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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

Gender Equity & Youth Inclusion

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 change 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 further overview of the U.S. FTF initiative, please visit www.feedthefuture.gov. SIL, initiated in 2013, currently is funded through 2027. SIL operates in 26 countries and 140 locations.

Background

SIL's Gender Equity & Youth Inclusion team is focused on researching, evaluating, and documenting gender equitable and youth inclusive agricultural development initiatives, tools, and methodologies in order to enable researchers and implementing partners to internally evaluate gender and youth responsiveness within their projects, programs, institutions, and/or organizations. Our gender responsive/youth inclusive R4D innovations to date include:

- **GRADA-SIL Wave I-II (Gender Responsive Agricultural Development Assessment – Soybean Innovation Lab)**. We implemented the GRADA-SIL Wave I in 2016 and Wave II in 2018 to evaluate how SIL researchers and implementing partners measure gender impacts of SIL activities, identify gaps, and determine entry points to effectively implement gender responsive development into SIL activities.
- **GRADA-FIL Wave I-II (Gender Responsive Aquaculture/Fisheries Development Assessment – Fish Innovation Lab).** We implemented the GRADA-FIL Wave I in 2020 and Wave II in 2022 to inform develop resources, trainings, tools, and communications to assist Fish Innovation Lab projects in advancing gender responsive and youth inclusive aquaculture and fisheries development.
- **OPEN-ACCESS GRADA COURSE 1:** *How to Increase Your Gender Responsive Agricultural Development Capacity.* We launched this Online Certification Course in 2021, which is available on the SIL University portal: https://soybeaninnovationlab.getlearnworlds.com/course?courseid=grad
- **OPEN-ACCESS GRADA COURSE 2:** *Your Comprehensive Guide to Conducting Focus Groups in Village Settings for Gender Responsive Agricultural Development.* We launched this Online Certification Course in 2022, which is available on the SIL University portal: https://soybeaninnovationlab.getlearnworlds.com/course?courseid=focus-groups

We propose to build on SIL's gender/youth R4D investments by develop and disseminate GRADA evaluation tools and resources at scale via a '**Gender Dashboard**' in order to provide evidence-based gender responsive and youth inclusive solutions to SIL partner organizations, other Feed the Future Innovation Labs, and beyond by translating gender/youth inclusive principles and approaches into agricultural development practice. We are seeking proposals to help us achieve the following activities:

1) **Activity 1.** Provide SIL partners with a benchmarking tool that measures their program's gender responsiveness using a set of metrics that indicate the level of performance within an organization. These measures provide the formal data that allow managers to move their organizations ahead.
2) **Activity 2.** Communicate benchmarked data via a **Gender Dashboard** to be used by organizations to understand internally the successes, challenges, and gaps in gender equity and youth inclusion, and communicate progress and activities effectively.
3) **Activity 3.** The **Gender Dashboard** will also involve a long-term social media marketing, branding, and communications plan to bring GRADA evaluation tools and resources to other Innovation Labs, research centers, institutes, and development programs to measure, track, and communicate gender responsiveness of their own organizations.
4) **Activity 4.** Expand the portfolio of SIL University **OPEN-ACCESS GRADA COURSES** by:
   a. Producing **COURSE 3:** *How to Build Your Own GRADA (Gender Responsive Agricultural Development Assessment).*, which will serve as a customizable template for organizations.
   b. Producing **COURSE 4:** *How to Make Your Organization Gender Responsive*, which will enable organizations to implement changes to ensure gender/youth responsiveness based on the findings of their own GRADA.

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 integrated social media marketing and branding 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 $25,000, including indirect costs. All budget requests should be commensurate with the scope and proposed deliverables of the project.

Time length

The duration of the grant is for up to one year. Smaller, more target project periods with more limited budgets or shorter timelines are also acceptable.

Capacity Strengthening

The research team winning the award will undergo training and then employ the Innovation-to-Impact (i2i) learning platform and management system, which will support their implementation of the Product Life Cycle (PLC) framework. Capacity building is a critical theme that must be addressed by each project. Research proposals should demonstrate capacity building plans both at the individual level and at an institutional level.

Cross-Cutting Themes

The cross-cutting themes of gender and youth responsiveness and resilience are a central focus of SIL. As noted above, target product profiles selected must seek to address gender and youth-based constraints and show potential for economic inclusion for women and youth. Applicants must designate a team member with the relevant background and expertise in gender and youth inclusion to guide the team in these focus areas.

Finally, applicants, should be prepared to join 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 five 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 March 31, 2023, 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. Must include a timeline for 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, 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 adapt 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.