

REQUEST FOR CONCEPT NOTES (RFCN)

Trade Expansion support grants to SMEs engaged in regional food trade led by women and youth in Western, Eastern and Southern Africa.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

1. Synopsis of the RFCN

2. Background

2.1 AGRA

2.2 Country/Region or Unit Strategy of AGRA

3. The Grant Funding Opportunity

3.1 Grant Intervention Areas

3.2 Special Conditions under the RFCN

3.3 Award Distribution

3.4 Period of Grant performance

4. Eligibility Requirements

4.1 Type of Organization

4.2 Partner capacity

5. Technical Evaluation Criteria

6. How to Apply

1. Synopsis of the RFCN

RF No.: CTE/RFCN 008/2023

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:

Trade Expansion support grants to SMEs engaged in regional food trade led by women and youth in Western, Eastern and Southern Africa.

Issue organization:

Alliance for a Green Revolution in Africa (AGRA)

Head office: West End Towers, 4th Floor

Kanjata Road, off Muthangari Drive, Off Waiyaki Way

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

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 Inclusive Markets and Trade (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

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.

Key expected results from this work include the following, for which this grant applicant will also be contributing to:

- At least 500,000 youth and women in work opportunities created.
- Reduction in non-tariff barriers in supported trade corridors/value chains particularly those that affect participation of women and youth in domestic and regional markets.

- Increase in the number of policies, regulations, certifications, and standards related to markets and trade that are adopted and implemented in the targeted countries.
- Increase in the number of supported countries using improved market data and information systems for supported commodities.
- Increase in the number of targeted countries adopting reforms for improving the functionality of the national Strategic Food Reserves.
- Increase in volume and value of net agricultural exports of supported commodities and corridors in the targeted countries.
- Reduction in the cost of doing business in the targeted countries particularly in the reduction of cost/time of obtaining trade documents.
- Increase in the number of new SMEs/agribusinesses established (including women and youth led) within the selected value chains in the targeted countries.
- Increase in the number of targeted smallholder farmers and SMES in the targeted countries that are able to increase volume and value of agriculture food trade.
- Increase in volume and value of off-taker sales for supported market actors.
- Increase in the number of targeted smallholder farmers/SMEs/agripreneurs accessing and using business develop

The potential eligible applicants for this call will include, but not limited to the following;

- Export ready firms and SMEs engaged in regional food trade led by women and youth or in support of women and youth in Western, Eastern and Southern Africa in one or more of the targeted trade corridors and priority value chains (see section 3 for targeted trade corridors).

Interested applicants are invited for submitting concept notes covering the Western, Eastern and Southern Africa region (see details of targeted trade corridors in section 3) for these investment areas, as summarized below:

- Co-investment in value-adding machinery or equipment to boost or scale the production capacity.
- Co-investment in construction of aggregating centers to enhance the product quality and safety.
- Co-investment in acquisition of transport vehicles to reduce the product transportation cost.
- Co-investment in acquisition of digital tools (portal or devices) to enhance the outreach to regional markets.
- Capacity building through provision of mentorship; advisory support and/or leadership (Quality standards or certification etc.) to enhance the participation in regional food trade markets.
- Training initiatives covering aspects of financial management; IT, trade business skills, expanding customer base, use of digital tools, new products development, negotiation and pricing and trade/export etc.
- Training on product quality assurance for service providers (suppliers, and aggregators) to the SMEs applicant/s.

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:

AGRA therefore invites submissions of grant applications from interested and qualified export ready firms and SMEs operating in the agricultural value chains for projects within the targeted trade corridors that will contribute to the achievement of AGRA's stated intended objectives and outcomes.

This Request for grant concept notes applications will remain open for a period of 20 working days, from June 9, 2023, to 7 July 2023 before 11:59 pm Eastern Africa Time (EAT). Interested firms, SMEs, organizations/ institutions must submit their applications before the final deadline; and grant applications will be evaluated on a rolling basis as indicated above in the synopsis. Applications made after the final deadline of 7 July 2023 will not be considered.

Applicants must follow the instructions mentioned below and must submit their grant concept notes applications using the AGRA guidelines and above mentioned scope of work following AGRA's online portal link of AMIS system. Potential Grant budget size: Maximum grant budget size is US\$ 25,000 per grant.

3.3 Award Distribution

Award Distribution is not applicable

3.4 Period of Grant performance

The maximum Grant period of performance is 24 months from 01/Sep/2023 to 31/Aug/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 eligible applicants for this call will include, but not limited to the following;

•Export ready firms and SMEs engaged in regional food trade led by women and youth or in support of women and youth in Western, Eastern and Southern Africa in one or more of the targeted trade corridors and priority value chains (see section 3 for targeted trade corridors).

4.2. Partner capacity

Firms and SMEs 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:

- Legally registered SMEs that active or spire to participate into regional food trade.
- Functioning SMEs business with established operations, with investments made in business infrastructure (processing/aggregation facilities).
- SMEs businesses with significant participation of women and youth.
- SMEs that are established in above indicated geographies or food trade corridors.
- Clear vision and mission established of the SMEs business in context of regional trade.
- At least two (2) years of demonstrable organization working experience in the food trade business.
- Good understanding of regional and continental level trade market opportunities.
- Committed to agriculture food trade systems development and youth and women empowerment in African context.
- Committed towards jobs creation, mainstreaming approaches for climate resilience, nutrition sensitive agriculture, value-addition and trade and participation of vulnerable groups such as women and youth in regional value chains will be considered an asset.

If an 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 by/before, 7 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 7th 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 but at later stage of short-listed concept approval, AGRA expects a detailed technical proposal submission by short-listed applicant/s only.
- 7)Financial Proposal – At this concept stage, applicants are expected to include a brief budget of project into the concept note but at later stage, AGRA expects a detailed financial proposal from short-listed applicants only.
- 8)Two (2) years Audited financial statements at proposal submission stage by short-listed applicants only (send a signed copy by the auditor).
- 9)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	<p>Description of the required co-investment justification which is relevant to the stated scope of investment in this Request for Grant Application. The requested investment in innovation have scale up potential, including the potential to develop new markets and impact on the growth of the applicant SME.</p> <p>The clear demonstration of the commitment towards agriculture food trade systems development and youth and women empowerment in African context through proposed Developmental Impact from the investment i.e.,</p> <p>Development Impact =(No of Youth and Women Farmers outreached + No of Jobs created) / (Total Project Budget)</p>	35.0
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.	30.0
Past Experience	Evidence of at least two (2) years of demonstrable organization working experience in the food trade business and sound understanding of regional and continental level trade market opportunities.	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.