

PROGRAM FOR EMERGING AGRICULTURAL RESEARCH LEADERS 2014

RFP Summary

RFP: SOL1109392

Call open for pre-proposals: April 11th 2014

Pre-proposal deadline: September 7th, 2014

Full proposals invited: November 2014

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Technical writing support workshops will be offered to finalists invited to submit full proposals. Selected full proposals will undergo a period of iterative proposal development and review before final awards are completed. Final awards are expected to be made in mid-2015 onwards.

[SUBMIT A PRE-PROPOSAL](#)

The Context

Severe hunger and poverty affects nearly 1 billion people around the world and 2 billion people in the developing world are malnourished. Three-quarters of the world's poorest people get their food and income from farming small plots of land. They deal with diverse and challenging farming systems, facing diseases, pests, and drought, as well as unproductive soil, with limited access to inputs. Their livestock are frequently weak or sick, resulting in reduced production of eggs and milk to eat or sell. Many of these farmers are women, who are key to breaking the vicious cycle of malnutrition in their families. Their success or failure determines whether they have enough to eat, are able to send their children to school, and can earn any money to save and lead healthy and productive lives. Helping farm families grow more, earn more income, and eat better food are powerful tools for fighting hunger and poverty.

The Call

The Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation seeks proposals for agricultural research with the potential to increase the sustainable productivity of smallholder farmers in developing countries. Sustainable productivity includes tackling

the underlying social and economic determinants of productivity, such as gender equity, environmental issues, and healthy, diverse diets. With this call, we are looking for projects led by MSc and PhD scientists at national agricultural research institutions and universities in sub-Saharan Africa, working in collaboration with other researchers internationally (either within Africa or beyond the continent). The 2014 PEARL call is restricted to proposals relevant to staple crops grown in Africa (please note we hope to offer future competitive opportunities for livestock research, but livestock-related proposals will not be considered in the current call).

How to Apply

In order to apply, applicants must:

- Be an African scientist residing in sub-Saharan Africa or planning to relocate to sub-Saharan Africa to implement the proposed project, e.g. returning from diaspora;
- Identify a local host institution (a national agricultural research institute or university) (International centers based in Africa or institutes overseas are not eligible to lead proposals in this call, but may partner as sub-grant hosts.)
- Have at minimum an MSc degree;
- Be able to devote at least 70% of their time to lead the proposed project.

PRE-PROPOSAL GUIDELINES:

Proposals will be selected for funding in a competitive two-phase process of short pre-proposals followed by invited longer full proposals. Pre-proposals should include:

- A brief description of the proposed research project up to 3 pages in length, written in English or French. Only the first three pages of any submitted pre-proposal will be evaluated and please do not submit additional background documentation at this time;
- A basic budget for the proposed research activities, not to exceed \$500,000;
- A letter of support from an appropriate senior administration official or supervisor at the primary host institution;
- A letter of interest and support from proposed international partner(s);
- Applicant's CV including at least 2 recent publications (within the last 5 years)
- Applicants, [submit your pre-proposals](#) by **September 7th , 2014 11:59pm PST** (Please note, after creating an account in the application portal, you must access the application form through this site via the previous link).

Pre-proposals received by the deadline will be evaluated on the following criteria:

- Alignment with the Agricultural Development team's strategy relevant to staple crops grown in Africa (please see [here](#));
- Potential for long- term impact to sustainably improve smallholder farmers' productivity, increase their income, and/or improve the quality of their diets;
- Innovation of the proposed idea and complementarity with other initiatives in the same area of research;
- Likelihood that the idea will result in farmer adoption of better agriculture practices;
- Capability, initiative, and commitment of the lead principal investigator (PI);
- Support and readiness of the identified local institution to host the lead PI and enable successful

- implementation of the project;
- Project design and implementation plan.

The most promising pre-proposal ideas will be invited to submit full proposals. Full proposals will be accepted by invitation only. Successful pre-proposal applications will:

- Be led by a scientist based in sub-Saharan Africa at a national agricultural research institution or university;
- Involve a partnership with at least one international research collaborator (research partner can reside in any country other than the applicant's home country, and may include collaborations within Africa). Applicants in need of an international collaborator are invited to apply for the Agricultural Research Connections Workshops to be held in Nairobi, Kenya, summer 2014. More information can be found [here](#);
- Clearly explain the role and value of the proposed international research collaborator;
- Closely align with the goals of the foundation's Agricultural Development strategy;
- Clearly propose a research project with the potential to substantially increase the sustainable productivity of smallholder farmers in developing countries within the next 5-20 years;
- Clearly describe how the proposed work fits with related ongoing work in the country or region;
- Have potential applicability to one or more of the following crop species: maize, wheat, rice, millet, sorghum, cassava, sweet potatoes, yams, beans, cowpeas, chickpeas, groundnuts, and banana;
- Have an estimated budget in the range of \$200,000-\$500,000 (including salary support, which will be allowed at capped rates to be agreed with host institutions if a full proposal is invited);
- Have a project duration of 4 years or less.

EXCLUSIONARY CRITERIA:

We will NOT consider funding for:

- Proposals in which the lead PI is not based at a national agricultural research institution or university in sub-Saharan Africa;
- Proposals without an international collaboration;
- Proposals that are not directly relevant to agricultural systems in sub-Saharan Africa;
- Proposals that are not applicable to one or more of the following crop species: maize, wheat, rice, millet, sorghum, cassava, sweet potatoes, yams, beans, cowpeas, chickpeas, groundnuts, and banana;
- Improvements to current regulated chemicals or the development of new chemical formulations that would be considered regulated chemicals;
- Proposals where it is unclear who is the principal investigator. While the project team may consist of multiple partners, PEARL pre-proposals need to clearly identify an individual leader/principal investigator (PI). Each lead PI may submit only one pre-proposal, however individual scientists may participate as supporting partners on more than one application.

Please carefully provide the information required in the online application. We will inform only the primary applicant of our decision, and our emails will be sent to the primary email address provided in your application. We will not communicate with anyone other than the primary applicant regarding an application.

SUBMIT A PRE-PROPOSAL

ABOUT THE FOUNDATION

Guided by the belief that every life has equal value, the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation aspires to help all people lead healthy, productive lives. We are dedicated to discovering and disseminating innovative approaches to addressing extreme poverty and poor health in developing countries and improving the

U.S. education system. Because our financial resources, while significant, represent a small fraction of what's needed to address these challenges, we work in partnership with governments, the private sector, and other donors and organizations to achieve the greatest possible impact. www.gatesfoundation.org