cost.*
3. *Registration, travel and maintenance of at least 1 representative to the AGRF Summit in Kigali between September 8-11th, where the Leadership Initiative is tentatively expected to be formally announced (pending any updates due to COVID-19)*

**Question 4: Has AGRA already identified specific development partners/ donors? If so, is the programme already discussed with them?**

*Response: The Leadership Initiative is a co-creation with the German Development Cooperation at its outset. Upon successful evaluation of the proposal, it is to be funded by BMZ through a financing agreement with KfW, building on an initial existing partnership. We will follow all the guidance from KfW regarding the funding agreement and any changes therein due to COVID-19.*

*Germany and AGRA cooperate strategically under an MOU signed in 2017 and have since been working together in Burkina Faso and Ghana on value chain development interventions. The Leadership Initiative is proposed as one of five complementary intervention areas that could further advance the partnership between AGRA and BMZ to actualize a shared vision supporting the transformation of Agriculture in Africa.*

*Other funding partners and approaches would be considered after the program is successfully designed for the purposes of sustainability and scale.*

***Question 5:* The methodology should involve a business model which needs to be scalable and sustainable. Has AGRA already identified Agricultural organizations (public or private) that are interested in these leadership courses for their staff?**

*Response: The demand for the Leadership Initiative is grounded in lessons learnt from AGRA’s work in Policy and State Capability with African governments in our 11[[1]](#footnote-1) focus countries. The Institutional Capacity Assessments (ICA) carried out over the course of 2019 and now undergoing validation with respective governments, further grounded the implementation challenges faced by leaders in the Agriculture sector.*

*Leaders for the inaugural cohort will be identified from a strategic sample of 6-8 countries from AGRA’s focus countries (Ethiopia, Rwanda, Ghana, Kenya, Tanzania, and Nigeria). For the second cohort, the Initiative will expand into other suitable countries and into Franco-phone Africa, particularly Burkina Faso and Mali, based on established leadership interest and potential for impact.*

*AGRA is targeting the leadership engaged in implementation of government projects based in Ministries of Agriculture, public and private agriculture policy firms and agriculture think tanks, and agribusiness leaders linked to government projects. As an alliance, AGRA has wide and well-established networks in these circles and plans to work with the identified implementation partner to select the right cohort.*

**Question 6: The bid process has listed the current document as an RFP. Reading through the contents and interpreting the envisaged selection process (which is two staged - i.e. (a) selection of an implementation partner and (b) proposal development to solicit for funding, it strikes us that this should instead be an EOI from implementation partner, which should be followed by the prequalification of the partners and final selection of the partner with whom AGRA will co-design the proposal. Please let us know if this is the correct interpretation.**

*Response: AGRA elected to take the Request for Proposals (RFP) approach because it allows us to scope solicit detailed applications as opposed to EOI that are relatively light in scope. This approach is in step with our quest for in-depth due diligence and expedited approval cycle to meet the tight timeline.*

*We therefore opted to go straight to RFP for expediency in selection of an implementing partner. This is because of the tight timelines which require the implementation partner to have been identified by June and a full co-designed proposal in place by August 2020.  The RFP was launched publicly to invite targeted firms and other qualified firms to compete in response to the RFP.*

**Question 7: What are the envisaged roles and responsibilities for i) Executive Track; ii) Pace setters and iii) Transformation Champions in the Agricultural Transformation discourse?**

*Response: The Executive Track will involve top level government leadership that is embedded in key national institutions over the mid-to-long term such as permanent secretaries, directors and department heads, as well as leaders from non-state institutions that are of similar seniority and play key roles in delivering on transformation priorities.*

*The Pace Setters track includes people in technical leadership/delivery positions who may be deputizing the executive track such as institutional directors, deputies, and program managers who are distinguishing themselves within the landscape in implementing top priority transformation programs. This track will also identify high performing emerging leaders who are taking up or being groomed for leadership in agriculture and have exhibited the potential to drive change even if they are earlier in their careers.*

*Transformation Champions are not expected to participate in the leadership training. Rather, they are pre-eminent leaders from the public and private sectors who have championed African Agriculture. Bringing these Transformation Champions together and with the cohort will help bridge the gap between private and public sector leadership cultures and will build the necessary political momentum and visibility for the delivery of results.*

**Question 8: Please elaborate on the numbers AGRA has in mind for the various tracks. Where are the transformation champions located in relation to the Executive and Pacesetters tracks?**

*Response: As detailed in Section 3.1. of the RFP, Overview of the Leadership Initiative, the Initiative will include two cohorts totaling approximately 150 leaders from the public and private sectors. Each cohort of 75 will comprise of the two tracks -Executive and Pacesetters. AGRA has not yet outlined the breakdown in terms of the specific numbers of participants to be included in each track as this depends on the applications received and the cohort recruitment plan to be rationalized and rolled out. We are however guided by a rough estimation per country of around 10 participants per track, which makes it approximately 20 participants per country from the sample of 6-8 focus countries. These figures will be worked out with the implementation partner. The Transformation Champions are not included in accounting for the 150 leaders since they will not be going through the leadership journey. They will likely be no more than five outstanding continental leaders drawn from AGRA’s networks of private/public sector leaders who have championed the development of the Agriculture sector.*

**Question 9: Please elaborate on AGRA’s cohort recruitment plan. How will you engage actors like the African Union and others to ensure that there is no overlap?**

*Response: Cohort recruitment is an important activity that will rely on AGRA’s existing networks based on its work in Policy and State Capability, as well as the wider alliance of private and non-state actors across the eleven focus countries. AGRA will also use this as an opportunity to tap into the network of PhD and Masters students whose studies were sponsored by AGRA in the previous strategy, and who have now taken up leadership roles in different areas within the agriculture sector. AGRA has also been in conversation with development partners who have been engaged in leadership capacity development e.g., USAID which ran the Champions for Change initiative and other transformation leadership initiatives, to ensure we build a complementary program to what already exists. AGRA has a strong relationship with the African Union and RECs and is also cognizant of the African Union’s Leadership Academy. This initiative’s cohorts will be structured to support and complement the AU’s continental agenda in Agriculture. Recruitment of the cohort will also ensure a relative gender balance in the Initiative.*

**Question 10: What are the expected durations and venues for the Themed Leadership Forums?**

*Response: Each leadership forum is expected to last three days, amounting to six days in total per year. The forums will be held twice a year (proposed to be in January for the launch and in July prior to AGRF, though open to revision during co-design with the implementation partner.)*

*The venue is to be decided with the implementation partner after a scoping and costing process and accounting for travel conveniences based the geographic outlay of the final cohort that is selected. That said, we anticipate that for the inaugural cohort it is likely to be in Kenya or Rwanda due to the proximity to AGRA HQ and the AGRF base respectively.*

**Question 11: Please elaborate on the duration and structure of the field trips to selected transformation agencies.**

*Response: AGRA proposes field trips or learning trips to selected government agencies spearheading agriculture transformation such as the Ethiopian Agriculture Transformation Agency and the Rwandan (RDB) among others, including potential one or more outside the continent for broader south-south learning. This unique continental and potential global exposure contributes to building the pre-eminence of this program and facilitates demand driven peer-learning across the continent. These trips are intended to inform the institutional architecture and development of roadmaps which other countries can learn from, as well as provide continental exposure on what is working and what isn’t in other contexts.*

**Question 12: The envisaged Leadership Initiative design will entail two aspects from a content perspective. Technical content design and Leadership aspects. What role will the Implementation partner play in technical content design and delivery of the technical aspects during implementation?**

*Response: Outlined in section 5.0 of the RFP under Scope of Work, the implementation partner is expected to take the lead role in designing the content of the curriculum informed by a training needs analysis.*

*The implementation partner will also take the lead role in delivery of training during the leadership forums and in managing on-the-job coaching.*

**Question 13: Has AGRA developed any digital learning modules and how far along are they?**

*Response: AGRA has not developed digital modules. As detailed in the RFP under section 3.1. Overview of the leadership initiative, as part of continuous learning and networking, a digital learning component consisting of webinars and online courses is also under consideration, especially as a means of delivery during this COVID-19 crisis. The suitability of this method needs to be ascertained for its effectiveness when working with senior leaders in the public sector. We propose to develop an initial understanding of the demand, content and time intensity for digital modules from the training needs assessment to be done by the implementing partner in June. AGRA also has a range of partnerships working in digitizing agriculture that can be harnessed to advice on developing the right kind of digital modules.*

**Question 14: How is AGRA thinking of designing the coaching component of the leadership training?**

*Response: The coaching process is an important aspect of the blended learning approach that AGRA hopes to embed in the curriculum. It is also a proven way of implementing applied/ on-the-job learning. AGRA hopes to work with the implementation partner to provide in-county support to participants after they have identified a discrete challenge to delivery of a government transformation initiative and to support the development of roadmaps for delivery of transformation initiatives. Coaches can also be brought into the Initiative by tapping into in-country networks of agriculture experts who can provide the required support.*

**Question 15: Would the content address aspects of value chain financing, governance and development?**

*Response: The technical content will be demand-driven depending on findings from the training needs assessment of a sample of the cohort. Value Chain interventions are central to AGRA’s interventions, and AGRA has deep expertise in this. It is also integral to many government agriculture development approaches and it is expected that this will likely be part of the content.*

**Question 16: Please clarify on AGRA’s expectations on accreditation.**

*Response: To ensure the quality and provide the best possible experience for participants in the Initiative, AGRA and the German Development Cooperation are keen to partner with an accredited African training institution. This preference reduces the coordination costs of working with a wider range of partners on quality assurance of the curriculum. In addition, working with an accredited partner will inspire confidence such that the curriculum and training will act as a template for lessons learnt on African leadership capacity development in the Agriculture sector and help us institutionalize this Initiative as a Centre for Excellence.*

**Question 17: What does AGRA expect to get from the leadership training initiative?**

*Response: The initiative builds into AGRA’s work on Policy and State Capability to support the leadership of the Agriculture sector to implement their transformation agendas more effectively. Through it, AGRA also hopes to see more advanced Agriculture Flagship Programs in the 6-8 focus countries. Thirdly, AGRA hopes to generate lessons in leadership capacity development for Africa’s Agriculture Transformation.*

**Question 18: In the submission, are the bidders expected to formulate the M&E and Results framework? What role, if any, will the implementation partner play in assessing the impact of the Leadership Initiative?**

*Response: A fully developed M&E results framework is not expected in the proposal submission responding to the RFP. This will be developed with AGRA in the proposal development phase to take place between June and August.*

*As outlined in Section 5.0 (Scope of work) in the RFP, the Implementation Partner will be responsible for carrying out the necessary evaluations to track the progress of the participants and the Initiative against the Results Framework.*

**Question 19: On Administrative and Logistical support, will the partner be expected to submit reports and/or participate in steering committee meetings? If so, how frequent will the meetings be and where will they be held as this has a cost implication?**

*Response: The implementing partner will be expected to handle all the administrative and logistical activities for the Leadership Initiative. These will be costed out in detail in the budget to be submitted with the proposal in August to the German Development Cooperation.*

*Any meetings and reports required will be tied to the most effective means of ensuring transparency, accountability and supporting the evaluation of the program. These will be detailed in the course of program design and proposal development with AGRA.*

**Question 20: On deliverables, we are of the view that these need to be more pointed and specific. Are the bidders allowed to comment on these in their submissions, based on their interpretations of what the deliverables should be?**

*Response: Bidders are encouraged to provide input on further sharpening the deliverables based on their experience.*

**Question 21: You have put French as a language that is required when bidding. The RFP has indicated that the 6-8 countries to be selected in this phase will be Anglophone countries. Please clarify the need for French.**

*Response: The two inaugural cohorts will be Anglophone and pulled from a subset of the 6-8 countries mentioned. For the third cohort (after this pilot 3-year launch), the Initiative will expand into other suitable countries and into Franco-phone Africa, particularly Burkina Faso and Mali, based on established leadership interest and potential for impact. Since the implementation partner is seen as a long-term partner, their proficiency in French will be critical for this scale-up phase. The implementation partner therefore needs to be able to help design and implement curriculum in French as well as English. Ultimately, the representation of Franco- and Anglophone participants in each cohort will be decided with the funding partner.*

**Question 22: On the disclaimer, what assurance/comfort is extended to the bidder that should AGRA withdraw, the intellectual input is held in confidence? Would it be okay for AGRA to get into a non-disclosure agreement?**

*Response: AGRA would consider getting into a non-disclosure agreement to safeguard the intellectual property that may have been shared in the course of selecting an implementation partner. In addition, the co-creation and ownership of IP will also be carried in the contractual agreement.*

**Question 23: Does AGRA have a sample contract for the RFP and/or for the Initiative should it receive funding?**

*Response: The partnership is handled by AGRA’s Grants Unit as the selected implementing partner will receive a grant and become an AGRA grantee. As an experienced grant maker, AGRA has template contracts detailing the nature, roles and responsibilities of this relationship. In the spirit of partnership, AGRA will provide the sample pre-award template to the winning applicants for pre-award concurrence.*

**Question 24: On the administrative and logistical management of participants’ accommodation and travel -  can bidders choose to sub-contract this function or are we required to run it (internally) as part of the bid?**

*Response: The successful bidder may choose to sub-contract some of the functions involved in logistical and administrative management of the Initiative. Such sub-contracting where viable should be cost effective and on a service level contract as opposed to sub-granting. A top priority is placed on quality management to ensure a quality experience.*

**Question 25: Will we be able to ask additional questions during the pre-bid conference or will that be a ''listen-only'' conference?**

*Response: The pre-bid conference will be an hour long where AGRA will present the answers to the questions put forward previously in the first half hour. Bidders will have 30 minutes to ask follow-up questions thereafter.*

**Question 26: Will we be able to ask additional questions after the pre-bid conference before proposal submission?**

*Response: The proposal process for this Leadership Initiative included a window from April 10th to 17th for questions and clarifications from interested parties, as well as a pre-bid conference call on April 27th to discuss these and other questions in more details. The full set of these questions and answers have been shared online for full transparency in the process. AGRA hopes that all substantive questions that would influence a proposal have been addressed. If other truly substantive questions arise that would have a material impact on the proposal, please let us know by emailing* ***rfcn@agra.org****. We reserve the right to respond or not in order to complete this process most effectively. Any subsequent questions addressed will be shared with all interested parties and posted online.*

1. AGRA’s eleven priority countries are Burkina Faso, Ethiopia, Ghana, Kenya, Malawi, Mali, Mozambique, Nigeria, Rwanda, Tanzania, Uganda. In addition to these, AGRA also works closely with governments in Cote d’Ivoire, Togo, and Zambia. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)