



National Soybean Research Center
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REQUEST FOR PROPOSAL (RFP)

Feed the Future Innovation Lab for Soybean Value Chain Research (SVCR IL) (Soybean Innovation Lab – SIL)

Managing Program

Mechanization: Service Business Model Development for Ethiopia

About SIL

The Feed the Future (FTF) Innovation Lab for Soybean Value Chain Research (SVCR IL) is part of the strategic investment by the U.S. Government to make transformative change in the food systems of target partner countries. FTF is the overarching U.S. government initiative on global hunger and food security. FTF programs work in close partnership with target countries to develop innovative agriculture advancements that break the poverty and hunger cycles. For further overview of the U.S. FTF initiative, please visit www.feedthefuture.gov. SIL, initiated in 2013, currently is funded through 2027. SIL operates in 26 countries and 140 locations.

Background

SIL's Mechanized Thresher Solution involves a turnkey platform that supports the local production of SIL's Multi-Crop Thresher (MCT) as well as business development activities for MCT manufacturing companies and thresher service providers. The MCT platform of products and services supports practitioners seeking to replace the drudgery and inefficiency of hand threshing soybean, which dominates almost all of soybean harvesting in SSA from commercial farms and international research stations to smallholder farmers. We are seeking proposals to help us achieve the following activities:

1. Making appropriate scale and sustainable grain threshing services available to small holder farmers
2. Reducing post-harvest loss and increasing small holder farmers income

Geographic Focus

This Request for Proposals spans Africa, with a focus on Ethiopia.



Applicant Eligibility

This RFP will support the Consultative Group for International Agricultural Research (CGIAR) institutions, Non-governmental organizations (NGOs), the private sector, university institutions, and members of the National Agriculture Research System (NARS) institutions, as defined by FAO (<http://www.fao.org/3/Y4349E/y4349e05.html>): “NARS are defined, in a given country, as encompassing all institutions public or private devoting full time or partially their activities to agricultural research and committed to a national research agenda”.

SIL is looking for applications led by local organizations that are relevant to, and appropriate for smallholder farmers in the focus country. Organizations need to have a demonstrated track record of scaled impact (outreach, adoption, diffusion, or commercial sales). The work should result in useful recommendations and key takeaways for future SIL research and development. Successful teams will benefit from a multidisciplinary approach and include such disciplines as agribusiness, agronomy, sociology, engineering, and economics.

Projects funded under this RFP must be led by a principal investigator (PI) already based at the lead institution.

The applicant must have engaged in threshing service projects or activities that targeted smallholder farmer beneficiaries. These hands-on experiences will provide tangible insights to inform project design and sustainable impact objectives. A minimum cost sharing of 25% of the total funds requested from SIL is required. Cost-sharing may include but is not limited to: 1) principal investigator/senior personnel effort; 2) in-kind contributions; 3) cash contributions; 4) unrecovered indirect costs; 5) indirect costs on principal investigator/senior personnel effort. Cost-sharing documentation from the contributing entity must be provided at the time of application submission. (in most cases, this will be in the form of a letter signed by the authorized organizational representative)

Funding Amount

The maximum amount awarded for proposal development grants is a maximum of \$25,000, including indirect costs. All budget requests should be commensurate with the scope and proposed deliverables of the project.

Time length

The duration of the grant is for up to one year. Smaller, more targeted project periods with more limited budgets or shorter timelines are also acceptable.

Capacity Strengthening

The research team winning the award will undergo training and then employ the Innovation-to-Impact (i2i) learning platform and management system, which will support their implementation of the Product Life Cycle (PLC) framework. Capacity building is a critical theme that must be addressed by each project. Research proposals should demonstrate capacity building plans both at the individual level and at an institutional level.

Cross cutting themes

The cross-cutting themes of gender and youth responsiveness and resilience are a central focus of SIL. As noted above, target product profiles selected must seek to address gender and youth-based constraints and show potential for

economic inclusion for women and youth. Applicants must designate a team member with the relevant background and expertise in gender and youth inclusion to guide the team in these focus areas.

Finally, applicants, should be prepared to join SIL community on monthly researcher conference calls, biannual advisory board meetings, and annual researcher retreats.

Proposal Submission Deadline

SIL will continue the support of this program over the next five years through an annual competitive grant program. Only proposals that adhere to the following guidelines will be fully considered. Proposals need to be emailed to soybeaninnovationlab@illinois.edu by March 31, 2023, and the maximum proposal length is two single spaced pages not including the budget. Proposals must be written in English. Questions about this RFP should be emailed to clarkk@missouri.edu.

Proposal Instructions

Successful proposals need to follow the following outline:

1. Introduction

- a. Describe your program
 - i. Goals
 1. Long term
 2. Over the next year
 - ii. Successes
 - iii. Challenges
 - iv. Sources of support

2. Program Description

- a. What will take place?
- b. Theory of Change?
- c. What will be the outcomes?
- d. Describe your materials and methods when using the grant funds.
 - i. This should match your budget and budget justification.
- e. Describe how you will measure progress.
- f. Be specific and outline key metrics.
 - i. Project deliverables – Include a separate section for project deliverables that includes outcomes, milestones, and deliverables. Include a timeline for attainment of objectives and production of deliverables that include final milestones with specific and measurable outcomes.
- g. Cross cutting issues – Include a section describing activities, teams to address gender and youth issues.
- h. Select suitable performance indicators from the FTF Handbook of Indicators that are applicable to the activities of your project and data collection plan. <https://agrilinks.org/post/feed-future-indicator-handbook>.
- i. What is the monitoring, evaluation, learning and adapt plan?
- j. Describe a plan for how the program will be sustained without donor funding.

3. Budget

- a. The budget needs to include separate budget lines for salaries, benefits, supplies, services, domestic travel, international travel, and indirect costs.
- b. Your budget total needs to include indirect costs.

c. Please provide a budget justification and a list of leveraged support for the program.