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

Pest and Disease Management Platform – Year 3

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 changes 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 a further overview of the U.S. FTF initiative, please visit www.feedthefuture.gov. SIL, initiated in 2013, is currently funded through 2027. SIL operates in 35 countries and 200+ locations.

Background

Disease and pests are a major factor curtailing soybean production in Africa. Whereas there are technologies and options for their management, there is little awareness among growers and other interested groups. SIL's Disease and Pest Team endeavors to help African farmers to be aware about the existing tools to enhance adoption and scale out. We have been successful in disseminating information through social media platforms. Among the tools that are available includes disease identification and management guides and free online courses, disease scouting and evaluation methods, early warning systems, resistant/tolerant varieties,and fungicide application. Our goals include the following:
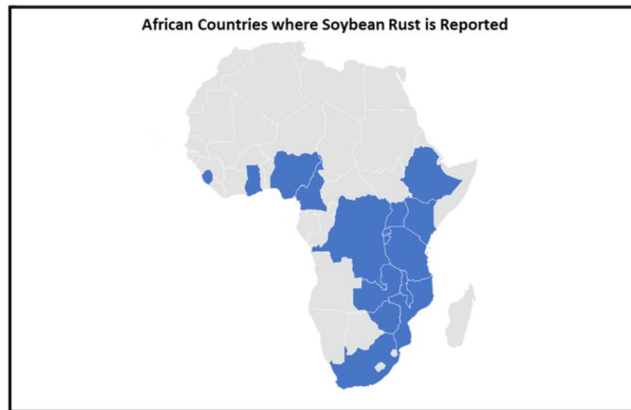
- Create awareness among practitioners about SIL technologies for the management of soybean diseases and pests
- Build capacity of soybean practitioners to correctly identify and manage diseases and pest in a timely manner
- Increase our visibility of our technologies through social media platforms
- Promote adoption and use of the SIL soybean disease and pest management technologies
- Adopt the Field Guide publications to local languages for wider reach across Sub-Saharan Africa.
- Promote the Disease Nursery Network to strengthen the efforts of breeders identifying resistant soybean lines
- Support research on Soybean Rust and Red Leaf Blotch diseases
- Foster collaboration with partners focused on soybean disease and pest management in Africa.

- Strengthen the early warning real-time pest and disease alert network the Africa Anti-rust Alliance to improve reporting and learning.

- Enhance early warning system through promotion of adoption of sentinel/monitoring programs
- Continue to partner with colleagues in the African and behold to unravel the diversity of soybean rust.

Geographic Focus

This Request for Proposals spans Africa, with a focus on sub-Saharan Africa.

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."

Applicants must be actively involved in disease and pest research and development, with a demonstrated track record of scaled impact (outreach, adoption, diffusion, or commercial sales). Projects funded under this RFP must be led by a principal investigator (PI) already based at the lead institution.

Funding Amount

The maximum amount awarded that can be applied for this grant is $25,000, including indirect costs. All budget requests should be commensurate with the scope and proposed deliverables of the project, ensuring that financial resources are allocated efficiently and effectively to achieve the project's objectives without exceeding necessary expenditures.

Time length

The duration of the grant is up to one year. However, smaller, more targeted project periods with limited budgets or shorter timelines are also acceptable, allowing for flexibility in the scope and scale of the proposed work.

Capacity Strengthening

The research team winning the award will undergo training and utilize the learning platform and management system, which will support their implementation of the Product Life Cycle (PLC) framework. Capacity building is a critical theme that each project must address. Therefore, research proposals should clearly demonstrate capacity-building plans both at the individual level and at the institutional level, ensuring sustainable development and the strengthening of local expertise and infrastructure.

The research team awarded the grant will participate in training and leverage the Innovation-to-Impact (i2i) learning platform and management system to support their implementation of the Product Life Cycle (PLC) framework. Capacity building is a vital component that each project must address. Research proposals should, therefore, include detailed plans for capacity building at both the individual and institutional levels, ensuring long-term development and the enhancement of local expertise and infrastructure.

Cross-cutting themes

The cross-cutting themes of gender and youth responsiveness and resilience are central to SIL's mission. Therefore, the selected target product profiles must aim to address gender and youth-based constraints while demonstrating potential for economic inclusion of women and youth. Applicants are required to designate a team member with the appropriate background and expertise in gender and youth inclusion to lead and guide the team in these essential focus areas.

Finally, applicants should be prepared to join the 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 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 two single-spaced pages, not including the budget. Proposals must be written in English. Questions about this RFP should be emailed to soybeaninnovationlab@illinois.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 the 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 and 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 adaptation 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.