



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

REQUEST FOR PROPOSAL (RFP)

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

(Soybean Innovation Lab – SIL)

Managing Program

Soy 360 & Processor to Processor Program - 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

SIL's Managed Research Area 5 (MRA5) focuses on supporting Sub-Saharan Africa (SSA) processors to enhance nutrition at scale through innovations and knowledge transfer technologies. Enabling processors enhances farmer livelihoods and increases access to better nutrition at scale. Innovations include:

- *Processor-to-Processor (P2P) Program.* SIL established the P2P program through partnerships with the American Oilseed Chemists' Society (AOCS) and Cultivating New Frontiers in Agriculture – CNFA's Farmer-to-Farmer (F2F) program. P2P provides direct technical support to processors using a large network of processing engineers and food scientists looking to help colleagues in low-resource settings. P2P brings one-on-one consulting to SSA's soybean processors (at their facility or virtually). The program aims to enhance efficiencies and innovations that scale up nutrition in food and feed.
- *Soy 360* is a comprehensive knowledge transfer platform designed to meet the needs of soybean processors, as well as food and feed manufacturers. This platform has the potential to significantly enhance nutrition and improve farmer livelihoods on a large scale. During SIL's needs assessment engagements, processors highlighted several constraints, particularly in oilseed and soy-specific technical areas, seeking technical assistance to enhance efficiencies, new product development, quality assurance and certification, and capacity building for both labor (especially youth) and management.



The next steps include:

- Expand the reach of P2P Program by identifying technical expert consultants to match with SSA processor-specific tasks. Working collaboratively with partners in the program, implement a communications and marketing plan to:
- Support processor's awareness of technical support expertise.
- Make expert engineers/scientists aware of technical support opportunities.
- Leverage consultant expertise and curate/translate consultant findings for knowledge transfer to Soy 360.
- P2P endeavors aligned/supportive of SIL MRA5 metrics for P2P are shown below (see Table 1).
- Provide Soy 360 partners with technical expertise and expense reimbursement to enhance their SSA institutions, facilitating their future ability to independently offer short courses.

Applicant Eligibility

This RFP will support the Consultative Group for International Agricultural Research (CGIAR) institutions, scientific societies, 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 soybean nutrition 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 for proposal development grants is \$63,000, which includes indirect costs and travel expenses for SIL's two-person monitoring and evaluation team. All budget requests should be aligned with the scope and proposed project deliverables.

Time length

The grant duration can extend up to one year. Smaller, focused projects with limited budgets or shorter timelines are also acceptable.

Capacity Strengthening

The research team awarded the grant will first undergo training before utilizing the [Innovation-to-Impact \(i2i\)](#) learning platform and management system, which will support the implementation of the Product Life Cycle (PLC) framework. Capacity building is a critical theme that each project must address. Research proposals should clearly outline plans for capacity building at both the individual and institutional levels.

Cross-cutting themes

The cross-cutting themes of gender and youth responsiveness and resilience are central to SIL's mission. As noted above, selected target product profiles must aim to address gender and youth-related constraints and demonstrate potential for economic inclusion of women and youth. Applicants must



designate a team member with the relevant background and expertise in gender and youth inclusion to guide the project in these areas.

Additionally, applicants should be prepared to actively participate in the SIL community through monthly researcher conference calls, biannual advisory board meetings, and annual researcher retreats.

Proposal Submission Deadline

SIL will continue supporting this program over the next two 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 e-mailed to soybeaninnovationlab@illinois.edu.

Proposal Instructions

Successful proposals need to follow the outline below.

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 are the monitoring, evaluation, learning, and adaptation plans?
 - ii. Describe a plan for how the program will be sustained without donor funding.

3. Budget

- a. The budget must 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.