



AGRA Sustainably Growing
Africa's Food Systems



MALI YOUTH COMPETITION

REQUEST FOR INNOVATIVE IDEAS IN THE AGRICULTURAL SECTOR

REQUEST FOR CONCEPT NOTES (RfCN)

1. SYNOPSIS OF THE RfCN

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| Title of Solicitation | Innovative Ideas Competition for Malian Youth in Agriculture |
| Issuing Office & Address | AGRA – Sustainably growing Africa’s Food Systems Mali, Bamako, SODIES building, ACI 2000, Street 286, corner behind BND, BP 2950 Website: www.agra.org |
| Location of the Assignment | Mali |
| Eligibility | Malian Youth between the ages of 15 – 35 years, with special emphasis on Young women (at least 50%), persons living with disability and internally displaced persons |
| Point of contact for clarifications & questions | AGRA Mali rrichardson@agra.org |
| Email Address for submission of Proposals/Quotes | AGRA Mali rrichardson@agra.org |
| Solicitation Issue Date | March 10, 2025 |
| Deadline for submission of questions and clarifications | March 14, 2025 |
| Deadline for Answering questions and clarifications | March 18, 2025 |
| Deadline for Submission of Proposals | March 21, 2025 |
| Type of organization | Youth-led MSMEs and Youth-led Organizations legally registered in Mali. |
| Anticipated Award Type | Grant award |
| Budget Ceiling | \$100,000 |
| Selection Method | Competitive Proposal review |

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| <p>Weight of Technical Vs Financial</p> | <p>Technical proposal: 90% Financial proposal: 10%</p> |
| <p>Submission and Evaluation Criteria</p> | <p>Mandatory Eligibility Requirements:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Company profile. • Trading license or Certificate of incorporation or Certificate of Registration • Valid tax clearance certificate • Three reference contacts of similar works carried out. • CVs of Key personnel. <p>Evaluation Criteria</p> <p>a) Organizational Capacity10%</p> <p>b) Experience in similar assignments.....25%</p> <p>c) Proposed approach, methodology, and work plan.....25%</p> <p>d) Experience and qualifications of key persons.....30%</p> <p>e) Youth Consortium integrated with youth working in rural areas and associations.....10%</p> <p>Total:100%</p> <p>NB.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The minimum technical pass mark for technical evaluation is 75%. 2. AGRA will co-create proposals with applicants that attain the highest combined technical and financial score above 75%. <p>Weightage: Technical 90%, Financial 10%</p> |

2. SCOPE OF WORK

2.1. Background

AGRA is an African-led institution working across the continent to multiply the scale of agricultural and agribusiness innovations that help smallholder farmers towards increased incomes, better livelihoods, and improved food security (AGRA, 2022b). AGRA's vision is to contribute to an Inclusive Agricultural Transformation (IAT) across Africa, ultimately reducing hunger, improving nutrition, and supporting farmers to adapt to climate change. Under our most recent strategy cycle, AGRA's vision has been further enhanced to put financially disadvantaged young people, especially young women, at the center of an Inclusive Agricultural Transformation in Mali, and across the rest of the continent. This commitment to youth engagement and gender inclusion are essential building blocks in achieving the relief of poverty and has been shaped by our extensive experience on the ground in country.

Since 2007, AGRA has made significant contributions to the Malian agricultural sector. During its first strategy 1.0, AGRA focused on building capacities and promoting technologies, providing technical assistance to the Government and private sector, and supporting the establishment of robust systems for input, extension, market, and inclusive finance.

Under our Strategy 2.0 from 2017 to 2021, AGRA Mali further supported the agricultural systems and government actions, undertook agricultural sector institutional capacity assessment, developed a new model of Input Subsidy Program (ISP), supported by an input distribution platform NAIP (PNISA II), established an M&E electronic platform, and developed a Flagship Program to support the Government in meeting its commitments under the CAADP framework. On last mile delivery, AGRA promoted community-based agents (CBAs) network, agro-dealership, seed production and distribution.

Building on these achievements, and in response to the evolving country context of recent years, AGRA has defined a 3rd strategy cycle in Mali. The entry point of strategy 3.0 in Mali is "Advancing Resilience and Productivity of Smallholder Farmers to improve their livelihood", and is being implemented from 2023 to 2028. This strategy is designed to be implemented through five integrated implementation pathways: 1) Sustainable farming; 2) Inclusive Markets, Trade and Finance; 3) Seed systems; 4) Policy and State Capability and 5) Gender, Youth and Inclusiveness. Primary priority crops for AGRA in Mali include maize and rice to drive the sector growth through value chains expansion and market integration. Secondary priority crops are cowpea, sorghum and millet to strengthen food security and resilience of smallholder's farmers by increasing the production through access to improved varieties and

promotion of proven sustainable farming practices and better linkage to local markets. For information about AGRA, please visit www.agra.org.

2.2. YEFFA program objectives

In partnership with the Mastercard Foundation, AGRA under the strategy 3.0 has initiated the Youth Entrepreneurship for the Future of Food and Agriculture (YEFFA) program. The goal of the YEFFA is to address constraints faced by financially disadvantaged youth, especially young women, including internally displaced persons as well as people living with disability (PWDs), to access dignified and fulfilling work¹ opportunities and entrepreneurial success in the agri-food sector as a route out of poverty. The program focuses on young women and men aged between 15 and 35 years who are financially disadvantaged. In Mali, YEFFA aims to reach over 1,042,600 young people under AGRA's current strategy, and in doing so, more than 260,650 dignified and fulfilling work opportunities are expected to be created for Malian youth. At least 50% of the program participants shall be young women. To achieve this, the program seeks to expand the agriculture sector, strengthen smallholders' farmers resilience in Mali and create the work opportunities along the following four pathways: (1) Youth on Farm, (2) Youth in Agri-services, (3) Youth in Agribusiness/ SMEs/Trade, and (4) Youth in Green Jobs. Interventions focus on priority crops (Maize, rice, sorghum, millet and cowpea), however, investment ideas in other value chains, such as vegetables and poultry that demonstrate great potential for youth work opportunities shall be considered.

The specific objectives of the YEFFA program in Mali include:

1. Expand and diversify inclusive markets and trade for youth and women-run MSMEs.
2. Improve sustainable agriculture productivity and resilience for young farmers, especially young women.
3. Improve youth participation in governance and decision-making process.

2.3. Request for concept notes

AGRA wishes to invite young women and young men, between the ages of 15 and 35 years, to form consortiums and submit proposals detailing innovative ideas that will generate employment for youth in the agricultural sector. The innovative ideas should contribute to the specific objectives of the YEFFA program outlined above and should achieve at least two hundred (200) dignified and fulfilling jobs and twenty thousand (20,000) youth in work (50% of each job category for young women). Applicants are encouraged to develop innovative ideas that will also benefit rural youth in agriculture.

¹ Dignified and fulfilling work is defined as work that:

- Gives people hope, dignity, and the means to build a prosperous future
 - Creates a work environment that encourages respect, acceptance, and avoids harassment and discrimination
 - Involves activities that bring a sense of purpose, satisfaction, and pride
 - Allows people to showcase their talent, abilities, and creativity
- Nurture mental health and provides financial stability

2.4. Application guidelines

Applicants are advised to carefully consider interventions that fall within their areas of expertise and submit innovative ideas that can generate job opportunities for Youth in the agricultural landscape.

The overall timeframe of the project should not exceed thirty-six (36) months.

3. TECHNICAL EVALUATION CRITERIA

Concept notes detailing innovative ideas should not exceed six (6) pages.

Evaluation Criteria Points

- 3.1. Technical Approach: 60 Points
- 3.2. Experience: Evidence of working experience in delivering assignments in the activities stated in the Scope of work linked to the selected application above listed: 25 Points
- 3.3. 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 (attach the brief profile of applicant organization and team): 15 points

Total 100 points

NB. For the financial proposal to be considered by AGRA, the applicant's technical proposal must score 70 points, and above. The financial proposal will be reviewed against the proposed approach and methodology, and cost negotiations held if applicable.

4. ELIGIBILITY REQUIREMENTS

Youth-led MSMEs and Youth-led Organizations legally registered in Mali. Organizations contemplating submission of proposals in response to this request for proposals (RFP) must determine whether they meet the following requirements to be eligible for AGRA financial assistance: Five (5) years of demonstrable organization working experience in agriculture sector expansion and job creation. 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.

5. HOW TO APPLY

If eligible and interested in responding to this call, please submit concept notes providing the following information;

- Project Title
- Project Goal
- Target Outputs
 - Number of Youth on Farm
 - Number of Youth in Agri-Services
 - Number of Youth in Agribusiness/ SMEs/ Trade
 - Number of Youth in Green Jobs
- Project Description
- Challenges to be addressed
- Methodology to address challenges
- High-level budget
- Organization profile with CVs of project implementation team.
- Contact information for applicants.