



National Soybean Research Center
1101 W. Peabody Dr.
University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign
Urbana, IL 61801
soybeaninnovationlab@illinois.edu

REQUEST FOR PROPOSAL

Soybean Innovation Lab

Managing Program

Mechanization: Development of Mechanized Equipment for Soybean Production in sub-Saharan Africa

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 35 countries and 200+ locations.

Background

The Soybean Innovation Lab (SIL) is currently soliciting applications from individuals or organizations to develop equipment relevant to small agricultural equipment manufacturing businesses in sub-Saharan Africa.

1. SIL is specifically supporting the development of a soybean thresher, mechanical planter, and pull-type harvester.
2. Applicant will also make recommendations and develop a plan on how small-scale manufacturers can fabricate locally. This will include material sourcing in a chosen market, manufacturing processes, and supply chain development.
3. Applications should include student entrepreneurship or apprenticeships.

Eligibility Criteria

The lead applicant and principal investigator must have experience in the production of equipment, design, and CAD for agricultural equipment for small-scale manufacturers.

Geographic Focus

Preferred focus countries include all of sub-Saharan Africa

Funding Amount

The selected projects will be funded up to \$10,000, depending on the scope of work, over a period of up to 12 months. The public and private sectors are encouraged to submit proposals.

Time length

The duration of the grant is for one year.

Proposal Submission Deadline

SIL will continue supporting mechanization development in sub-Saharan Africa or other areas with low mechanization levels over the next three 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 **September 20, 2024**, and the maximum proposal length is three single-spaced pages, not including the budget. Proposals must be written in English without grammatical errors. Questions about this RFP should be emailed to clarkk@missouri.edu.



Proposal Instructions

Proposals will be accepted for these projects or other relevant projects identified by the applicants:

1. SIL has a design for a soybean thresher that can be fabricated locally. Materials should cost about \$6,000. SIL will support an educational institution or private sector business to build a manufacturing process around the thresher. This includes material sourcing in a chosen market, manufacturing processes, and supply chain development. Applicants may also submit proposals based on other thresher designs. Applications should include a component that engages students or apprentices to become agricultural mechanization entrepreneurs as fabricators, distributors, or service providers. A commercialization and marketing plan must be included in the proposal.
2. SIL has a design for a 4-row tractor-pulled planter that can be fabricated locally. Materials should cost about \$3,000. SIL will support an educational institution or private sector business to build a manufacturing process around the planter. This includes material sourcing in a chosen market, manufacturing processes, and supply chain development. Applicants may also submit proposals based on other planter designs. Applications should include a component that engages students or apprentices to become agricultural mechanization entrepreneurs as fabricators, distributors, or service providers. A commercialization and marketing plan must be included in the proposal.
3. SIL has a design for a pull-type grain harvester that can be licensed for production in Africa by manufacturers at \$50 per unit sold. Materials should cost about \$4,000. SIL will support an educational institution or private sector business to build a manufacturing process around the harvester. This includes material sourcing in a chosen market, manufacturing processes, and supply chain development. Applications should include a component that engages students or apprentices to become agricultural mechanization entrepreneurs as fabricators, distributors, or service providers. A commercialization and marketing plan must be included.
4. SIL is seeking proposals for private sector business development and product research in agricultural machinery. Proposals for this funding should include a novel product or marketing and distribution system that will be instrumental in achieving market infiltration of agricultural equipment. A commercialization and marketing plan must be included in the proposal.

Successful proposals need to follow the following outline:

1. **Introduction (1/2 page maximum)**
 - 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 (2-1/2 page)**
 - a. What will take place?
 - b. What will be the outcomes?
 - c. Describe your materials and methods when using the grant funds
 - i. This should match your budget and budget justification
 - d. Describe what will be accomplished
 - e. Describe how you will measure progress
 - i. Be specific and outline key metrics
 - f. Describe your commercialization and marketing plan
3. **Budget and Budget Justification (1 page)**
 - a. The budget needs to include separate budget lines for salaries, benefits, supplies, services, domestic travel, and indirect costs. International travel is not funded.
 - b. Your budget total needs to include indirect costs if applicable to your institution.
 - c. Please provide a budget justification and a list of leveraged support for the program.