

# REQUEST FOR CONCEPT NOTES (RFCN)

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## Implementation of Youth Entrepreneurship for the Future of Food and Agriculture (YEFFA) Program in Ethiopia.

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## 1. Synopsis of the RFCN

RF No.: PD/RFCN 046/2025

Issue date: 17/Dec/2025

Country/geographical location:

Region	Country
Eastern Africa	Ethiopia

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	16/Jan/2026	19/Jan/2026	26/Jan/2026	31/Jan/2026	05/Feb/2026	10/Feb/2026

Title:

Implementation of Youth Entrepreneurship for the Future of Food and Agriculture (YEFFA) Program in Ethiopia.

Issue organization:

Alliance for a Green Revolution in Africa (AGRA)

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## 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

AGRA is seeking potential partners (youth agri-SMEs, NGOs, Business Development Service providing institutions, public agencies, anchor farms, and firms) to design and implement projects under a sub-awards basis aimed at the delivery of the following listed strategic portfolio outcomes. Where necessary, interested parties can form a consortium/strategic partnership to combine each partner's capability/area of expertise for a strong project proposal. The eligible value chains are wheat (primary value chain) and horticulture (secondary value chain).

## 3. The Grant Funding Opportunity

### 3.1 Grant Intervention Areas

This is a call for concept notes for projects addressing

Youth Entrepreneurship For the Future of Food and Agriculture (YEFFA)

The call is open to implementing organizations in

Region	Country
Eastern Africa	Ethiopia

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 Youth, Gender & Inclusiveness

### **Grant Funding Opportunity Description**

The YEFFA program seeks to empower youth, particularly young women, in Ethiopia's agrifood systems through five strategic outcomes. These include expanding market access and ensuring dignified income by integrating youth into structured commodity systems and linking them to buyers; fostering inclusive policies and strengthening the entrepreneurship ecosystem through collaboration with government and stakeholders; improving sustainable agricultural productivity via technology transfer, mechanization, digital tools, and incubation support; deepening financial inclusion through fintech solutions and credit guarantees; and amplifying youth voices in policy dialogue while building leadership and soft skills. Collectively, these interventions aim to create inclusive, resilient, and competitive opportunities for youth in agriculture.

#### Expected Deliverables

- 100,000 Linking 100,000 smallholder farmers (80% young women) reached with various project interventions.
- At least 45,000 young people access dignified and fulfilling jobs across agricultural value chains while enhancing the development of agri-entrepreneurship among youth and women.
- At least 10,000 of targeted youth farmers (80% young women) participating in structured trade.
- 150% increase in volume and value of sales for supported MSMEs.
- At least USD USD \$4M of financial products, services, and loans offered to target young women agri-enterprises.
- At least 5 functional multi-stakeholder platforms that support youth voice and agenda established and or supported.
- At least 80 % of supported agri-enterprises (esp. youth-owned) receive extension advisory services on SF technology/inputs, including climate advisory services.
- At least 80 % of young women farmers are accessing Agricultural Advisory extension support services

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 16/Jan/2026 will not be considered.

### 3.2 Special Conditions under the RFCN

Applications should be in line with the following:

The proposal should address, among others, the following key activities:

1. Increasing Access to Markets and Dignified Income for Young People through Enhanced Inclusion in Structured Commodity Aggregation and Trading Systems and/or Programs.

- Increase the market participation of youth by integrating them into structured commodity aggregation systems such as cooperatives, off-taker programs, warehouse receipt systems, and digital trading platforms.
- Propose models that connect youth-led agribusinesses and youth farmers with structured buyers or processors, facilitate contract farming, or support innovations that improve transparency, traceability, and efficiency in aggregation and marketing. The goal is not only to improve income but also to ensure that young people engage in agri-food value chains with dignity—by reducing exploitation, enhancing the predictability of earnings, and providing fair labor conditions.
- Demonstrate how the proposed approach will enable increased market access, enhance price realization for youth farmers, and build capacity for sustained participation in formal commodity systems.

2. Policy Analysis and Ecosystem Development

- Establish or strengthen existing groups on the aggregation of demand for input and climate-smart services.
- Partner with youth-led agro-input suppliers in prioritized value chains to increase the supply of climate-smart, nutrition-dense varieties, fertilizers, and other inputs
- Establish a Youth Support Coordination Platform (meetings/dialogues) to facilitate collaboration among youth entrepreneurship ecosystem stakeholders and share innovative solutions and best practices, and effective functioning of the platform.
- Formulate inclusive policies through capacity building for government institutions and strengthen youth and women leadership in agribusiness.
- Strengthen collaboration with the Ministry of Labor and Skills, the Ministry of Trade, and the Ministry of Agriculture to support integrating youth employment, gender inclusion, and climate change into policy and planning processes.
- Collaborative efforts will be exerted with organizations, including those representing persons with disabilities and returnees, to drive policy reforms and reduce regulatory barriers in agriculture and agribusiness.

3. Improved sustainable agricultural productivity for competitiveness by youth farmers

- Facilitating the transfer of technologies and provision of startup Kits that support the sustainable production of horticulture (vegetables) or the processing of these into viable products with good commercial potential.
- Facilitate youth-led MSMEs access to equipment that supports the delivery of mechanization services across the value chain, while creating work opportunities.
- Leverage Digital tools and platforms to modernize extension services, ensuring young women have access to climate-smart, productivity-enhancing technologies and practices.
- Support targeted capacity-building/enhancement initiatives that strengthen young women's capacity to lead in agriculture.
- Link young women and young men to incubation centers in collaboration with known institutions offering incubation opportunities to nurture and help develop their business ideas. (Startup kits, seed capital, BDS supports)
- Promoting a farming-as-a-business approach by prioritizing high-value horticultural crops to ensure year-round income generation.

4. Deepened Financial Inclusion for youth

- Support for scaling the availability of ag sector-oriented fintech solutions to rural-based youth farmers.
- Establish a credit guarantee mechanism to support loans to financially disadvantaged young women.
- Strengthening the Capacity of Youth Entrepreneurship Ecosystem actors to provide effective support services to youth. E.g., in BDS, digital marketing, and investment readiness.

5. Increased inclusion and Strengthened Voice of Young People, especially women.

- Support youth associations and existing platforms

### 3.3 Award Distribution

Award Distribution is not applicable

### 3.4 Period of Grant performance

The maximum Grant period of performance is 49 months from 01/Mar/2026 to 01/Mar/2030. 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:

Applicants must be:

- Well-established private company, SMEs, or BDS professional with a track record of service delivery to value chain actors that work with youth and women businesses.
- Civil society organizations, social enterprises, agriculture technology firms, research institutions, market facilitators, and local think-tank organizations engaged in agricultural development or developing knowledge products used in policy formulation or designing programs that are beneficial to farmers.
- Conversant with the youth ecosystem in Ethiopia. Additionally, conversant with the Ethiopian agribusiness sector.

Institutions/organizations intending to work with AGRA in this area of work must demonstrate that they meet the following requirements to be eligible to receive financing from AGRA:

- Unless specifically stated otherwise, applicants must be registered in Ethiopia with valid registration documents
- For its stated area of expertise, organization must produce certifications, marks or permits as required by national legislations, demonstrating adherence with relevant codes of practice, industry standards
- Organization's primary business activity must be in the Host Countries
- Organization must be in a sound financial condition
- Organization must have/demonstrate sufficient existing capability/capacity to perform as required
- Organization must have demonstrated favourable past performance record in the area of this call
- Organization must have accounting systems, procurement practices and corporate integrity/ethics aligned to AGRA systems and values
- Organization must not have been previously excluded from the eligibility to receive funding from any of AGRA's partners
- Demonstrate inclusivity (youth, women, vulnerable/marginalised groups) and promote sustainability principles in past project activities.

#### 4.2. Partner capacity

Key considerations:

- Minimum of 5-7 years of demonstrable organization working experience in any/all or a combination of the following systems-level areas: Value Chain Development, Sustainable Farming, [Agri-] MSMEs development, Market and Financial Access systems, MSME development, Agriculture and/or Food systems policy, Climate Change, Extension systems
- Demonstrable ability to work with private sector partners and have experience leading/facilitating value chain development, linkage of smallholder farmers to markets (aggregators, processors, etc),
- Experience working with women and youth (and other underserved groups)
- A team with experience working in smallholder agriculture value chains, agri-SMEs, and nutrition in Africa; experience in climate change, MSME development, and working with national institutions
- Present qualified personnel/CV's of key staff proposed; and
- Applications should be in line with the AGRA Environment and Social Policy

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
Management approach	Fit-for-Purpose (Governance and management): Institutional capacity, financial systems, governance, and monitoring	30.0
Past Experience	Past experience, personnel qualifications, proven success in similar projects	20.0
Technical Approach	Technical Ability: Methodology, innovation, context understanding, and delivery model	50.0

## 6. Environmental and Social (E&S) Management

Institutions/organizations considered/shortlisted for funding under this Call must provide an Environmental and Social (E&S) Action Plan. The purpose of the ESAP is to identify E&S impacts and associated mitigation measures of the project to minimize negative effects and enhance positive effects, as identified during the internal AGRA E&S Screening and as listed below:

- 1) Provide list of Main E&S risks as identified during the E&S Pre-Screening and description of how these will be addressed
- 2) Provide any climate related risks as identified during the Climate Adaptation Pre-Screening
- 3) Provide a description of the project Area of Influence, based on the risks identified

## 7. 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://amisprod.agra.org/>
- 2) Create an account as an applicant
- 3) Log in to the system with your credentials: <https://amisprod.agra.org/portfolio/requests>
- 4) Choose the request and submit your application via *Create New Response* section of the form by 16/Jan/2026

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.