

## Request for Concept Notes

### Creating work opportunities for youth by advancing sustainable agricultural productivity and diversification through inclusive markets and trade

#### A. SYNOPSIS OF THE RFCN

Issue date	25/10/2023
Title	Request for concept note submission – <b>Creating work opportunities for youth by advancing sustainable agricultural productivity and diversification through inclusive markets and trade</b>
Issuing 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
Submission of questions & Concept Note application	We only accept online submission at AGRA's online portal AMIS. <a href="https://agra.synisys.com/portfolio/requests">https://agra.synisys.com/portfolio/requests</a>
Deadline for Receipt of Questions	<b>By Friday November 3, 2023</b>
Deadline for Responding to the questions (for AGRA)	<b>By Monday November 06, 2023</b>
<b>Deadline for Receipt of Concept note Applications</b>	<b>Friday, November 10, 2023, before 11:59 pm, Southern Africa Time (CAT).</b>

#### About AGRA

Founded in 2006, AGRA, is an African-led African-based organization that seeks to catalyze Agriculture and Food Systems Transformation in Africa. AGRA is focused on putting 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.

AGRA in Malawi's aims to support the country to create work opportunities for youth by advancing sustainable agricultural productivity and diversification through inclusive markets and trade with a view to strengthen the resilience, capacities of and incentives for food market actors. AGRA Strategy in Malawi will seek to build inclusive business models with offtakers, improving value chain coordination and information flow [reducing costs] and improving access to finance and services for market actors with young men and women as the key target.

## Malawi AGRA Strategy

AGRA's investments in Malawi will catalyze the growth of inclusive food systems and agricultural transformation across Malawi as the basis for creating work opportunities for young people, especially women. AGRA in Malawi will use a market system approach to deliver transformational systems change that enhances the capacity of youth micro-entrepreneurs, and the productivity and resilience of youth farmers through farming as a business. AGRA will also support the government to create an enabling environment that enhances Food systems transformation.

### Scope of work:

#### **A: The Young Farmer Mobilization and Organization**

Our youth work opportunities program envisions a brighter future for Malawi's youth by offering a holistic approach to empowerment, skill development, and employment creation. We recognize that youth empowerment is not a one-size-fits-all strategy; it requires a multi-staged, dynamic, and inclusive strategy.

- i. **Identification, Screening, and Registration** - This phase involves a comprehensive process of identifying youth especially young women. The selection process should be inclusive and sensitive to the unique circumstances of youth. The partner will employ an approved methodology to ensure that the right youth are selected and registered into the program. This methodology should be efficient, transparent, and accountable. It should include mechanisms for verifying the eligibility criteria and conducting thorough background checks to minimize dropout rates once resources are allocated.
- ii. **Inspiration, Empowerment, and Basic Entrepreneurship Training** - The partner's role in this stage is to inspire and empower the registered youth. This involves providing basic life skills and entrepreneurship training to help youth discover their areas of interest and build their confidence. The training should motivate and instill a sense of self-worth, encouraging beneficiaries to explore various opportunities.

### Eligibility Criteria for young farmer mobilization:

- **Experience:** The partner institution should have a proven history of working with youth, implementing programs that promote their well-being, education, and economic empowerment. They should be able to provide documentation of past projects, highlighting their impact on youth development.
- **Capacity:** The partner should possess the necessary infrastructure, technology, and logistical support to efficiently execute the program. This includes well-equipped training facilities, qualified trainers, and a strong project management framework.
- **Relevant Experience:** The partner's previous experience should include successful implementation of programs targeting vulnerable and marginalized youth. Experience in areas such as education, vocational training, mentorship, or job placement for youth will be highly advantageous.
- **Commitment to Inclusivity:** The partner should demonstrate a commitment to inclusivity by having policies and practices in place to ensure equal opportunities for

all eligible beneficiaries, regardless of gender, disability, or refugee status. They should actively seek to break down barriers and address the unique challenges faced by these groups.

- **Transparency and Accountability:** The partner should commit to full transparency in all processes, from beneficiary selection to program execution. They should be prepared to provide regular reports, undergo external evaluations, and maintain open channels of communication with AGRA Malawi to ensure program goals are met.
- **Local Knowledge:** An understanding of the local context, including cultural and economic dynamics in Malawi, is essential. Experience in working with Malawian youth, along with knowledge of the specific challenges and opportunities within the region, will contribute to program success.

## **B: Market Facilitation**

The Market Facilitation role will focus on bridging the gap between output market actors and producers. This includes identifying market demands, creating market access strategies, and expanding inclusive sourcing models that provide valuable services to young farmers and service providers along value chains. The facilitator will work closely with commodity processors, to develop backward integration linkages that enhance last-mile services to young farmers and unlock critical bottlenecks that constrain youth participation along crop value chains. The role will identify binding constraints and expand opportunities for youth-led SMEs in target value chains, including facilitating access for youth-led SMEs to BDS, digital, financial services and market information and linkages. The role will also identify work opportunities for youth along the supply chains of the various value chains.

### **Eligibility Criteria for Market Facilitation:**

- **Demonstrated Experience:** Organizations with a proven track record in market facilitation, agricultural development, Business Development Services, Deep knowledge, and relationships with offtakers, and youth engagement. Demonstrated understanding of the issues hampering market access, AgriSME growth and development potentials most especially the youth and women
- **Work Opportunities:** proposal should outline how work opportunities will be created for youth especially young women along the value chains.
- **Innovative Approach:** Proposals should outline creative strategies for developing value chain integration, and for addressing other bottlenecks along value chains.
- **Partnerships:** Collaboration with local stakeholders, businesses, and government agencies to ensure holistic development.
- **Impact Assessment:** Clear methods for measuring the socio-economic impact on youth, agribusinesses, and the overall agricultural sector.

## **B: Policy and State Capability**

### **i. Policy Reform and Support:**

- Enhance the delivery of policy reforms supporting agriculture commercialization and diversification.

- Coordination and advocacy on Food Systems, trade, Affordable Input Program/subsidy reforms and inclusion of financially disadvantaged youth and women including their contributions to development and implementation of policies that affect their contribution to agricultural productivity and commercialization and job creation; the implementation of policy reforms, including those that are targeting the creation of an enabling environment for youth and women-led businesses.
- Coordination of the implementation of the National Agriculture Policy, the Control of Goods Act as well as the National Export Policy II at the Ministry of Trade.
- Promote evidence-based policy reforms and implementation through Data and Analytics for planning and investment prioritization.
- Promote evidence-based policy reforms that promote the participation of youth especially young women in agriculture and create work opportunities.

**ii. Food Systems Transformation:**

- Support the development and delivery of food systems transformation initiatives, ensuring alignment with national priorities and strategies.
- Support Government in tracking budget allocations and evidence, impacts, and gaps under the food systems agenda. Support fundraising for food systems transformation.
- Support the MDAs in the implementation of the Food Systems Strategic plan and flagship projects driving food systems transformation.
- Multi-sectoral coordination for food systems integration.

**iii. Sector Coordination, Monitoring and Delivery:**

- Support sector coordination structures/mechanisms to promote stakeholder engagement, accountability, transparency, efficiency, and effectiveness in the implementation of this policy as well as the resultant programmes and projects.
- Support institutionalization and awareness of the MW2063 coordination framework and the MW2063 Pillar Enabler Coordination Groups (PECGs)
- Coordinating private sector participation in sector engagements using various platforms such as value for her, AGRF deal rooms, youth platforms and others.
- Enhance cross-ministerial coordination and communication to ensure effective delivery through continuous technical support to promote cross-ministry collaborative activities.

**Eligibility Criteria for Policy and State Capability:**

- **Demonstrated Organizational Capacity and Experience:** Organizations with capacity and proven track record in policy, youth advocacy and public engagement.
- **Problem analysis:** Demonstrated understanding of the issues hampering policy delivery and sector coordination.
- **Innovative Approach:** Proposals should outline creative strategies for coordinating stakeholders and integrating youth in the sector.
- **Work Opportunities:** proposal should outline how incomes and work opportunities will be created for youth especially young women along the value chains.

- **Partnerships:** Collaboration with local stakeholders, businesses, and government agencies to ensure holistic development. Demonstrate how the proposal will leverage other public and private investments.
- **Commitment to Inclusivity:** The partner should demonstrate a commitment to inclusivity by having policies and practices in place to ensure equal opportunities for all eligible beneficiaries, regardless of gender, disability, or refugee status. They should actively seek to break down barriers and address the unique challenges faced by these groups.

**Criteria for Concept Note Submission:**

Partners responding to this RFCN must submit a brief 2-3 pages Concept Note.

Applicants can only submit one concept notes in their areas of expertise, each concept note must focus on one specific Intervention area outlined above. Applicants will select the intervention area where they have competence and experience.

**TECHNICAL EVALUATION CRITERIA**

	<b>Evaluation Criteria</b>	<b>Points</b>
1.	Technical Approach – A thorough problem analysis and description of the methodology and approach to address the gaps. These should meet or exceed the stated technical specifications or scope of work	50 Points
2	Management approach –the grant application should describe how proposed key staff have the necessary experience and capabilities to carry out the scope of work (attach the key team members’ CVs).	30 Points
3.	Past Experience: Evidence of working experience in delivering assignments in Malawi in the intervention areas and activities stated on the Scope of work and outcome areas;	20 points
	<b>Total</b>	<b>100 points</b>

*NB. The organization technical proposal must score 70 points and above to proceed to the next level. If an institution/organization meets the above eligibility criteria, AGRA may request additional documentation to be submitted which may include proposal co-creation workshops to refine the submissions under very tight deadlines.*