### ***VALUE4HER: Strengthening Women-Led Agribusinesses in Africa***

CALL FOR PROPOSALS / APPLICATIONS

# Innovation Grant for Catalyzing Women-Women supply chains

**Guidelines for Applicants**

# ABOUT AGRA

The Alliance for a Green Revolution in Africa (AGRA), [www.agra.org](http://www.agra.org) is a farmer-centred, African-led, partnerships-driven institution that is working to transforming smallholder farming from a solitary struggle to survive to a business that thrives. In collaboration with its partners—including African governments, researchers, development partners, the private sector and civil society— AGRA’s work primarily focuses on smallholder farmers - men and women who typically cultivate staple crops on two hectares or less. AGRA has learned a lot from efforts during its first decade and is now recognized across the continent as a strong voice for African rural development, a prosperous agricultural economy, and for supporting thousands of small African businesses and millions of African families to improve agriculture as a way to ensure food security and improve their livelihoods.

AGRA’s goal is to catalyse an inclusive agricultural transformation in the African continent by increasing incomes and improving food security. With an initial focus on 11 countries, the goal is to improve the lives of over 30 million female and male farmers in Africa by 2021.

# PROJECT BACKGROUND AND OBJECTIVES (VALUE4HER)

AGRA, through the VALUE4HER program, plans to implement activities geared towards catalysing women to women supplier and mentorship relationships, to create market and learning networks among women-led businesses. As a pilot intervention, this grant seeks to catalyse women-women supply chains, evaluate and learn how business relations along women supply chains work to incentivise women to learn and adapt their attitude/perception to business growth and facilitate the development of knowledge and insights for scale, voice and advocacy initiatives in Africa. The grant provides the crucial link between top tiers of women SMEs and the nano and micro women entrepreneurs and provides avenues for knowledge transfer and mentorship between women in agribusiness.

**VALUE4HER** is AGRAs continental program, aimed at increasing the performance of women agri-enterprises, through access to markets and trade, finance and investments, knowledge and skills, networking and building women’s collective voice. The program **VALUE4HER** is powered by [VALUE4HERConnect](https://value4her.hivebrite.com/page/about-value4her), Africa’s first women in agribusiness integrated digital resource, designed to assist women agri-enterprises transcend gender and market entry barriers, built upon digital technologies capabilities to connect, amplify, and deliver customized service.

# OBJECTIVE OF THE VALUE4HER INNOVATION GRANT

The overall objective is to catalyse, incubate, consolidate the approach for women to women supply chains, to reach women micro-entrepreneurs and or women farmers. AGRA stands to benefit from the knowledge developed from the pilot to further hone its approach on women to women business networks while cascading the benefits from established women’s businesses who are beneficiaries of VALUE4HER to those that are not yet beneficiaries of the program.

The women to women supply relationship will leverage, connect, and integrates all women from micro, meso and macro levels of agribusiness, to create market opportunities that serve women from the higher tier to the lower tier of agribusinesses.

1. To connect **20 women top tier SMEs** on the **VALUE4HER platform** with approximately **400 women nano and micro-entrepreneurs**, through a supply relationship
2. To pilot these **women’s supply integration** to **develop knowledge** and insights on women to women market linkages.
3. To develop **coaching and mentorship/role modelling** support between women’s business leadership at the different tiers of relationship, to create the incentive to trigger growth ambitions among women agribusinesses.
4. To contribute to the **expansion of voice and advocacy outcomes for the VALUE4HER platform** through proof of concept that enhances the visibility of the performance of women entrepreneurs.

# ELIGIBILITY AND CRITERIA

This Innovation Grant (IG) is open to women-led/owned agribusinesses (at least 70% of the shares held by a woman or group of women) that are incorporated in an African country and have been in existence for at least three (3) years. The detailed eligibility criteria are below. The woman-led/owned agribusiness (hereafter called ‘The Applicant) must meet the following criteria:

* The Applicant is a **legal entity** (sole proprietorship; partnerships, corporation or limited liability company)**, incorporated in an African country,** fully or majority-**owned** by women citizens of Africa (minimum 70% shareholding).
* The Applicant is in agribusiness – either in bulking, processing or trading in agricultural commodities or products.
* The Applicant must have been in operation for a minimum of **3 years**, with an **annual turnover of USD 20,000 – USD 200,000**.
* The Applicant must demonstrate the capacity to contribute at least 10% of the total project budget (in **cash or in-kind**).
* Qualifying members of the **#VALUE4HERConnect Platform** are particularly encouraged to apply.

# INNOVATION GRANT SUPPORTED ACTIVITIES

The Applicant can use the **VALUE4HER** grant to fund a range of services, alone or in combination, for example as per the following:

* Costs relating to the identification and mobilization of women agripreneurs and producers of lower business segment for produce offtake.
* Costs relating to the identification of capacity gaps of women suppliers, cost of at least one training on product quality, standards, product flow schedules, logistics, packaging, etc.);
* Costs relating to two coaching/mentorship sessions
* Costs relating to the drafting of partnerships/ supplier agreements/contracts.
* Costs relating to new supply chains and linkages (to meet at least 20 new women suppliers);
* Costs in lieu of small equipment purchases, not exceeding **USD 2,500**
* Costs relating to personnel supporting the initiative, not exceeding **USD 1,500**

# USE OF VALUE4HER INNOVATION GRANT (IG)

The **maximum available grant per qualifying** agribusiness is **USD 9,000.** This is to cover up to a maximum of 90% of the total budget for approved activities (inclusive of fees for training, logistics costs, equipment, etc.). The balance of 10% (USD 1,000 in-cash or in-kind contribution from participating business) is the Applicant’s contribution to the project.

The successful agribusiness will be required to sign a grant contract with AGRA, which will include a cash advance payment of up to 70% of AGRA’s contribution to the agribusiness. The balance (30%) will be paid after the approved activities have been completed; verification done, and signed completion certificate(s) received; and upon receipt of original supporting documents, including a 2-page summary report on experiences, achievements and lessons learnt.

***N.B****. The* VALUE4HER grant can only be used for activities eligible as per criteria laid out in this call and as per the contract signed with AGRA;

***N.B.*** The grant **cannot** be used to acquire land, property or other real estate, or large capital expenditure items (e.g. equipment costing more than USD 2,500) or registering or buying patents.

***N.B.*** Ownership of any intellectual property or profits generated through this funding facility will reside with the agribusiness.

***N.B.*** Grant beneficiaries will be invited to provide a one-page impact statement based on the **VALUE4HER grant** six (6) months afterwards.

# OPERATIONALISING THE VALUE4HER INNOVATION GRANT

1. All applicants will be required to complete and submit the official #VALUE4HER-Grant Application form available both on **#VALUE4HERConnect platform** [**https://value4her.hivebrite.com**](https://value4her.hivebrite.com/)**/** and [www.agra.org](http://www.agra.org) on or before the deadline.
2. Applications will be evaluated based on the technical and administrative criteria that are herein included (cf. section 9).
3. All activities are to be completed within 6 months.

# SUBMISSION OF GRANT APPLICATIONS

Eligible African women-led agribusinesses are required to submit their grant applications using the official template and by providing required supporting documents. Submissions should be sent as attachments to the email provided below. The email subject should be stipulated as follows <NAME OF COMPANY> followed by <APPLICATION FOR VALUE4HER GRANT>. Documents should be scanned and organised as follows:

1. One file with - Administrative Documents
2. Grant Application Form (Annex 1)
3. Signed declaration (Annex 2)
4. Company registration certificate
5. Proof of nationality and gender of the owner(s) (e.g. scanned copy of passport page)
6. Certified bank statements for either 2019 or 2020 (01 January to 31 December 2019 or 01 January 2020 – 31 December 2020) or recent bank certificate showing the financial situation of the Applicant (dated less than 90 days prior to the submission date).
7. One file with - Technical Documents and Budget
8. Technical Proposal (Annex 3) detailing:
	1. Justification for women to women supply chain and why your company is best placed to implement this scheme (adding at minimum 20 new women suppliers into your company supply chain)
	2. Innovative women to women supply chains activities for which the innovation grant will be used
	3. The implementation plan
	4. The expected impact – short- and medium-term
	5. The budget summary (clearly showing own contribution of 10%)
9. Detailed Budget form (Annex 4)
10. Details of the service provider to be engaged (Annex 5) – not mandatory

**Email Address** - The complete set of **documents (scanned copies)-** the application form including annexes and supporting documents (PDF, Word and Excel format) must be sent to the following email address – rfcn@agra.org on /or before July 30, 2021**, at 23:59HRS (EAT)**.

**Deadline -** All documents (as indicated above) must be received before the deadline. The deadline for receipt of applications is **July 30, 2021, at 23:59HRS (EAT)**

**Questions** – Any questions and requests for clarification regarding the **#VALUE4HER INNOVATION GRANT** call should be submitted to rfcn@agra.org on or before July 7, 2021. A reply to all questions will be provided up to 5 calendar days before the deadline of submission of proposals. The questions and answers will be posted online and made available for all other applicants.

# EVALUATION OF THE VALUE4HER- INNOVATION GRANT APPLICATIONS

Only applications received within the deadline in response to the VALUE4HER- Innovation Grant calls for applications and submitted using the approved official IG grant application form and templates will be considered. Applications will be evaluated using a **two-step** process:

1. **1st Stage**: **Conformance** with **administrative requirements (cf. section 8.1 above)** – All proposals will be screened to ensure compliance with the **administrative** requirements. Applications that do not meet the administrative requirements will be rejected.
2. **2nd Stage** – An inter-disciplinary team of experts (3) drawn from VALUE4HER implementing partners in Africa and supported by staff members of AGRA will undertake the technical evaluation of all **eligible** applications using the established evaluation scorecard (see below).

### *Evaluation Score Card*

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Criteria** | **Weighting factor** | **Maximum score** |
| **Justification/why your company** | **1** | **10** |
| **Innovation/solution proposed** | 3 | 30 |
| **Implementation plan & schedule** | 1 | 20 |
| **Impact expected/achieved** | 3 | 20 |
| **Detailed Budget** | 1 | 20 |
| **Total** | **10** | **100** |

**Minimum score** required: **70 points**.

**Finalists** - A maximum of **21 - 25** qualifying SMEs will be selected from among those with the highest scores (>70), ranked from highest to lowest. The top 20 will be selected and the extra five to ten (nos. 21-25) will be placed on the list of reserves.

1. **3rd Stage**: The partners **reserve the right** to include **a third stage in the evaluation process.** If deemed necessary, in-country representative(s) of the project partners will be requested to make a site visit to validate key data of **any** finalists before the final announcement of the top twenty (20) winners.

# AWARD OF GRANTS

The top **twenty** (20) successful applicants will be officially informed of their success in winning an innovation grant by email. A grant contract will then be signed with AGRA to access the funding as per the contract.

# MONITORING, DOCUMENTATION AND ADVOCACY

AGRA through the country Gender staff and local partners will monitor the implementation of the Grant award and evaluate the outputs, outcome and impact, through a verification visit by local partners of VALUE4HER.