

# REQUEST FOR CONCEPT NOTES (RFCN)

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**Build capacity of Cross Border Trader Associations and promote utilization of trade facilitation tools by women and youth in trade in Eastern and Southern Africa.**

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## 1. Synopsis of the RFCN

RF No.: CTE/RFCN 009/2023

Issue date: 30/May/2023

Country/geographical location:

No Data

Timeline of Proposal Development:

Lot No.	Deadline	Concepts Review	Notification of successful Grant concepts	Development of Proposals	Review, Internal/External approval of Proposals	Fund Approval, Award and Inception meetings
1	28/Sep/2023	05/Oct/2023	12/Oct/2023	13/Nov/2023	30/Nov/2023	01/Dec/2023

Title:

Build capacity of Cross Border Trader Associations and promote utilization of trade facilitation tools by women and youth in trade in Eastern and Southern Africa.

Issue organization:

Alliance for a Green Revolution in Africa (AGRA)

Head office: West End Towers, 4th Floor

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P.O. Box 66773 Westlands, 00800 Nairobi, Kenya

## 2. Background

### 2.1 AGRA

Established in 2006, AGRA is an African-led and Africa-based institution that puts smallholder farmers at the center of the continent's growing economy by transforming agriculture from a solitary struggle to survive into farming as a business that thrives. Together with our partners, we are working to sustainably grow Africa's food systems. AGRA strengthens seed systems, develops and promotes sustainable farming practices, helps unlock trade and markets, and supports governments who lead their countries' development. We work with farmers to adapt to climate change, increase soil health, and protect the environment. AGRA believes deeply in the urgency of reducing the inequality that women face in agriculture, and to unlocking the power and innovation of youth. More information: <https://agra.org/>

### 2.2 Country/Region or Unit Strategy of AGRA

In the new strategy, AGRA will tackle systematic constraints in access to finance, market and trade institutions in order to build a strong agri-food markets and trade at the domestic, regional and continental level. This will help to ensure that increased on-farm productivity is matched by post-harvest opportunities for aggregators, traders and processors as well as access to finance that is required to pursue these opportunities. To achieve these systematic changes, AGRA through IMT business line will seek to deliver the following by leveraging resources from its key strategic partners:

- i) develop inclusive market systems by shaping markets based on consumer demands and increasing local capacity for safe and nutritious foods;
- ii) facilitate stronger intra-African agricultural and food trade by reducing search and transaction costs, and improving predictability and transparency;
- iii) enhance market actor competitiveness by enhancing market access, improving market access to finance, and enhancing capacity and incentives for agri-food system actors.

## 3. The Grant Funding Opportunity

### 3.1 Grant Intervention Areas

This is a call for concept notes for projects addressing

Business Line: (IMT): Inclusive Markets and Trade

The call is open to implementing organizations in

No Data

AGRA invites submission of grant 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 concept notes that demonstrate synergy test

### **Grant Funding Opportunity Description**

Inclusive Markets and Trade (IMT) work will be centered around i) creating an enabling environment for inclusive markets, trade, and finance (i.e. policy reforms, implementation, trade facilitation, etc.) and ii) supporting a well-functioning private sector that will be capable of driving farmers and agri-business into a cycle of commercial growth and reinvestment. To support the implementation of Inclusive Markets and Trade work through market shaping/trade facilitation interventions, AGRA is seeking potential partners, to manage the necessary sub-awards, to deliver the three long-term Objectives of the IMT program:

SO-1: Resilient supply and demand of supported agricultural products and services;

SO-2: Inclusive market (output and finance) performance for supported value chains;

SO-3: Improved enabling environment for inclusive markets, trade, and finance especially for youth and women agri-entrepreneurship.

Interested Applicants are invited for Regional Grant concept note applications covering the Eastern and Southern Africa region on this investment area, as summarized below:

Build capacity of Cross Border Trader Associations (regional and national levels) and promote utilization of trade facilitation tools at regional level to enhance participation of women and youth in trade which includes;

- Building the capacity of Cross Border Traders Association in lobbying and advocacy skills in order to engage key relevant stakeholders (i.e. RECs, Government, etc.) for policy reforms and follow up with key stakeholders on removal of Non-Tariff Barriers and resolution of reported NTBs.
- Working with regional and national CBTAs to design and implement various sensitization and awareness strategies for promoting utilization of regional trade facilitation instruments (i.e. AfCFTA, COMESA STR, EAC STR, SADC Trade Protocol, Charter of Cross Border Traders, etc.) by SMEs including women and youth traders.
- Enhancing the awareness of existing regional food trade promotional incentive schemes, and capacitating CBTAs on accessing the benefits of such schemes,
- Establish linkages among the CBTAs and the relevant governmental agencies to enhance the relationship and coordination for supporting the regional food trade transactions,
- Training session to CBTAs personnel in enhancing their capacity and knowledge about regional food trade documentation and procedures and available digital information tools (online NTB monitoring and reporting platforms; markets/trade information, and procedural and documentational information for trade).
- Capacity building of CBTAs to enhance access of CBTAs to the Quality Standards and norms expected from major food off-takers and also available best handling technologies and techniques while aggregating the food commodities for regional trade.

AGRA therefore invites submissions of grant concept note applications from interested and qualified organizations operating in the agricultural value chains for projects that contributes to the achievement of AGRA's stated intended objectives and outcomes.

Grant Concept notes submission/s made after the final deadline of 5 July 2023 will not be considered.

Note: Organizations can submit individual concept notes. In addition, organizations are allowed to jointly submit grant proposals. Where applicable after receipt of concept notes, AGRA has a chance to ask the organizations to jointly implement at award stage.

Grant applications made after the final deadline of 28/Sep/2023 will not be considered.

### 3.2 Special Conditions under the RFCN

Applications should be in line with the following:

This Request for grant concept notes applications will remain open for a period of 20 working days, from June 6, 2023, to 5 July 2023 before 11:59 pm Eastern Africa Time (EAT). Interested organizations/ institutions must submit before the final deadline; grant applications will be evaluated on a rolling basis as indicated above in the synopsis. Applications made after the final deadline of 5 July 2023 will not be considered.

### 3.3 Award Distribution

Award Distribution is not applicable

### 3.4 Period of Grant performance

The maximum Grant period of performance is 25 months from 11/Sep/2023 to 10/Sep/2025. Each grant concept application should be contextualized given the solution(s) being proposed.

## **4. Eligibility Requirements**

### 4.1 Type of Organization

The potential project partners are:

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

- NGOs or private firms providing Business Development Services and other consultancy services.
- Capacity building/training institutions that have a strategic focus towards training of Trade Associations and business associations involved in national and intra-regional trade.

### 4.2. Partner capacity

Organizations contemplating submission of concept note applications in response to this request for grant applications (RFA) must determine whether they meet the following requirements to be eligible for AGRA financial assistance:

- Five (5) years of demonstrable organization working experience in the following; (a) capacity building of trade associations and other business groups cross border trade focusing on agriculture commodities; (b) popularization of regional and continental trade facilitation instruments/tools/protocols; and (c) awareness raising and campaigns on trade related issues.
- In depth understanding of regional and continental level trade policies and barriers to regional markets particularly those that affect the participation of women and youth in intra-regional markets.
- Excellent understanding of agriculture food trade systems and youth and women empowerment in African context.
- Excellent grasp of markets systems analysis and design of interventions that have the potential to sustainably capture large number of smallholder farmers.
- Relevant experience in Eastern and Southern African trade corridor market.

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 and its funding partners accountability and audit requirements.

If eligible and interested in this Request for grant concept note Application, please provide the following via AGRA's online portal AMIS (the link for online submission with indicated concept structure will be live on AGRA's website upon the RFA launch on May 30, 2023) by/before, 5 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);

- 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 5th July 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;
  - a)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.
  - b)Demonstrate availability of appropriate skills among staff in sufficient numbers and experience and attach their CVs.
- 6)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.
- 7)Two (2) years Audited financial statements at proposal submission stage by short-listed applicants only(send a signed copy by the auditor).
- 8)A copy of your organization's registration certificate at proposal submission stage by short-listed applicants only.

AGRA therefore invites submission of grant applications from interested and qualified organizations operating in agriculture and or related sectors. Organizations contemplating submission of applications in response to this Request for Concept Note (RFC) must determine whether they meet the following requirements to be eligible for AGRA grant award:

- 1) List of technical capacities required
- 2) Provide CVs of key staff proposed for this assignment.

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 and donors accountability and audit requirements.

## 5. Technical Evaluation Criteria

Evaluation Criteria	Description	Percentage
Technical Approach	Description of the methodology and approach which meet or exceed the stated technical specifications or scope of work in this RFA by the grant applicant.	35.0
Management approach	The grant application should	30.0

	describe how the proposed team members have the necessary experience and capabilities to carry out the scope of work (attach the brief profile of applicant organization and team).	
Past Experience	Evidence of working experience in delivering assignments in the activities stated in the Scope of work in the following; (a) capacity building of trade associations and other business groups cross border trade focusing on agriculture commodities; (b) popularization of regional and continental trade facilitation instruments/tools/protocols; and (c) awareness raising and campaigns on trade related issues and experience working on gender and inclusivity agenda within the market and trade system space.	35.0

**6. How to Apply**

If eligible and interested in this Request for Concept Note, please submit your application by following the steps:

- 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 by 28/Sep/2023
- 5) Ensure you submit your CN /Proposal by using the submit prompt in the Action button

The following must be presented with your submission

- 1) A copy of your organization's registration certificate
- 2) Detailed organization profile
- 3) Most recent Audited Financial statement

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 and adequacy of staff and experience in the specific region and technical area and attach their CVs.