

SHORT NOTE ON THE CALL FOR PROPOSALS

Bert Visser, June 28, 2010

The ACFS in its 5th meeting in Geneva in May 2010 considered that in order to enhance optimal responses to the call for proposals, the (members of the) Bureau, the Committee, and the Secretariat should publicize the Call as much as possible to all potential applicants (see paragraph 48 of ACFS-5/10/Report).

Given that the call focuses on the challenge "to help ensure sustainable food security by assisting farmers to adapt to climate change through a targeted set of high impact activities on the conservation and sustainable use of PGRFA" it is highly relevant to reach out to stakeholders to which the Governing Body is traditionally less attached. In addition, the focus on Strategic Action Plans in the first window requires consortium building across national, and maybe even regional, boundaries.

As a consequence, the members of the Bureau and the Committee, as well as the Secretariat, may wish to focus their contributions on consortium building across institutional and political barriers, and to reach out to less traditional constituencies. It may be a challenge to directly reach out not only to institutions in the National Agricultural Research Systems but also to NGOs with a track record in PGRFA and community development and to the national private sector. It may also be a challenge to ensure that the element of adaptation to climate change is driving the project agenda and not another artificial layer under which a traditional activity is presented.

In doing so, the Bureau, Committee and Secretariat might find use in a check list that contains the following central elements of the call for proposals. Communication on these central elements might help potential project proponents to best understand the call and to focus their efforts in the light of these central elements.

- The main focus and scope of projects to be funded by the Benefit-sharing Fund recently branded "Leading the Field" through the Call for Proposals 2010 will be to help ensure sustainable food security by assisting farmers to adapt to climate change.
- In order to achieve a meaningful and significant impact through the "Leading the Field" Initiative, the Call for Proposals 2010 will concentrate on the first priority area adopted by the Governing Body (information exchange, technology transfer and capacity-building) and on three inter-related activities to address the other two priority areas adopted by the Governing Body: on-farm conservation and management of plant genetic resources for food and agriculture; participatory plant breeding; and, the distribution of appropriate seed and planting materials.
- The expected funding available for the Call for proposals 2010 is at least USD10 million to invest in projects globally.
- Any governmental or non-governmental organization, including farmers and farmers' organizations, genebanks and research institutions and regional and international organizations, based in countries that are Contracting Parties to the International Treaty, may apply for grants under the Benefit-sharing Fund.
- The Call for proposals distinguishes two windows, one requesting Strategic Action Plans and one requesting Immediate Action Projects. Each window has a separate Application Form.
- Strategic Action Plans should set out clear priorities and action plans and where possible milestones on a regional, sub-regional, eco-regional, or other basis. Strategic action plans could focus on agro-ecological zones, such as the marginal dry lands of the sub-Saharan Africa region, Southern Africa, small islands developing states, tropical mountain areas, or Asian flood plains and coastal sealine areas, but might also be formulated on the basis of specific crops or crop group (cereals, food legumes, vegetables, etc). The action

plans should cover a long enough period for these targets to be realistically met, ideally 6 to 10 years.

- In order to achieve this desired planning base, Strategic Action Plan projects could be of any value but would not exceed US\$ 400,000. Strategic action plan projects shall run for a maximum of one year in order for the strategies developed through them to be available to guide the following call for proposals.
- In addition to the eligibility criteria adopted by the Governing Body (see Annex 1), pre-proposals will be screened according to the following criteria:
 1. Geographic extension
 - address the adverse impacts of, and risks posed by, climate change to particularly vulnerable farming communities, ideally in more than one Contracting Party country;
 - support the integration of PGR components into sub-regional, eco-regional, national or regional action plans for adapting to climate change;
 2. Project relevance
 - identify the problem, the information that needs to be gathered or generated, and the methodologies that will be used to identify and prioritize adaptation responses;
 - inclusion of clear priorities, targets and milestones to assist farmers in developing countries to adapt to climate change and achieve sustainable food security;
 3. Collaboration and partnerships
 - identify a coherent and representative group of institutions (a 'consortium') that will implement the project, with clearly defined roles and responsibilities;
 - identify actual and potential additional funds from other funding sources;
 4. Beneficiaries
 - specify, whenever possible, the farmers or farming communities that are expected to benefit from the proposed project in their food security and their adaptation to climate change.
- Immediate Action Projects would not exceed US\$300,000 and run for a maximum of two years.
- In addition to the eligibility criteria adopted by the Governing Body (see Annex 1), pre-proposals for Immediate Action Projects will be screened according to the following criteria:
 1. Immediate impact
 - projects must have the potential for a short-term impact;
 - have an adequate size to have a significant impact;
 2. Projects must respond to a clear priority need, preferably as expressed through already existing strategies or plans;
 3. Projects must be country driven and demonstrate a clear engagement with, and participation by relevant stakeholders;
 4. Projects must identify actual and potential additional funds from other funding sources, whether national or international, that share similar or complementary objectives.
- i ○ A Helpdesk function will be provided to applicants upon request to support assist applicants to trigger good quality proposals. The Helpdesk will provide information and support in English, French and Spanish through e-mails, and if possible, in Arabic for oral inquiries.

Bureau and Committee members may confer to identify potential stakeholders and lead organizations that may wish to coordinate the development of pre-proposals and proposals, and directly approach such organizations to invite them to respond to the Call for Proposals, or contact development agencies or other agencies to alert them to use their contacts in partner developing countries.

Pre-proposals will have to be submitted through the national authorities, i.e., through the National Focal Points or through the Permanent Representatives of FAO, of eligible Contracting Parties no later than 8 September 2010, 24:00 Rome time. Therefore, applicants should calculate additional time before 8 September 2010 for the application to reach the Treaty Secretariat through the national authorities.

Further information on the Call for Proposals is available at the Treaty's webpage www.planttreaty.org