

Feed the Future Innovation Lab for Integrated Pest Management



Request for Concept Note

Rice, Maize, and Chickpea IPM for East Africa

Calendar

Activity	Date
Issuance of request for concept note	June 12, 2015
Deadline for questions	June 22, 2015
Deadline for receipt of concept notes	July 10, 2015
Review and selection of concept notes for promotion to full proposals	July 31, 2015
Requests for full proposals sent	August 3, 2015
Deadline for submission of full proposal	August 24, 2015
Proposal winner announced	September 10, 2015

This request for concept notes is issued by Virginia Tech, the Management Entity of the Feed the Future Innovation Lab for Integrated Pest Management (IPM IL). The Virginia Tech IPM IL is funded by the U.S. Agency for International Development under cooperative agreement AID-OOA-L-15-00001. The Virginia Tech IPM IL management entity offices are located at the Office of International Research, Education and Development, Virginia Tech, 526 Prices Fork Road, Blacksburg, VA 24061. For additional information please contact Dr. R. Muniappan, IPM IL Director, 540-231-3516, Email: <rmuni@vt.edu> Website: <<http://www.oired.vt.edu/ipmil/>>



1. Background

The **Feed the Future (FtF) Innovation Lab for Integrated Pest Management (IPM IL)** is a USAID-funded program that supports integrated pest management research, technology transfer, and capacity building in relation to small-holder farming systems. Virginia Tech was awarded a five-year cooperative agreement on November 25, 2014, to serve as the management entity of the IPM IL. The IPM IL will develop, implement, and scale up IPM packages for selected crops. USAID has requested, as part of the overall IPM IL program, an IPM project in East Africa (Ethiopia, Kenya and Tanzania) for rice, maize, and chickpea.

The IPM IL is now inviting the submission of concept notes designed to develop a project on Rice, Maize and Chickpea IPM for East Africa through a process of technology development and large-scale transfer combined with human and institutional capacity building activities. Project activities may be proposed for 4 years (October 1, 2015, to September 30, 2019). Following the evaluation of the concept notes, full proposals will be requested from a short list of applicants.

Crop losses due to pests (insects, diseases, weeds, nematodes, birds, and rodents) are a major constraint to alleviating poverty and improving nutrition in Africa. Most estimates of production and post-harvest losses due to pests range from 30 to 40 percent. Improper use of pesticides poses a serious threat to health and biodiversity. IPM is a decision support system that uses evidence-based information to reduce losses due to pests, minimize reliance on synthetic pesticides, and foster the long-term sustainability of agricultural systems.

Applicants are referred to the IPM IL website for additional information about the IPM IL:
<http://www.oired.vt.edu/ipmil>

2. Overview

The IPM IL invites the submission of concept notes from U.S. universities, regional institutions, CGIAR and AIRCA institutions, and host country research institutions that may lead to an invitation to submit a full proposal to lead the project on Rice, Maize, and Chickpea IPM for East Africa. Focal countries are Ethiopia, Kenya, and Tanzania. Some illustrative institutions for collaboration include: Africa Rising, AfricaRice Center, IRRI, ICARDA, CIMMYT, National Agricultural Research Institutes, Ministries of Agriculture, KALRO, KAVES, NAFKA, Dudutech, Real IPM, Russell IPM, ISCA, EIAR, ATA, Ambo / Debre Zeit / Bako Research Centers, SUA, Tanzania National Biological Control Program, Tanzania Plant Research Institute, CABI, ASARECA, ICIPE, and GIZ. Appropriate technology transfer methods will be tested and applied through collaboration with national universities, departments of agriculture, national extension services, NGOs, and the private sector. The concept note must describe work in all three countries.

In Africa, farmers generally rely on insecticides to avoid crop loss. In the past ten years, insecticide usage in many countries has escalated, and misuse is becoming more abundant. IPM packages for grain crops need to be developed to reduce the use of pesticides, improve human and environmental health, enhance biodiversity, and increase productivity of soil and crops.

The crops to be addressed in this RFA are maize in Ethiopia, Kenya and Tanzania; Chickpea in Ethiopia; and rice in Tanzania. The project should:

- a. Develop a working model to improve capacity in diagnostics on either an individual country basis or through regional means. Diagnostic capacity will be developed for major fungal, bacterial, viral and other diseases, as well as insects, mites, nematode, and weed pests of the above crops in the field and in storage. Alternative strategies and technologies will be developed where synthetic chemical pesticides are now used as the primary control tactic.
- b. Develop IPM technologies and packages for rice, maize, and chickpea in Ethiopia, Kenya and Tanzania.
- c. Implement specific activities that support USAID Mission objectives. Activities should be highly supportive of, and possibly imbedded into, USAID Mission Value Chain projects. Research activities must be conducted at experiment stations and in farmers' fields with the use of appropriate statistical designs. The project must partner with relevant and appropriate host country organizations/universities and may partner or significantly link with other U.S. universities, regional institutions like ASARECA and *icipe*, Innovation Labs (e.g. Chickpea IL, Sustainable Intensification IL, Post-harvest Loss IL), international agricultural research centers (e.g. CGIAR centers, AfricaRice Center, IRRI, ICARDA, CIMMYT, and AIRCA institutions *icipe*, CABI, etc.), institutions in other countries, and development community partners. The project applicants should demonstrate links to and leverage from the work of other relevant projects to avoid unnecessary duplication.
- d. Transfer IPM technology to rice, maize, and chickpea producers through a dynamic technology transfer program.
- e. Plan and conduct economic and gender impact evaluations of the IPM technologies and packages.

3. Research and Activity Priorities

Program objectives:

- Advance IPM science and develop IPM technologies, information, and systems for sound sustainable intensification;
- Improve IPM communication and education and the ability of the practitioners to manage knowledge that results in widespread adaptation, adoption, and impact of ecologically-based IPM technologies, practices and systems;
- Provide information and capacity building to reform and strengthen policies that influence pest management; and
- Develop and integrate sustainable resource-based local enterprises into national, regional, and global markets.

In order to accomplish these program objectives, the project should:

- Identify and describe the technical factors affecting pest management;

- Identify and describe the social, economic, political, and institutional factors affecting pest management;
- Work with collaborating groups to design, test, evaluate, and disseminate appropriate participatory IPM technologies, packages, and strategies;
- Work hand-in-hand with existing IPM-related firms in the private sector, while stimulating the creation of new IPM start-up companies
- Work with collaborating groups to promote training and information exchange on participatory IPM; and
- Work with collaborating groups to foster needed policy and institutional changes.

The overall purpose of the Rice, Maize, and Chickpea IPM for East Africa project will be to accomplish the objectives listed above and achieve the key IPM outcomes for rice, maize, and chickpea crops in Africa. Specific activities will include diagnosis of arthropods and fungal, bacterial, viral and other diseases; prioritization, development, and validation of IPM component technologies and packages; outreach and scaling up of IPM; and impact evaluation of IPM technologies on gender, income, and the environment. Favorable consideration will be given to activities that involve significant scaling up of existing successful technologies in addition to the development of new technologies with the private sector. A portion of the budget may be reserved for activities in support of areas identified through the IPM IL research sub-award competition. Such activities would necessarily be described after the sub-awardee is selected and that process will take place after the successful proposal is selected. To facilitate the development of sustainable IPM packages, a strong representation of genetic improvement, entomology, plant pathology, weed science, agricultural economics, and gender is encouraged in the project.

The ability to build a research activity through strong partnerships involving local universities, government institutions, NGOs, and the private sector – in the African context – is required.

Sub areas of inquiry include:

a. Role of IPM in Sustainable Intensification and Environmental Sustainability

‘Sustainable intensification’ refers to farming in ways that increase yields and reduce crop losses, so as to feed growing populations while substituting biologically-intensive inputs for chemically-intensive inputs wherever possible. Ecologically-based IPM practices such as biocontrol (natural enemy conservation and enhancement), pest-resistant varieties, and biopesticides can be used to manage pests and improve the quality of diets while preserving human health and the environment.

b. Adaptive research

Adaptive research is needed on key tactics related to biological control, host plant resistance, cultural practices, biopesticides, habitat management, and other IPM components. These tactics should be supported by an extensive insect and disease diagnostic component and by social, gender, and policy/regulatory analysis to create the necessary environment for IPM adoption. The adaptive research program should involve trials and demonstrations in farmers’ fields, and should be linked to communications, training, technical assistance, and educational programs to strengthen local capacity and accelerate and broaden adoption.

The project should be aligned and work closely with IARCs located in the same region, local NGOs and private industry and external organizations, e.g. APHIS/OPIS, universities, CABI’s Plantwise, ASARECA,

NAFAKA, AfricaRice Center, IRRI, ICARDA, CIMMYT, *icipe*, GIZ, and PestNet. Targeted projects may be country-specific but should take into account regional and global needs. Relevant institutions in strategic partner countries should be involved.

Training on the safe use of pesticides and pesticide application needs to be conducted. A PERSUAP should be prepared addressing pesticide issues related to rice, maize, and chickpea production in each of the target countries.

c. Research on IPM Delivery Techniques

This project should a) leverage a variety of resources to extend IPM research results to farmers, b) conduct research to identify innovative means of transferring IPM knowledge cost-effectively to the end-users, c) maximize user incentives for IPM adoption, and d) communicate IPM information regionally and broadly across countries. We encourage technology transfer through the involvement of value chain projects, private companies that produce agricultural inputs, and via supply chain dealers.

Key IPM outcomes expected:

- Advancement of ecologically-based participatory IPM science, with ecologically-based IPM technologies, information, and systems for managing key pests of rice, maize and chickpea crops in East Africa.
- Improvement of IPM communication, increase in capacity of host-country scientific and outreach institutions, enhancement of ability of practitioners to manage IPM knowledge and foster the widespread adoption of ecologically-based IPM technologies, practices, and systems, with measurable impacts.
- Capacity building for pest and disease diagnostic capability in the region.
- Introduction of sound economic analyses of IPM technologies.
- Introduction of sound ecological analyses i.e., intervention effects on beneficial microorganisms and other micro-flora, including how suggested interventions will improve yields and preserve environmental integrity over time.
- Enhancement of the capacities of national institutions to reform and strengthen policies that influence pest management.

4. Capacity Building

The project should include human and institutional capacity development at both the scientist and institutional levels. Details regarding the number of trainees, disciplines, location of training, and efforts to ensure gender parity of trainees, as well as the need for training of host country nationals, should be described in the concept note. Collaboration with host country universities in IPM related topics is encouraged and may include curriculum development, academic support consistent with research programming, short courses, and other activities that support improved institutional capacity.

Outreach and IPM technology transfer activities aimed at the end-user are required. These activities can occur via direct contact with end-users by project investigators or through third party organizations such as host country extension services, host country universities, NGOs, and NARS. Use of mass media (radio, TV, newspapers), internet, cell phones, E-Readers, on-farm training, workshops and demonstration plots for technology dissemination and scaling up is encouraged.

5. Gender

The application must present a gender analysis that discusses important gender issues relevant to appropriate IPM research, development, and extension activities. The application must explain how gender considerations and equity issues will be integrated into the design, implementation, management, knowledge sharing, capacity building, and monitoring and evaluation of the overall project activities.

6. Impact assessment

An impact assessment study should be conducted. It should assess advancement of USAID-supported goals and strategic objectives, the agronomic, economic, and environmental needs of target beneficiaries, environmental sustainability, food security issues, and development policies that increase whole farm profitability and productivity.

7. Project Design and Evaluation

The project must describe a results framework, including monitoring and evaluation, that is consistent with the overall objectives of the IPM IL supporting research, knowledge sharing, and capacity building in relation to small-holder farming systems and the ability to increase ecological intensification for the production of food. The project must be in compliance with USAID's Environmental Compliance Procedures described in Title 22 of the Code of Federal Regulations, Part 216 (22 CFR 216 http://www.usaid.gov/our_work/environment/compliance/22cfr216) and provide evidence of compliance with all relevant financial accounting procedures, regulatory compliance, responsible conduct of research, and the U.S. Agricultural Terrorism Act of 2002.

8. Project Reporting

An annual work plan, budget, semi-annual activity report summarizing results, impact analysis and results, trip reports, and research reports and summaries will be part of the reporting requirements. The IPM IL staff, USAID staff, and IPM IL technical advisory committee will review and provide feedback. Amendments or changes may be suggested during the annual review with respect to program and budget. Funding for the overall IPM IL budget, and hence for the subcontracts, is allocated on an annual basis. The project should have contingency plans in place for a 10% cut in funding to demonstrate abilities to achieve outcomes under an uncertain federal fiscal environment.

9. Concept Note Information

Eligibility

U.S. universities as defined under Section 296 (d) of Title XII of the Foreign Assistance Act, CGIAR and AIRCA institutions, host country institutions, and international research centers are eligible to apply as the lead institution for a period of 4 years. IPM IL will subcontract with the selected institution, which will then subcontract with collaborating organizations, at least one of which must include a U.S. university if it's not led by one. The institution making the application will be responsible for negotiating sub-agreements with all collaborating organizations and for accounting to the Virginia Tech IPM IL

Management Entity for all program accomplishments, expenditures, and reporting requirements. The concept note should identify the nature of any collaboration, the distribution of labor and activities between collaborating organizations, and the budget allocations among collaborating organizations.

The IPM IL strongly encourages concept notes from – or for concept notes to include – qualified minority serving institutions. These include, but are not limited to, historically black colleges and universities, predominantly black institutions, Hispanic serving institutions, tribal colleges and universities, and Asian American, Native Alaskan and Pacific Islander serving institutions.

Importance of Human Resource and Institutional Capacity Development

Human and Institutional Capacity Development (HICD) is a core objective, and concept notes should indicate how this will be strengthened. There should be a demonstration of meaningful collaboration in research and training between a lead institution and one or more host country institutions (public research institutions, universities, NGOs, etc.). Other partners, such as U.S. universities and public and private sector research institutions (CGIAR, AIRCA, International agencies etc.), may also be subcontracted. Collaboration with multiple host country institutions is encouraged.

Project Funding, Budget Guidelines, and Cost Sharing

Approximately US\$ 1.55 million is available through September 30, 2019, for the project. The concept note must contain a summary budget with projects and subcontracts clearly delineated using the [budget template](#). Applicants are required to provide non-federal cost sharing that equals or exceeds any overhead earned on host country sub-awards. Favorable consideration will be given to proposals that further leverage consortium funding. At least 50% of the proposed budget should be spent to support in-country activities. Travel costs for host and U.S. scientists should be included and explained.

The IPM IL strongly encourages applicants to utilize their off-campus research or other reduced F&A cost rate. As IPM IL is a foreign assistance grant, the utilization of a reduced indirect rate allows for maximum aid to our international collaborators. Virginia Tech, prime recipient of the award, will be applying an off-campus rate and favorable consideration will be given to applicants implementing a similar policy.

Format and Evaluation of Concept Notes

Concept notes must be in English with narrative portions prepared in MS Word with Times New Roman font size 11 and 1.15 line spacing. The summary budget tables must be prepared in Microsoft Excel utilizing the [attached template](#). Page size should be 8 ½ x 11” with 1” margins. Table 1 lists the guidelines for submission of concept notes.

Table 1. Guideline for submission.	
Component	Description
Title Page	Title; name, institution address, email, phone, and fax for lead PI at lead institution; list members, total project budget, timeframe, and funds requested from IPM IL.
Executive Summary	Maximum one page
Narrative Description	Describes the project membership with clearly identified roles and responsibilities of all members. Focal topics and geographic areas, IPM components and packages, and

	research needs should be clearly articulated. Barriers to adoption of IPM components and strategies to overcome them should be identified. Opportunities for supporting research sub-award projects, capacity building, knowledge sharing, and strategies for addressing gender issues should be described. Provide a management and staffing plan.
Anticipated Results	Provide a narrative description referring to the results framework with clear indicators of measuring project results.
Expected Impacts	Describe expected impacts and how they will be measured.
Activity Plan	Provide a timeline of activities over the 4-year life of the project
Budget	Provide a summary budget sheet and for the project lead institution and all project members that will receive funding. The format specified by IPM IL must be used.
Budget Justification	Provide a one-page justification/explanation of budget expenditures.
References	List references used in the concept note narrative
PI Qualifications	In one page, provide a description of the qualifications of the PI at the project lead institution and for all relevant members in the project.
Curricula Vitae	Provide the CV for each PI/collaborator whose participation is described in the concept note.

Page length and order of sections

The total page length of the concept note, excluding title page, one-page summary budget, one-page budget justification, reference list, PI qualifications, and CVs, is 6 pages. Assemble all sections of the concept note into a single file and convert to a single pdf file for submission. The sections should appear in the following order: 1) title page, 2) executive summary, 3) narrative description, 4) anticipated results, 5) expected impacts, 6) activity plan, 7) budget, 8) budget justification, 9) references, 10) PI qualifications, and 11) relevant CVs.

10. Selection Process

An independent Technical Advisory Committee will review and score all proposals according to the following criteria (Table 2). Input may be sought from ad hoc reviewers, host country institutions, USAID Missions, and other relevant development organizations in making the final selection.

Table 2. Criteria used for the evaluation of concept notes

Criteria	Weight
Technical Merit, Including Management and Staffing	30%
Alignment with Target Country Research Priorities, IPM IL Goals and Objectives	20%
Knowledge Sharing and Outreach Activities	10%
Human and Institutional Capacity Development	10%

Gender programming	10%
Monitoring and Evaluation Activities	10%
Past Performance	10%

11. Submission of concept notes

Questions pertaining to concept notes should be sent to Dr. R. Muniappan, email: rmuni@vt.edu by June 22, 2015, 11:59 pm Eastern Time.

Concept notes should be submitted to Dr. R. Muniappan, email: rmuni@vt.edu by July 10, 2015, 11:59 pm Eastern Time.