2013 Call for Concept Notes

Canadian International Food Security Research Fund (CIFSRF)

Instructions

Canada's International Development Research Centre (IDRC)

Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA)

April 2013

IDRC CRDI International Development Research Centre / Centre de recherches pour le développement international

Canadian International Development Agency / Agence canadienne de développement international

INSTRUCTIONS FOR FILLING OUT THE APPLICATION FOR THE 2013 CIFSRF CALL FOR CONCEPT NOTES

The 2013 CIFSRF call documents set out a list of mandatory requirements or conditions precedent as the case may be. In these documents, words such as “must”, “shall” and “will” denote a mandatory requirement. Words such as “may”, “can” and “should” denote IDRC’s suggested approach. Unless otherwise stated, submissions not meeting the mandatory requirements as outlined in the call documents will be disqualified.

HOW TO SUBMIT

The deadline for this call is 17:00 Eastern Daylight Time, on Wednesday June 5, 2013 (Ottawa time). Applications must be sent via email to cifsrf@idrc.ca. Applicants are encouraged to submit their applications well in advance.

Concept notes received after the deadline **WILL NOT** be considered and electronic files will not be saved. Concept notes must be submitted in either English or French.

You will need Adobe Acrobat or Reader version 8.0 or later. The most recent version of Adobe Reader can be downloaded here.

Please note that due to the large number of concept notes anticipated in this call, only those applicants that are selected to develop full proposals will be contacted by IDRC.

Please use this email format for sending applications:

From: (one of the principal investigators)
To: cifsrf@idrc.ca
Cc: (the other principal investigators and third-party organizations)

Subject: CIFSRF 2013 Call for Concept Notes Submitted by (names of all principal investigators, e.g. Lopez, Ndiaye, and Smith)

Attachments:
1. Lopez_Smith Concept Note Application (using the PDF application)
2. Lopez_Smith Letters of Endorsement (signed and scanned in ONE PDF or an image file). See Section I for more information.

Message:
Please find attached our Concept Note.

Total message size with attachments: Not to exceed 8 megabytes

CONTACT

Any enquiries should be directed to **cifsrf@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 CIFSRF website (www.idrc.ca/CIFSRF) 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.

INSTRUCTIONS FOR COMPLETING THE APPLICATION FORM

All sections of the form should be completed, except question 9 (third-party organizations), which should only be filled out if relevant.

Some sections of the form contain a drop-down menu of choices. Other sections require you to enter text, which you can copy and paste from an existing document. These sections will expand once you click off them, not as you type. Some sections allow you to add another section or more rows, or delete entire rows or sections, after entering text. Look for the add box/row buttons at the end of each section. Most sections have character limits that will block additional text.

Note that the Research Project Description (Section E) is limited to 20,000 characters, or approximately 5 pages of single-spaced text, including spaces and line breaks. See Section E for more details.

SECTION A: SUMMARY OF PROPOSED RESEARCH PROJECT (questions 1-6)

Complete the overview information. You will be asked to provide the following:

1. Proposed research title;
2. An abstract of 1,700 characters maximum, including spaces and line breaks (approximately 250 words);
3. 5 keywords, separated by commas, that describe the research;
4. Project duration (to a maximum of 30 months);
5. Total budget requested, in Canadian dollars (rounded to the nearest dollar); and
6. Country or countries where research will take place (select from a menu of eligible countries).

SECTION B: APPLICANT ORGANIZATIONS AND/OR COMPANIES (questions 7-8)

You will be asked to complete tables with the following information:

7. Details on each applicant organization and/or company in an eligible developing country. Each applicant organization (not third-party) that will be receiving funds must be listed as an applicant organization. Each applicant organization must have a principal investigator (PI), who is that organization's intellectual lead for the research project. Fill out one section for EACH applicant organization, including the PI's name and contact information at the applicant organization. Add sections as needed. (Note that third-party organizations will be listed under Section C, question 9). Use the drop-down menus for type of organization and title of PI. For a description of eligible organizations, see the Call document under "3. A. Applicant Organizations and Research Location".

8. Details for all Canadian applicant organizations and/or companies. Follow the same instructions as above. Note that Canadian provincial and federal government agencies or departments may not apply directly, but may participate as third-party organizations (see Section C, question 9).

SECTION C: THIRD-PARTY ORGANIZATIONS AND/OR COMPANIES (if applicable)

9. Fill out one section for EACH third-party organization and/or company involved in the research (if applicable). Use the drop-down menu for type of organization. Include the contact information of the primary person at the third-party organization who will be involved in the research. Briefly describe the role of the third-party in the research. Include the approximate funding to be provided (in Canadian dollars/CAD) to this third-party organization by one of the applicant organizations. Add more sections as needed.

   Note that expenses related to third-party organizations are to be included under the Research Expenses of one applicant organization, in Section G Tentative Budget, of the application form.

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

   The exact amount should depend on the nature and cost of the work to be done by any third-party organization. The overall balance of budget and responsibilities should clearly show that the applicant organizations are the primary actors in the research.

SECTION D: TEAM COMPOSITION

10. List all key members of the research team. Add rows as needed so that there is one row for each team member. Add a new section for each organization. Team members from each individual organization should be grouped together. As the Fund requires appropriate collaboration between natural and social scientists, it is important to include the field of expertise of each individual, as well as the percentage of their professional time they will be committing to the project.

    The lead principal investigators (PIs) should be included in the table and indicated under the role/responsibility column.

    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.

    Key contributors from third-party organizations may also be listed here.

SECTION E: RESEARCH PROJECT DESCRIPTION

11. Section 11a must not be more than 20,000 characters total (approximately 5 pages of single-spaced text). Additional space (3,000 characters including spaces, approximately 1 single-spaced page) will be allowed for references (Section 11b.). No annexes are permitted. The form will not permit tables or figures, only plain text. If you exceed the character limit you will receive an error message.

    All individual sections should be filled in. Applicants can choose which sections they wish to use more space for and which they will use less space for, while keeping to the total character limit. **The application form will prevent applicants from exceeding the limit.**

    The Research Project Description should address the listed points and **take into account the five (5) selection criteria listed in the Call document**.

    - Research problem and justification
    This section should briefly describe the problem that is to be investigated and the questions that will guide the research process. Clearly demonstrate how the research builds on and adds value to past work, citing previous research done on the theme and in the region – both by the proposing organizations in this research and by other researchers.

    - Research objectives
    This section should provide both the general and the specific objectives of the research. The general objective should state the research-for-development goal being pursued by

the research. The specific objectives should indicate the specific types of knowledge and applications to be produced, the audiences to be reached, and forms of capacity to be reinforced. These are the objectives against which the success of the project will be judged. Use only active verbs. Bullet points are recommended for this section.

- Methodology
Provide a concise, but thorough description of how the objectives of this research project will be achieved. This section should show how the research questions will be answered in the most rigorous way possible.

The methodology should discuss the following details as appropriate:

- Conceptual and theoretical framework: Define the frame of reference that will guide the research and identify the explanatory and dependent variables.
- User participation: Indicate whether the ultimate users of the research were, or will be, involved in the design of the project and how they will participate in the execution of the project or implementation of the results.
- Data collection and analysis: Indicate the approaches and methods that will be used to collect and analyse data.

- Collaboration
This section should briefly describe the strength and degree of partnerships in concept note development; the level of planned collaboration in project implementation; and whether this is a pre-existing partnership. It should also demonstrate the following:

- how the research builds on – and adds value to – existing/past partnerships (if applicable);
- the potential benefits for all partners; and
- appropriate collaboration between natural and social scientists.

Be sure to clarify how Canadian expertise will be beneficial to the project and how the budget is shared appropriately. The roles of the organizations involved should be clearly defined, with the added value of each actor in the collaboration. Project management effectiveness should be addressed.

In addition, this section should include information on the role, contribution, and activities of any third-party organizations. Please indicate specifically how organizational matters will be managed for this large project and describe any administrative arrangements that may include third-party organizations included in Section C.

Note: If a team member (i.e. someone making an important contribution to the project) is not from an applicant or third-party organization, their role needs to be clarified, and it needs to be clear in the proposal whether or not they will be receiving funding.

- Justification of need for a travel grant for full proposal development
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 10,000 CAD, to permit representatives from the applicant organizations to meet to develop the full proposal. Please describe in a

short paragraph the justification of the need for a travel grant to develop a full proposal. Include details of expected associated budget and any additional funding that applicant organizations might also contribute for proposal development, if short-listed. 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.

- Monitoring and evaluation

Describe how project achievements will be tracked, how expected outcomes will be monitored and evaluated to ensure proper and effective learning, and how the relevant stakeholders will be involved in the research and uptake of results. Briefly explain how a baseline will be set and related to milestones to demonstrate progress (as appropriate).

- Gender considerations

Consideration of women's specific needs in the design of the research, participation of women in research, and potential impact of the research on women are important. Applicants should demonstrate how they will incorporate gender analysis into the research activities and how they will report on the results.

- Environmental sustainability

Provide a concise, but thorough assessment, of potential environmental impacts (both positive and negative), and identify steps to maximize positive impacts and minimize negative impacts. Applicants should be clear about related activities and how environmental impacts will be measured and reported on.

- Results and dissemination

List the major research outputs (not just publications) expected from the 30 month research project, and how the research findings will be disseminated and/or implemented. Highlight 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 the agri-food system and increase food security and enhance nutrition in developing countries.

- Potential development outcomes

Describe the potential development outcomes that are expected from the research. Be clear about how the research results are likely to be used, by whom, and what their expected impact might be on specific communities or populations in the targeted country(ies) – both by the end of the project and anticipated within 3 years of the end of the project.

SECTION F: PROJECT SCHEDULE

12. Provide an overview of project activities (key outputs, events, milestones, or deliverables) according to specific objectives in your proposal. Projects must keep within the 30 month (maximum) timeline.

    The project schedule should include the mobilization, research, dissemination or utilization, and reporting times. Use the table provided. Briefly describe the activity first, and check the appropriate timing box column(s). Add as many rows as needed.

    It is anticipated that projects selected in this call with begin July 2014. As such, please plan activities accordingly.

SECTION G: TENTATIVE BUDGET

13. Include a budget, between CAD $1,000,000 and CAD $5,000,000, for new activities from new or existing partnerships. Use the template provided for one tentative consolidated budget, indicating expected and reasonable expenses for the duration of the project. This tentative budget must be agreed on jointly by the project leaders from all applicant organizations. Use one row for each applicant organization. This budget summarizes each organization's spending over the life of the project.

    Use Canadian dollars as the currency for each applicant organization's budget. Use only digits. Do not use commas or decimals. Round all figures to the nearest dollar.

    "Total in Canadian dollars" is an auto sum column and will thus be filled in automatically. Any currency conversions should be carried out using the link provided. The local currency and conversion rate should be stated in the budget notes. Please note that final values will be determined by IDRC on an official agreement if a project is selected for funding.

    Funds allocated to third-party organizations should be included in the research expenses budget line of one of the applicant organizations. If possible, and if consistent with sound financial management of the project, Canadian organizations should be responsible for the funds of Canadian third-party organizations, and Southern organizations should be responsible for those third-party organizations based in the south.

    In the budget notes, please indicate which applicant organization is responsible for which third-party organization.

General Description of Budget columns:

- Personnel Expenses
Includes all remuneration, allowances, and benefits paid to staff and advisors hired for a specific project. Project advisors are people hired for long periods (more than 1 year) and paid on a regular basis. The payment of replacement salaries (e.g., in some cases a course teaching buy-out may be justified, but only at actual replacement costs) or of core salaries (i.e., of existing staff), must be fully justified. As a general rule, IDRC does not pay salary supplements (i.e., honorarium for full-time employees in addition to their regular salaries or higher salaries than the institution would normally pay).

- Consultant Expenses
Consultants provide expert professional advice and usually work on a fee-for-service basis. Compared with project advisors, consultants are contracted for shorter periods to work on specific assignments. Payments to consultants include all expenses related to the services of a consultant for a specific activity within the project.

- Evaluation Expenses
Includes the systematic assessment of a project, program, policy, or strategic issue to assess either progress toward achieving objectives or the quality and effects of IDRC-funded activities. Evaluation may occur during an activity or after its completion. Evaluation costs can include: consultant fees; travel expenses; and dissemination of the evaluation findings.

- Equipment Expenses
Includes equipment that has a useful life of more than 1 year and costs more than CA$ 5,000 per item. Equipment less than CA$5,000 per item should be budgeted under Research Expenses. Costs may include the basic purchase price, related Canadian sales taxes (net of government rebates), freight costs, and other costs associated with purchasing the equipment. IDRC does not pay foreign taxes, import duties, or equipment insurance after delivery. The recipient institution is responsible for all subsequent insurance coverage, and IDRC does not assume responsibility for any losses after delivery.

- International Travel Expenses
Includes all costs related to international travel incurred by Project Personnel listed in the Personnel category of this budget proposal. Allowable costs include ground transportation, accommodation, meals, airfare, departure taxes, and other related expenses.

- Training Expenses
Includes a trainee's registration and tuition fees; living and other allowances; training expenses; and travel costs during the trainee's participation in degree or diploma programs, short courses, student field work, postdoctoral training, or other scholarly activities.

- Research Expenses (include funds provided to any third-party organizations)
Includes services and materials required to carry out the research. Costs include remuneration of persons who gather data and information or provide casual labour, maintenance and operation of project vehicles, consumable goods and non-capital equipment, computer services, training for project staff for implementation of research activities, training costs that are directly related to research and leading to research outcomes (e.g. Master's and PhD students), in-country travel, reference materials, rent paid for land or premises used in a research activity, and translation of project-related documents.

- Indirect Project Costs
Includes administrative costs not directly related to the research. Costs may include clerical, accounting, or secretarial help, general office expenses, office rental and utility charges, non-capital office furnishings, communications costs, and photocopying. IDRC expects the recipient to absorb the indirect or administrative costs of a project as part of its local contribution. In exceptional cases, IDRC will consider a contribution towards indirect costs. The maximum contribution is 13% of all recipient-administered costs, less the indirect costs requested by/payable to third-parties/sub-grantees.

- Financial Contribution by Other Donors (if applicable)
Please provide the details of financial contributions that will be made to the project by other international funding agencies (or foundations).

- Estimates of Local Contribution to Project
Local contributions represent cash amounts expended by the recipient from its own resources, from private grants, or from grants received from local, provincial or national authorities for the purpose of the project. Other supporting funds and in-kind contributions such as salaries of regular staff, equipment, infrastructure and overhead costs should not be included. Note that this is not a requirement of funding.

Additional information for budgets:
i) The tentative budget should be realistic and based on clear, actual, expected costs, with clear justification of expenses. Given the time frame for this call (30 months to complete research), realistic budgets will be essential. Unrealistic budgeting (over-budgeting relative to project objectives and scope) was a common reason for rejections in previous CIFSRF calls.
ii) Salary recovery for salaried employees (e.g., tenure-track staff) should not be included in the budget. Instead, these salaries would be the in-kind contribution of organizations to the project. Reasonable and well-justified requests to hire additional staff are acceptable, as is salary for non-salaried employees (e.g., adjunct professors on soft money). In some cases a course teaching buy-out may be justified, but only at actual replacement costs. This level of detail may not show in the overview budget, but will be important in planning it.
iii) Budget notes should be clear, especially for research expenses, and any anticipated equipment purchases should be clearly laid-out.

SECTION H: CVs

14. Include a CV of the principal investigator of EACH applicant organization. **Do not** include the CVs of other team members or individuals from third-party organizations.

    Please use the table provided. Two CV forms are provided. If you require more, please click on "add another CV" at the bottom of the section.

SECTION I: LETTERS OF ENDORSEMENT

Include signed official letters of endorsement: One from **each** applicant organization is required.

Each letter must be signed, and they should be scanned as ONE .pdf or image file (.jpeg, .gif, etc.), and included as an attachment with the application and sent via email as one message.

The letters should be written by a person who is authorized to approve the spending of funds within the organization (e.g., the Dean or Head of the Department at a university, or Director/President/CEO an organization) and should acknowledge the organization's support for the project.

A strong letter will: acknowledge the names of all the applicant organizations; indicate familiarity and history with the work being proposed; explain what is innovative or unique about the research; and explain why the project should be supported.