

Call for concept notes:

Strengthening/Revitalizing Farmer Institutions to become centres of service delivery (for Agri-productivity, agrifinancing, marketing, Food security and nutrition):

Please find below the answers to all questions which came in until 10th March 2024. With this information, we expect you should be able to develop your concept note. The deadline as indicated in the call for concept notes is 15th April 2024 at 12:00 Ugandan time.

As indicated in the Call, an online meeting to further explain the threshold criteria will be held on 18th March 2024 at 11:00 am to 12:30 pm (EAT).

MINOR ADJUSTMENTS TO THE CALL REQUIREMENTS FOR ALL APPLICANTS.

- For consortium applicants, a full partnership agreement has to be in place and signed at full proposal stage. The CN should however elaborate on the questions to be answered under 4.1.1. number 8. This will be part of the assessment.
- In the concept note, only an outline of the results framework is required. The full results framework is part of the full proposal.
- The following adjustment has been made on **Section 4.1.2.1 Concept note check: qualitative criteria concerning the concept note (100 points)** as follows:
 1. The extent to which the draft theory of change (ToC) contributes to the goal, outcomes and intended result areas for farmer institutional development program. (11 points)
 2. The translation of the different outcomes, results and major features into a comprehensive and efficient program design, strategy and main interventions. (26 points)
 3. The extent to which the concept note shows understanding of, and provides a convincing strategy concerning (each 6 points):
 - a) The importance of participatory approach for planning and implementation in farmer organizational development, and how the results will be translated into the program results framework, strategy, and activities.
 - b) Translation of the challenges and opportunities related to farmer organizational development into concrete outputs and activities.
 - c) The strategy to build bargaining and advocacy capacity of the FO for the interests of SHF members
 - d) Building resilience through farmer organizational development and its operationalization in the strategy, concrete outputs, and activities of the program.
 - e) The strategy and potential for enhancing productivity, marketing and financial access in an integrated manner.

- f) Analysis of the major risks related to climate change and the strategy to integrate solutions in the activities of the project that will benefit vulnerable households in a sustainable and replicable way.
 - g) Strategy for enhancing access to quality inputs through farmer organizations
 - h) The development of value chains through farmer organizations.
 - i) How gender and inclusivity are integrated in farmer organizational development. And how broader inclusivity challenges (resource rich/poor, well/poor connected, etc.) are integrated in the program strategy and interventions.
4. The concept note provides information on how collaboration with other (Dutch funded) funded projects is planned (4 points).
5. The concept note outlines how the contract party will include sub-contracting local organisations in the implementation of the program and how their capacity will be strengthened, including financially. (5 points)

QUESTIONS and ANSWERS

Questions which were not understood or are related to provide input or vision for the CN, are not included in this Q and A.

1. Is the 6 months inception period part of the 5 year 10-million-euro program in this call for concept notes?

Answer: The Inception period is included within the five years. The inception period is therefore not a separate project.

2. Does the call only cover crop value chains or livestock too?

Answer: Other value chains including livestock can be considered

3. "The program offices and all full-time staff will be based in the program locations. Program office and full-time staff will not be based in Kampala." Does this mean that no cost will be allowed for running the headquarter office based in Kampala?

Answer: Indeed

4. A maximum of 10 million euro is available for the whole program. Furthermore, the guidelines state that "based on the concept notes, a maximum of three organizations will be selected to submit a full proposal". Does that mean that the maximum amount that can be requested per proposal is € 10 million?

Answer: The Embassy is seeking to sign a single maximum EUR 10 million contract for a five-year project. Selection procedures are explained in detail under section 4 of the call

MAJOR FEATURES/STRATEGIES/APPROACHES

- 5.** "The lead partner has proven experience in the management of single projects of USD 5 million or more in which the lead partner is the lead (or contract) party. The following information is required: name of the project, thematic area, main results, total budget (including currency) and the contact details of the contact person of the donor organization."

Can a partner qualify this USD 5 million requirement with consolidated project budgets rising from project extensions? (e.g. Project A starts with USD 1million and secures an extension with USD 2million additional budget). Or the USD 5 million should be a static amount awarded to one single project?

Answer: It refers to single projects of 5 million USD or more.

- 6.** Can an organization/ firm apply for only one (1) region?

Answer: No, all districts/regions should be covered.

- 7.** Do Concept Notes submitted have to cover all the districts mentioned in the Call for Concept Notes, or can they be limited to interventions in only some of the mentioned districts?

Answer: Please refer to qn 6 above

- 8.** "EKN has no objection to/no preference for consortia. If the application is submitted by a lead party on behalf of a consortium, the application must include a partnership agreement signed on behalf of all consortium partners (the lead party and all co-applicants)."

Is this applicable to the concept note application stage or only at the proposal stage?

Answer: For consortium applicants, a full partnership agreement has to be in place at full proposal stage

- 9.** Which organization will conduct the diagnostic study/feasibility analysis? If it is the same applicant organization, is the budget part of the 10million euros?

Answer: The contracted organization will be responsible for the diagnostic study and is part of the 10 million euros

- 10.** If a different organization or consultancy firm conducts the diagnostic study/feasibility analysis, MUST their recommendations be considered in totality by the fund applicant?

Answer: Please refer to question 9

- 11.** In the qualitative criteria, the experience is referred to the consortium. Is it correct that here only the lead partner can provide proof of projects?

Answer: Please refer to the threshold criteria in the call for concept notes section 4.1.1.

Section 4.1.1. Threshold criteria check, outlines general criteria applicable to organisations submitting applications individually and those submitted by consortia. The Criterion further specifically provides guidance to consortia. In either case, some criteria are addressed to the lead applicant/consortium lead while others are addressed to both the lead applicant/consortium lead and subcontractors/consortium members.

- 12.** The current lead partners in country total annual budget is more than 50% of the value of the program proposal per year'. Does this mean that our locally registered Uganda office's annual budget is 50+% more than what we request from EKN for this project / program of work?

Answer: Yes

- 13.** Is it possible to participate in two applications, in one as lead and in the other as consortium member, sub-contractor or co-applicant?

Answer: It is possible but not recommended

- 14.** Is there a defined concept note template/ format for this call?

Answer: Applicants can submit the concept note in their preferred format. However, applicants are advised to make sure the concept note can be assessed easily on the criteria of section 4.1.

- 15.** Is there a maximum number of pages for the entire application or specifically annexes?

Answer: The CN will be maximum 10 pages (excluding front and content page and the annexes), There is no maximum number of pages for the annexes.

- 16.** For the track record: Can an international organization use programs it has implemented outside Uganda and those implemented by its Country Office in Uganda?

Answer: Please refer to section 4.1.1 .

- 17.** Should we include the results framework, theory of change and results chain in the concept note?

Answer: See above under minor amendments to the call requirement, and, Please read the call carefully especially on the section 4.1.2.1 which outlines the Concept note check: qualitative criteria concerning the concept note (100 points)

- 18.** Should we submit a detailed budget with the concept note? Or is the mention of the desired amount sufficient? Kindly guide us on how to go about the budget.

Answer: The concept note contains an overview of the major budget lines in your own preferred format, that will allow EKN to assess the relevance of the major budget categories in relation to the CN.

- 19.** Could you please confirm the maximum percentage of the budget that can be allocated to indirect cost recovery?

Answer: Indirect cost recovery (ICR) will be in relation to actual overhead costs of the organisation. Therefore, local and national organisations will have in general lower ICR costs than international organisations. ICR will be presented transparently in order for EKN to assess.

- 20.** What costs/ expenses qualify as allowable, and disallowable?

Answer: The question is not clear; Only eligible expenses made during the implementation of a programme will be funded by EKN.

- 21.** Can we include admin/overhead costs in the budget categories?

Answer: No, admin (support) and overhead costs should be separate budget categories.

- 22.** Could EKN please confirm that you intend to make one award only? If so, does EKN expect that the winning proposal will consume the full amount of 10 million euro over the period of 5 years? Or can different partners applying for different regions be allocated portions of the 10 million euro?

Answer: Only one project will be funded. The Embassy will finance maximum one project with a maximum budget of EUR 10 million for a five-year project. Selection procedures are explained in detail under section 4 on pages 12 – 19 of the call.

- 23.** Locations: Is the planned project expected to cover all locations/districts listed on page 4 of the call, or is there a minimum number of districts to be targeted within the 5-year project/10 million EUR budget?

The concept note should cover all the regions mentioned in the call and not a single region or district. All districts mentioned should be considered.

- 24.** On the threshold criteria: For the 5 million USD threshold on single-projects managed by the lead partner; we have a 3-year project funded by the US Government with budget 10 million USD; however, grant agreements are signed only for 1 year at a time, and the annual agreements are below 5 million USD. Project is treated as a multi-year project, and the application attached to the agreement as annex is multi-year. Can such a project be counted in the 5 million threshold?

Answer: No, the threshold refers to one single project implemented in Uganda or another country.

- 25.** In the eligibility criteria, I read: "The current lead partner's in-country budget is more than 50% of the value of the project proposal per year. Annual financial statements of 2020, 2021 and 2022 to be submitted." Does EKN accept a financial statement whereby the lead partner self-declares the in-country budget per year?

Answer: Please read the call carefully, section 4.1.1. presents the "Threshold criteria check" . Under this section, details of project documents to be submitted are listed. Audit reports and management letters of the last three years are included in the list of documents.

- 26.** We have read the TOR of this program which aligns seemly with our key objectives. We are interested in undertaking the lead in the implementation of this program. However, we less operate in the crop section of Agriculture. How legible are we for this program?

Answer: see eligibility criteria in the call and question 2.

- 27.** Are CGIAR centers eligible for this call?

*Answer: The call for concept notes is open to all organisations that meet eligibility criteria specified under section **4.1 Concept Note (CN), stage 1.***

- 28.** On page 6 of the CfP it is mentioned that every FO (and its members) will be supported to select and engage in at least 3 or 4 productive enterprises/value chains. Often cooperatives have specialized in one value chain where aggregation and marketing are concerned, although their members produce a more diverse set of crops. Including additional business cases on cooperative level might lay an additional layer of complexity on the governance of a cooperative, since not all members will benefit equally from decisions related to the allocation of funds to one business case over another. Additionally, not all cooperatives are already at a stage of development where they can efficiently handle more than one revenue-generating activity. Can EKN confirm that it expects all farmers' organisations included in the program to commit to at least 3 (or 4) enterprises/value chains?

Answer: The farmer institutions should commit to diversified economic activities or enterprises

- 29.** EKN has referred to 7 food security projects in the call for proposals. These projects have made differing strategic choices about including organized farmers in the project interventions. Does EKN expect concept notes for this call for proposals to develop a customized approach per region to complement the work of other projects?

Answer: The call is on strengthening farmer institutions. EKN does not expect a customised approach per region. Where necessary and relevant, synergies and alignment with other food security projects can be explored.

- 30.** Following the previous question, does EKN expect the new project to align with the selected value chains of the other 7 projects?

Answer: Please refer to qn 29.

- 31.** In section **4.Selection Procedure** of the call for Concept Notes, in stage 1 and right after point B., it is said: "Applications that pass the threshold check will be assessed based on the qualitative criteria set out in sections **4.2.1.**" Please provide clarification on which section is this sentence really pointing. Isn't it referring to section **4.1.2**?

Answer: Yes, this is adjusted. See "Minor adjustments to the call requirements for all applicants" above

- 32.** In section 4.1.2.1 *Concept note check: qualitative criteria concerning the concept note (100 points)*, the total amount of the 5 qualitative criteria described is only 51 points. Please clarify what is taken into account for the scoring of the remaining 49 points.

Answer: This has been adjusted (see minor adjustment section above).

- 33.** In section 3.5 *Expected way of working/strategies/approaches*, it is mentioned that a diagnostic study/feasibility analysis has to be undertaken to assess the context situation of the FO and the level of agriculture in the area. In addition, in section 4.2 *Stage 2: Full Proposal (FP)*, in *Inception Period* chapter, it is mentioned that "relevant studies will be carried out in the first months of the inception period...." Is the study mentioned in section 3.5 meant to be carried out in these initial months of the inception period?

Answer: The diagnostic study and any other relevant studies are meant to be carried out during the inception phase.

- 34.** Does the applicant have to use a Concept Note template of his choice?

Answer: Please refer to qn 14

- 35.** On page 3 it is mentioned that "... smallholders cannot increase their competitiveness in diversified markets without effective farmer organizations at different levels." Can you please elaborate on which levels are meant here?

Answer: that is for the applicant to consider.

- 36.** Are there ideas on how many farmer organizations and smallholder farmers should be reached through the program?

Answer: The number is up to the applicant to propose and justify

- 37.** Are there specific value chains that are preferred? Are the programs mentioned in 3.6 an indication of the preferred value chains? C

Answer: Please refer to qn 28

- 38.** Do Dutch leads have an advantage over non-Dutch leads? Do the existing leads or program partners of the programs mentioned in 3.6 have an advantage over newcomers?

Answer: Please read the call carefully, specifically the eligibility criteria

- 39.** It is mentioned that there is a need for an "integrated approach". Can you please clarify what you mean by this? Does it mean the integration of the different types of support/strengthening, or does this refer to the more strategic integration of farmer organizations and other actors in the agricultural sector?

Answer: This is for the applicant to consider.

- 40.** Is our understanding correct that the PIP approach is prescribed for the program?

Answer: a participatory approach is looked for, not necessarily PIP.

- 41.** What is the definition of local farmer institutions according to EKN?

Answer: Farmer institutions are membership organizations established, governed and controlled by farmers, with an aim of supporting members in pursuing their individual and collective interests, for the benefit of associated members.

- 42.** Is it mandatory to run the project in the 28 local governments suggested in the call?

Answer: Refer to qn 4, 6 and 7

- 43.** Are you looking to finance one single programme that covers all regions/districts listed under point 1.3? If partial targeting of certain regions/districts is allowed, what would be the value split amongst areas (assuming 10 millions are to cover all listed regions/districts)?

Answer: One project. Please refer to qn 4

- 44.** If partial targeting of certain regions/districts is allowed, what would be the split of minimum target HHs per region/district (assuming minimum target of 200,000 HHs refers to all listed regions/districts)?

Answer: Refer to qn 4

- 45.** Regarding threshold criteria #2, is it ok for the lead partner to demonstrate experience managing projects of 5+ million EUR outside of Uganda?

Answer: It is accepted

- 46.** In case the annual financial statement for the last year (2022) wasn't available yet at the time of submission, would a justification suffice?

Answer: Please refer to the threshold criteria. . Annual financial statements of 2020, 2021 and 2022 to be submitted

- 47.** For international NGOs with headquarters outside of Uganda, would the annual financial statements have to be those of the global office or those for the Uganda country office?

Answer: All relevant statements are required to assess the threshold criteria.

- 48.** "A need for a study to analyse and appraise farmer institutions (...)" to inform tailored interventions is expressed in the ToRs. Are organisations expected to conduct such study(ies) during project design or rather during the inception period?

Answer: Refer to qn 33

- 49.** From the TORs: "The program will have a budget to contribute to investment in technology innovations and for basic upgrading essential organizational functional infrastructure/equipment and operational management systems that improve productivity, marketing, financial access". Can you indicate if there's a minimum/maximum percentage of the budget to be allocated to such end?

Answer: There is no maximum or minimum. It cannot be a dominant component of the interventions. Sustainability, ownership and other interventions will have to be put under consideration.

- 50.** From the TORs: "At least 60% of the activity budget should be implemented directly by the program staff of the applicant". In case of a consortium, does this rule refer to the lead applicant or the consortium as a whole?

Answer: It applies to the consortium

- 51.** Regarding the requirement that the "Maximum allocation for personnel costs is 30% of the total budget", does this apply to lead applicant personnel costs only (in the case of a consortium), or also to personnel costs from all consortium partners?

Answer: It applies to the total budget; all personnel costs of the project

- 52.** Regarding the requirement that "The program team should be capable to manage the program, therefore no major costs for support by general office staff can be budgeted", does this require that all administrative, finance, and operational personnel costs must be budgeted 100% to the program, rather than being shared across projects? We respectively suggest that if applicants can find more cost-effective approaches of sharing support staff across projects, this should be allowed.

Answer: this relates to the full proposal stage.

- 53.** Is there a template for the 10- page concept note?

Answer: Please refer to qn 14

- 54.** Does the proposal need to cover all the districts mentioned under the "geographical coverage (page 4 of the ToR, section 1.3) or can we make a selection of some districts?

Answer: Please refer to qn 6

- 55.** Is it compulsory to use the PIP approach? Or can we use our own participative approaches?

Answer: PIP is just one of the participatory approaches, other participatory approaches can be proposed

- 56.** Do we have to strictly follow the formulation of the goals, outcomes, results and expected outputs outlined in the TOR (section 3, page 7) or are we allowed to change this to make the flow more logical and more consistent with log frame theory?

Answer: The applicant can present their preferred format. However, the assessment should be facilitated and the assessment will be based on 4.1.2.1 Concept note check: qualitative criteria concerning the concept note (100 points)

- 57.** Our organization considers the direct implementation of activities by the farmers organizations' staff (and consequently, managing part of the budget) as a crucial element for them to become stronger organizations (learning by doing). What is EKN's view on this, given that the guidelines mention that "At least 60% of the activity budget should be implemented directly by the program staff of the applicant."?

Answer: Please refer to the threshold criteria in the Call. EKN has no objection to/no preference for consortia. Beneficiaries cannot be consortium members.