

**Canada’s International Development Research Centre (IDRC)  
 Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA)**

**Canadian International Food Security Research Fund (CIFSRF)**

**2013 Call for Concept Notes**

**April 2013**

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Canada's International Development Research Centre (IDRC) and the Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA) are pleased to announce the 2013 Call for Concept Notes of the Canadian International Food Security Research Fund (CIFSRF or the 'Fund').

IDRC is a Crown corporation created in 1970 by the Parliament of Canada. IDRC builds the capacity of people and institutions in developing countries to undertake the research that they identify as most urgent. It works with researchers as they confront contemporary challenges within their own countries and contribute to global advances in their fields.

CIDA is Canada's lead agency for development assistance. CIDA was established in 1968 by an order in council to administer the bulk of Canada's Official Development Assistance program and to better assist people living in poverty. CIDA's aim is to i) manage Canada's support and resources effectively and accountably to achieve meaningful, sustainable results; and ii) engage in policy development in Canada and internationally, enabling Canada's effort to realize its development objectives.

## **1. Rationale of the Fund**

Food and nutritional insecurity, climate change, new and emerging diseases, and the uncertain economy in many regions of the world continue to threaten the livelihoods of millions of poor people in many developing countries. According to the 1996 World Food Summit, "*Food security exists when all people, at all times, have physical and economic access to sufficient, safe and nutritious food to meet their dietary needs and food preferences for an active and healthy life.*" Food insecurity remains a significant challenge for most developing countries, which are especially vulnerable to economic and weather-related shocks to food production and distribution systems. The need to improve food security is particularly important in sub-Saharan Africa and Asia, which account for almost 90% of the undernourished people in the world.

Evidence shows that spending on agricultural research and innovation is one of the most effective types of investments for sustained poverty reduction. Agriculture-led growth addresses

rural poverty directly because it uses rural people, including poor subsistence farmers, as the key agents of change, linking them with other parts of the economy through networks of suppliers, buyers, and markets. Hence, investment in agricultural research, coupled with effective application at scale in development practice, has spillover effects beyond the sector, spurring broader economic growth in developing countries. Despite this, donor investment in agriculture, including research, has decreased since 1979 from 18% of total Official Development Assistance to approximately 6%. The demand for applied research in food security for developing countries greatly exceeds available funding.

The World Bank has estimated that under current conditions, global food production would have to double by 2050 to meet increasing global demand. With a growing world population and increased affluence in some rapidly developing countries leading to demand for more and higher quality foods, and given environmental problems such as soil degradation, water scarcity, biodiversity loss and climate change, new and innovative solutions are required to improve food security. Increasing agricultural productivity through strategies that do not harm the environment will be one of the keys to ensuring food security for the growing rural and urban populations of developing countries.

In all developing regions there is a need for technologies, methodologies, and practices to sustainably increase the productivity, stability, and resilience of agricultural systems (pre- and post-harvest, and along the agri-business value chain). There are also important regional, local and intra-household dimensions of food security to consider. Strengthening agri-food systems involves consideration of crops and foods from arable lands, aquaculture, livestock and other food products (such as non-timber forest products) and improved farming and food distribution systems that can contribute to the food security of rural and urban populations.

There is wide consensus that the small scale farming sector is fundamental to food security in the developing world. Additionally, in many regions of the global South, women play central roles in food production but are increasingly vulnerable to food insecurity. The unequal social, economic and legal status of women in society limits their access to adequate quantity and quality of food within the household and marketplace, and reduces their access to the means of



production, such as land, training, credit, and financial services. Women's needs and opportunities for enhancing their participation in decision-making alongside men often are not adequately considered in agricultural research. Finding ways to ensure that women contribute to and benefit from food security programs and interventions is key.

Increased investments in agricultural and nutrition-related research also require innovative partnerships between the natural and social sciences and between developed and developing country organizations, including the private and public sector, farmers and their organizations, media, and civil society. In particular, there is a demand in the South for strong relationships and partnerships between Canadian and developing country organizations and companies. Effective Canadian and developing country partnerships can generate the type of knowledge and innovation that enables smallholder farmers – including the poorest – to improve their productivity and strengthen the markets that process and deliver food, while achieving environmental sustainability. This would enable these producers to increase their own food supplies and incomes, build a more effective agri-food system and improve food availability in their countries.

In 2009, CIDA and IDRC launched the Canadian International Food Security Research Fund to increase the contribution of Canadian and developing country research expertise toward solving global problems of food insecurity through applied, collaborative, results-oriented research. To date, the Fund has supported 19 large applied agriculture and nutrition research consortia in 20 countries, each a mix of Canadian and developing country researchers, chosen from three rounds of competitive calls.

For more information on the projects funded to date, please visit [www.idrc.ca/cifsrff](http://www.idrc.ca/cifsrff).

Early results appear promising and there is a large volume of high-quality research being conducted, much with potential to be scaled-up. To build on the success of the program, on October 29, 2011, Prime Minister Stephen Harper announced continued support for the CIFSRF, aimed at *providing people in developing countries with a more secure supply of food with a*

*greater nutritional value*, with a focus on innovation and scaling-up of research results to reach the most vulnerable and food insecure in developing countries.

## **2. Goal and Key Objectives of the Fund**

The goal of the CIFSRF is to develop more equitable, productive and environmentally sustainable agri-food systems that increase food security and enhance nutrition in developing countries.

The key objectives of the Fund are to:

- i. Increase food security in developing countries by funding applied research in agricultural development and nutrition;
- ii. Apply Canadian science and technology expertise in collaboration with developing-country partners to address food security;
- iii. Use research results to inform food security policies and programs; and
- iv. Identify innovations and scale-up the most promising research results.

This 2013 call will support new research projects to improve food production and distribution, and the health and nutritional dimensions of food security in developing countries. Through this call, the Fund is looking to expand its research portfolio to other innovative research ideas and lay the groundwork for scaling-up research results and innovations – within a country, across a region, and possibly, across continents.

## **3. Eligibility for the Fund**

### **A. Applicant Organizations and Research Location**

This call is open to applicant organizations that will work in partnership with each other to carry out research in one (or more) of the eligible countries listed in Appendix A. Each partnership must be between two or more organizations and/or companies, at least one of which must be

Canadian, and at least one of which must be based in one of the eligible countries in the South. Eligible country organizations are considered to be those that have legal corporate registration in an eligible country. Applications must include an official letter of endorsement, signed by an authorized officer, from each applicant organization (more details about this letter can be found in the instructions document).

Applicant organizations and teams will require considerable research for development and project management experience. To date, the majority of successful projects involved academic and national research institutions; however, the Fund actively encourages applications from a wide variety of research for development partnerships that are end-user driven (see Section B and C for more information).

International organizations (except United Nations organizations and members of the Consortium of International Agricultural Research [CGIAR centres]) are eligible to apply as Southern collaborators, provided that they have regional chapters or offices with appropriate legal status to operate and manage funds in the eligible countries where the research will take place. United Nations organizations and CGIAR centers receive significant Canadian funds via other funding windows and shall not apply to this Fund as applicant organizations. They may, however, be included in applications by other research teams, as *third-party organizations*. Similarly, Canadian provincial and federal government agencies or departments shall not apply directly, but may participate as third-party organizations.

IDRC will only contract directly with successful applicant organizations. Successful applicant organization will be permitted to develop contracts with third-party organizations for specific services. IDRC will not contract directly with third-party organizations. Applications that involve third-party organizations must clearly justify their involvement and explain their role(s). Note that third-party organizations are not required to be located in the eligible countries.

The guideline for total third-party participation in a project is a maximum of 20% of the budget.

## **B. Collaboration**

This open, competitive call for concept notes is designed to promote new or expanded Canadian and developing country partnerships. The partnership may be pre-existing or newly formed.

The Fund promotes joint working relationships between Canadian and developing country organizations and companies. Effective relationships require a clear description of roles and responsibilities (who will be involved, where, when, with what intensity, and for what specific purpose or end). Effective partnerships should harness and integrate specific skills as necessary to achieve the research and development objectives without creating overly complex managerial and organizational structures. The Fund is interested in supporting innovative partnerships that are able to conduct high quality research – anywhere from ‘farm to fork’ – and deliver development outcomes at scale. As such, the Fund is open to public-private partnerships, with investments that are in support of scaling-up research results.

Applications must be prepared and submitted jointly by Canadian and developing country organizations, must clearly demonstrate the Canadian value-added to the project, and must demonstrate that they will be jointly managed. Effective partnerships are also reflected by equitable sharing of the budget and shared accountability for research processes and results. The Fund seeks to harness Canadian knowledge, technology, and expertise in a manner that adds value and is sensitive to the needs and participation of partners in the South.

Each organization (other than a third party) that will be receiving funds must be listed as an applicant organization, and each applicant organization must have a principal investigator (PI). Principal investigators are defined as those responsible for both the intellectual direction and the administration of the project. The percentage of time that each PI dedicates to the project should be sufficient for leading a project of this scale.

Each proposed research project will have one or more PIs based in Canada and one or more in an eligible country or countries (depending on the number of applicant organizations), and they will be jointly responsible for the direction and administration of the research (including reporting to IDRC). The project should also ensure that they have the necessary team in place to effectively manage a research project of this size, including, but not limited to project coordination (e.g., project managers, thematic leads in each organization, language capabilities, etc.), monitoring and evaluation, and communication activities.



**Please note** that individual researchers are eligible to be included on a maximum of **two** concept notes in the 2013 Call— a researcher can apply as PI on one project and be on the research team of one additional project. Or, a researcher can be on the research team of two projects.

Researchers are not eligible to be the PI on two projects. Any researcher who is currently a PI (or a co-PI) on a funded project from the previous 2010 or 2011 Calls for Concept Notes is not eligible to be a PI on an application in the current call, but s/he may be included on the research team of **one** application in the current call.

### **C. Type of Research**

This call will support cutting edge, applied field and/or laboratory research projects with potential to generate high impact and innovative results for agriculture, nutrition, and food in developing countries, with particular impact on the poor (including women and vulnerable groups). All projects require the sound assessment of environmental impact and the consideration of social and gender issues.

Research should be designed to be completed within 30 months. Longer-term research (e.g., animal and crop breeding, farming systems, etc.), weather-dependant research, and intensive participatory research will need to be clearly justified to ensure that work can be completed and results demonstrated within 30 months. Basic/fundamental, purely theoretical, and/or pure policy research will not be considered. However, activities to develop policy implications from the research may be included in the projects.

Proposed research must clearly address real, practical development challenges targeting the poor and most vulnerable. The Fund is especially interested in supporting innovative research with the potential for breakthrough results that could be effectively scaled-up and easily adopted by small-holder farmers, food processors, post-harvest handlers, and other value chain actors to improve food security in developing countries.

Concept notes must demonstrate that research will be user driven, that potential research-users are identified, and that they will be engaged in project development and implementation. Potential research-users include a wide variety of private sector and non-academic entities (e.g., large and small businesses, producer groups, business associations, developing country



governments, international organizations, private foundations and institutes, non-government organizations, and scientific professional bodies, etc.), all of whom can adopt, adapt, and bring to scale the research results or innovations.

#### **4. Budget and Duration**

Project budgets under this call must be in the range of CAD \$1,000,000 to CAD \$5,000,000 (please see the instructions document for more detail on budgets). Project duration must not exceed 30 months, **including all research activities and final reporting**. It is anticipated that projects selected in this call will begin July 2014. Please plan activities accordingly.

#### **5. Selection Process**

This call will consist of a two-stage selection process to fund research projects. In the first stage, all concept notes prepared by applicant partnerships will be pre-screened for eligibility and then thoroughly reviewed. A set of concept notes will be short-listed, according to the selection criteria outlined below. The review process draws on the expertise and recommendations of IDRC and CIDA technical specialists and an international Scientific Advisory Committee of the Fund. Final short-listed concept notes are approved by the Governance Committee of the Fund.

In the second stage of the process, short-listed applicants will be eligible to receive a small travel grant (must be fully justified) of up to CAD \$10,000, to permit representatives from the applicant organizations to meet to develop the full proposal. Note that provision of such a travel grant does not guarantee funding of any future full proposal; but if such a grant is awarded, a proposal must be submitted, and attendance at the meeting between applicant organizations is considered a prerequisite for submission of a full proposal.

The applicant organizations whose concept notes are short-listed will jointly submit a full proposal, which will again be reviewed by IDRC, CIDA and the Scientific Advisory Committee. The Governance Committee will make final funding decisions based on the review and recommendations of the Scientific Advisory Committee.

## 6. Selection Criteria

Concept notes will be assessed on the following five criteria:

- 1. Relevance of the concept note / scientific idea (25%):** Relevance of the research to the global food security and development challenge, and in particular to the most food insecure (with special emphasis on women and children) in the developing world. Clear demonstration of how the research is new and innovative and will add value to existing knowledge, identifying past and on-going work done on the theme and in the country/region – both by the applicant organizations and by other researchers. Alignment with national or regional development plans and strategies should be demonstrated (e.g., Comprehensive Africa Agricultural Development Plan, National poverty reduction plans, etc.).
- 2. Research merit and effectiveness (25%):** Evidence of innovation, clarity of research questions and objectives, conceptual soundness, robustness of methodology and research design (including performance measurement), capacity to generate results within the lifetime for the project, and potential approach to scaling-up of results (applicability and replicability).
- 3. Team strength and collaboration (25%):** The roles and responsibilities of each of the partners should be identified – including the value-added role that Canadian knowledge, technology, and ideas will play in the research. Please describe briefly the expertise, track-record and planned contribution of natural and social scientists (women and men), the involvement of strategic research-users who will use and/or distribute the innovations resulting from the research, and the level of collaboration in project implementation to ensure effective partnerships. The role, contribution, and activities of the third parties (including their level of collaborations), if applicable, should also be briefly described.
- 4. Special attention to women (12.5%):** Consideration of women as a key client in the design of the research is needed to ensure that adoption of, and effects from improved technologies and innovations will lead to positive development outcomes for the most

vulnerable. Applicants should demonstrate how they will incorporate gender analysis into the research activities and how they will report on the results.

5. **Environmental sustainability (12.5%):** Environmental impacts have an important role in determining the long-term success and sustainability of the research. Applicants should carefully consider environmental risks and benefits (both positive and negative), and be clear about how environmental impacts will be measured and reported on.

**In addition to the above five criteria, applications must include a budget estimate, which should be commensurate with the proposed work. Value for money is inherent in the overall assessment of criteria 1, 2, and 3, above.**

## 7. Target Timelines

April 5, 2013: Launch of call

June 5, 2013: Deadline for submission of concept notes

By October 31, 2013: Successful applicants invited to develop full proposals

February 14, 2014: Deadline for submission of full proposals

By April 30, 2014: Applicants informed of full proposals recommended for funding

July 1, 2014: Projects begin

Please note, due to the large number of concept notes anticipated in this call, only those applicants that are selected (in the first stage of the process) to develop full proposals (in the second stage of the process) will be contacted by the Fund.

IDRC reserves the right to cancel the process at any time without prior notice and/or at its discretion to grant all or none of the awards under this process.

## **8. Concept Note Format and Requirements**

In order to be considered, concept notes must:

- a) be completed using the application form provided;
- b) be submitted in either English or French;
- c) provide summaries of the proposed research project, applicant organizations and principal investigators, team composition, and third-party organizations (if applicable);
- d) contain a description of the research project, plus references;
- e) provide an overview of project activities (note expected start date of July 1, 2014);
- f) include a tentative consolidated budget, indicating expected and reasonable expenses for the duration of the project;
- g) include a CV of the principal investigator of **each** applicant organization;
- h) include a signed official letter of endorsement from **each** applicant organization.

## **9. Submission Deadline**

Concept notes must be submitted by e-mail to [cifsr@idrc.ca](mailto:cifsr@idrc.ca) by the deadline of **17:00 Eastern Daylight Time, on Wednesday June 5, 2013 (Ottawa time)**.

Concept notes received by the deadline and deemed by the Fund to be compliant with the requirements set out in this call will be evaluated in accordance with the process outlined herein.

Concept notes received after the deadline **WILL NOT** be considered.

Any enquiries should be directed to [cifsr@idrc.ca](mailto:cifsr@idrc.ca) on or before 17:00 hours, Eastern Daylight Time on Wednesday May 22, 2013 (Ottawa time), in order to receive a response prior to the deadline date.

Any enquiries which affect all applicants received on or before the above-mentioned deadline will be posted as FAQs on the CIFS RF website ([www.idrc.ca/CIFS RF](http://www.idrc.ca/CIFS RF)) with the Fund's responses to those enquiries, without revealing the sources of the enquiries. Applicants are, therefore, strongly encouraged to monitor this website for any information updates regarding this call.

## **10. Permission to Share Information**

By way of submitting an application under this call, the applicant consents to the disclosure of the documents submitted by the applicant to the reviewers within IDRC, CIDA and externally who are involved in the selection process of both concept notes and full proposals. If selected for funding, the applicant further consents to the disclosure of the name of the applicant, the name of the principal investigator and the title of the proposed project in any announcement of selected projects.

Unsuccessful concept notes will be destroyed within 180 days after the close of the application period.

## **11. IDRC Standard Grant Conditions**

Each applicant organization selected for funding shall be required to sign IDRC's standard grant agreement, as amended by IDRC from time to time. A sample of IDRC standard grant agreement terms and conditions is available here:

[http://www.idrc.ca/EN/Funding/Guides\\_and\\_Forms/Documents/MGC-Att-A-e.pdf](http://www.idrc.ca/EN/Funding/Guides_and_Forms/Documents/MGC-Att-A-e.pdf)

IDRC's obligations herein are subject to sufficient funds being made available to IDRC by the Parliament of Canada and under the donor partnership agreement with CIDA.

IDRC will conclude a separate grant agreement with each Canadian and developing country recipient organization. There may be intellectual property rights considerations that flow from a patentable invention created in the course of a project funded in the CIFSRF. The intellectual property guidelines followed by the CIFSRF recognize rights to patents and copyright. Specific guidelines on intellectual property rights will be made available to research teams selected to develop full proposals.

## **12. Country Clearance Requirements**

IDRC has conducted general agreements for scientific and technical cooperation with a number of governments. These agreements establish the framework for IDRC cooperation with that country by defining the rights and obligations of both IDRC and the government. As such, any applicant institution selected to receive funding may be required to obtain country approval in accordance with these agreements prior to receiving funding from IDRC.

In particular, all applicants from India require clearance through the Foreign Contribution Regulation Act (FCRA). Please note that applicants selected to develop full proposals (in the second stage) will need to provide a copy of the form for their organization when submitting their full proposal. An FCRA form will also need to be attached for any third-party organization based in India.

Please note that each concept note and/or proposal will be subject to a risk management process which assesses the ability of the CIFSRF to support programming in proposed countries or territories according to Canadian law, knowledge of the research setting, and ability to monitor research activities. The risk management process at IDRC draws on the Government of Canada's Travel Advice and Advisories website and identifies countries (or areas within countries) where travel is unacceptably dangerous, or requires case-by-case approval. Even if travel is approved, certain conditions may be attached to it (see Appendix A for more information). The CIFSRF reserves the right to update this information as needed and reject applications proposing research in the eligible countries, if the research location is deemed by IDRC and/or CIDA to pose an unacceptable risk. Applicants are encouraged to visit the CIFSRF website for more information and for any updates.

## **Appendix A: CIFS RF Eligible countries**

Any applicant organization not based in Canada must be based in one of the following eligible countries. The research work carried out must also take place in one (or more) of these countries.

Please note that this list of eligible countries has changed from previous calls.

Algeria <sup>†</sup>	Gabon	Rwanda <sup>†</sup>
Angola	Gambia	Saint Lucia
Benin	Ghana	Sao Tome and Principe
Bolivia	Guinea <sup>†</sup>	Senegal
Botswana	Guinea-Bissau <sup>†</sup>	Seychelles
Burkina Faso <sup>†</sup>	Guyana,	Sierra Leone
Burundi	India*	Somalia <sup>‡</sup>
Cambodia <sup>†</sup>	Kenya <sup>†</sup>	South Africa
Cameroon <sup>†</sup>	Lesotho	South Sudan <sup>†</sup>
Cape Verde	Liberia <sup>†</sup>	Sri Lanka
Central African Republic <sup>‡</sup>	Libya <sup>†</sup>	St. Kitts and Nevis
Chad <sup>†</sup>	Madagascar	Sudan
Colombia <sup>†</sup>	Malawi	Swaziland
Comoros	Mali <sup>‡</sup>	Tanzania
Congo Dem. Rep. <sup>†</sup>	Mauritania	Togo
Congo Rep.	Mauritius	Trinidad and Tobago
Cote d'Ivoire	Morocco	Tunisia <sup>†</sup>
Djibouti <sup>†</sup>	Mozambique	Uganda <sup>†</sup>
Egypt	Nepal <sup>†</sup>	Zambia
Equatorial Guinea	Niger <sup>†</sup>	
Eritrea <sup>†</sup>	Nigeria <sup>†</sup>	
Ethiopia <sup>†</sup>	Peru <sup>†</sup>	

\*Countries for which concept notes will have to address a research problem of regional relevance to be considered eligible for funding. It will need to be clearly demonstrated in the proposal that research results in these countries are applicable to other countries in the region.

<sup>‡</sup>At the time of this CIFS RF Call, IDRC has complete travel bans for IDRC staff in these countries, which would severely limit the ability to effectively monitor projects and may negatively influence funding decisions.

<sup>†</sup>Due to local security conditions, at the time of this CIFS RF Call, IDRC has partial travel bans for IDRC staff in these countries which would limit the ability to effectively monitor projects and may negatively influence funding decisions. Please note that it is acceptable to propose research in these countries with elevated risks in specific regions, but it is highly recommended that high-risk regions be avoided. Please monitor the [Government of Canada's Country Travel Advice and Advisories site](#) for more information about risks in countries or specific regions of countries.