





**Michigan State University**

**Global Center for Food Systems Innovation (GCFSI)**

**2015 Malawi Innovation Grants**

**June 2015**

**Annual Program Statement (APS)**

**Issuance Date:** June 1, 2015

**Closing Date:** July 15, 2015

The Global Center for Food Systems Innovation (GCFSI) at Michigan State University (MSU) seeks grant applications for projects that test, pilot or scale innovations in the Malawi food system, and that specifically focus on the integration of multipurpose legumes into maize-based farming systems, and on the adoption/adaptation of multipurpose legume-maize (MLM) systems. This grants program is referred to henceforth as the “Malawi Grant Program”. The grants are being funded under a Cooperative Agreement between MSU and the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) and will be awarded and implemented in accordance with U.S. Government Standards.

# **Competition Snapshot**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Competition Opens | June 1, 2015 |
| Application Deadline | July 15, 2015 |
| General Area Basic Eligibility | Proposals that demonstrate innovative science-based solutions to challenges to the food system in Malawi |
| Applicant Eligibility | Faculty from the Lilongwe University of Agriculture and Natural Resources (LUANAR) and University of Malawi (UNIMA) |
| How to Apply | Please submit proposals to: [gcfsi@msu.edu](mailto:gcfsi@msu.edu) |
| Award Amount | Typically USD $20,000 to $35,000, but up to $50,000 if justified |
| Award Duration | 12 months |

# **Purpose**

The Malawi Grant Program intends to award grants to active faculty of the Lilongwe University of Agriculture and Natural Resources (LUANAR) and of the University of Malawi (UNIMA) for one year to implement short-term (12-month), medium-scale (up to $50,000) innovation projects that seek to pilot, test or scale innovations[[1]](#footnote-1) that focus on the adoption/adaptation of multipurpose legume-maize (MLM) systems. Multipurpose legumes are varieties that provide multiple benefits to farm households, including maintenance of soil fertility or other agronomic benefits, contributions to household food security and nutritional status, and generation of cash income through commercial sale.

1. **Malawi Research Overview**

During the summer of 2014 (June – August 2014), GCFSI and LUANAR conducted a coordinated series of eight intensive studies, which sought to shed light on the question, *“Where and how can multipurpose legumes be scaled for sustainable intensification of maize systems and what would the potential impacts be, in the medium term, across the food system in Malawi?”*

The integration of multipurpose legumes into maize-based farming systems, and the adoption/adaptation of multipurpose legume-maize (MLM) systems, is considered by many in the scientific community to be an innovation that can improve soil fertility, raise maize yields, and diversify and improve household nutrition and livelihoods. However, adoption rates among smallholders remain low, a situation that is attributed to multiple factors, including:

* A general preference for maize and a reluctance by farm households to devote resources to legume cultivation for fear of jeopardizing their ability to meet household maize requirements

Lack of reliable access to seed, especially improved seed

* Lack of awareness of improved legume varieties and their benefits
* Limited access to markets, inputs and government support for legumes

To date, most MLM research has focused on farmers and the constraints and conditions they experience that might hinder adoption. In contrast, the core-funded GCFSI research projects implemented in 2014 recognize that farming systems extend well beyond the farm gate, and that innovation in off-farm food system policy and practice can have a profound impact on farmer decision-making and the adoption of agronomic practices.

The complete details of the research and the findings can be accessed by emailing [**gcfsi@msu.edu**](mailto:gcfsi@msu.edu) or [**ddmkwambisi@gmail.com**](mailto:ddmkwambisi@gmail.com).

# **Thematic Areas**

Six thematic areas have been identified by GCFSI for this APS. Proposals should address one or more of the following six themes, which relate to scaling-up the use of improved multipurpose legume and maize (MLM) technologies. The discussion below is meant only to illustrate, not to restrict, the range of issues within each thematic area where innovations could be proposed. Details of these thematic areas can be found in the Malawi Synthesis Report, which is available from [**gcfsi@msu.edu**](mailto:gcfsi@msu.edu).

**4.1 Build capacity on appropriate agronomic practices through improved extension**

Adoption of MLM production activities must be supported by extension programs that result in improved agronomic management practices. For example, there is evidence that farmer innovation is enhanced by farmer field schools (FFS) where the curriculum promotes action-learning and teaches science-based principles as well as good farm management practices. In addition, **new** uses of ICT technology (e.g., low-cost participatory videos) promise to extend the reach of extension programs and increase awareness of and demand for legume varieties and cropping techniques by farmers.

* 1. **Seed systems**

Improving the legume sector depends in part on expanding the availability of improved quality seed. Women are generally responsible for seed selection and have certain criteria for the seeds they choose. The critical role that women play in seed selection and storage, as well as their knowledge of different seed varieties, argues for involving them as the primary actors in local or community seed production. This will not only improve the seed supply but also provide an additional source of income for women.

In the absence of an adequate supply of certified seed for improved multipurpose legume varieties (and effective demand for that certified seed), promoting quality-declared seed may enhance farmer access to improved legume seeds and support conditions for local seed production, which can improve local income-generating opportunities. In addition, community seed systems can be built by training and empowering farmers to better carry out seed multiplication.

* 1. **Storage and transportation infrastructure**

To support the MLM technologies, storage solutions are needed for farmers, rural traders and processors, and urban wholesalers and retailers. Better storage can help to mitigate lack of market power by farmers (especially women), minimize need to travel, reduce food loss from pests, spoilage and theft, improve incomes, and maintain quality of seed. In addition to storage improvements, improved transportation infrastructure is another critical priority for increasing food system performance.

* 1. **Small-scale processing**

Multipurpose legumes require processing. For example, pigeon peas produced for export undergo mechanized processing that is currently performed by exporters. Pigeon peas that are diverted to the local market from the export value chain cost three times the farm gate price. Improving the ability of small-scale entrepreneurs and farmers to process pigeon pea can bring down the price for consumers, as well as creating a new revenue stream in the informal legume sector. More distributed processing clusters could decrease energy and transport costs. Partnerships between small-scale processors and distributed and renewable energy supplies may have significant cost advantages compared to using the centralized energy supply system.

* 1. **Access to information, capital, and financial services**

Greater access to information about market prices and volumes traded can benefit both farmers and traders and promote scaling up of multipurpose legumes. Urban retailers need good market information if they are to successfully handle a larger volume of business. Municipal governments need empirical evidence that can inform market upgrades and support urban food provisioning and exchange. Urban agri-food actors and municipal decision-makers need to understand each other’s needs, interests, and constraints, as the basis for identifying mutually beneficial ways to improve food system performance.

Inadequate access to capital and financial services is another commonly cited constraint for processors and urban food traders in both the formal and informal systems. Small agro-enterprises may also lack the business management, finance, and numeracy skills to effectively participate in financial services programs, even those targeted at small and micro firms.

* 1. **Networking and collective action.**

Weak networking capacity is at least partially responsible for dramatic price fluctuations and uncertain conditions, to the extent that it reduces market integration. Networks can provide access to price information, aiding the buying and selling decisions of value chain actors and encouraging farmer adoption of MLM technologies by acquainting farmers with the demand for legumes in urban markets.

Networking and collective action in agri-food systems can also stimulate actors to innovate and to share risks. Collective action can result in improved extension agent service delivery; new supply chain models that encourage cost sharing (in transportation, for example); improved information sharing among members; and improved ability of small-scale entrepreneurs to influence policy-makers. At the farm level, group/collective action can increase farmers’ bargaining power, increase volume available for sale, fetch better prices, and enlarge access to capital, thereby supporting investments in storage infrastructure, business training, and other resources. It could be particularly beneficial to women who face mobility constraints.

# **Geographic Focus**

In order for proposals to be considered they must propose implementation (piloting, evaluation, scaling)that are conducted in Malawi, preferably but not exclusively in the central and southern regions of the country, consistent with the USAID/Malawi Feed the Future Multi-Year Strategy, [FTF Malawi Multi-Year Strategy](http://feedthefuture.gov/sites/default/files/resource/files/MalawiFeedtheFutureMultiYearStrategy.pdf).

# **Application Instructions**

Proposal shall be submitted using the guidelines of the application template provided in Annex A and the budget template provided in Annex B. Proposals that meet the evaluation criteria will be informed of awards and non-eligible applicants will be notified that they are not being considered for funding.

# **Submission Information**

Applications shall be submitted in English. Applications must be submitted no later than 5pm Malawi time, on July 15, 2015.

1. Complete the application form in Annex A and the budget form in Annex B.
2. Include a photocopy of UNIMA or LUANAR certification that applicant(s) is/are active faculty members of the university.
3. If the proposal team includes a local NGO or other local partner, include a letter of approval for proposed project from the local partner.
4. Email application, budget, and supporting documents to [**gcfsi@msu.edu**](mailto:gcfsi@msu.edu)**.**

# **Application Evaluation Criteria**

Full applications will be evaluated against the evaluation criteria in the table below.

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Evaluation Category** | **Point Value** |
| Quality/Relevance of Innovation | 20 |
| Feasibility of Design | 20 |
| Impact on Target Group | 15 |
| Organizational Capacity | 15 |
| Sustainability/Local Partner Engagement | 20 |
| Gender Considerations | 10 |
|  |  |
| **Overall Rating (out of 100 points)** | **100** |

These evaluation criteria elements are described more fully below.

1. *Quality/Relevance of Innovation:*Clear understanding of the area of the food system being addressed, and clear explanation of how the project would result in an innovation that would address an important problem affecting food system performance (15). Responsive to GCFSI and USAID/Malawi Feed the Future program goals and appropriate for the Malawi country context (5). The goal of GCFSI is to create, test and enable the scaling of food system innovations, taking into account challenges posed by population growth, climate change and pressure on the land, and the strain on food system infrastructure and operation due to the demands of rapidly growing urban populations. **Total 20 points**
2. *Feasibility of Design:* The proposed activities are feasible with a clear plan for testing, piloting or scaling the proposed innovation. The proposal articulates clearly how the grant activities will result in meeting grant objectives. Objectives are results-focused and SMART – specific, measurable, attainable, relevant, and time bound (10). Proposed timeline for project is reasonable (5) and budget is realistic and well justified (5). **Total** **20 points**
3. *Impact on Target Group:* The extent to which the proposed activity corresponds to the needs of target group(s) and will directly benefit them (10). Clearly defines how many men and women will benefit and how project participants will be selected (5). **Total 15 points**
4. *Organizational Capacity:* Shows evidence of team’s capability to undertake and accomplish the proposed activities. Organization clearly designates a principal investigator with current contact information and demonstrates adequate financial and project management oversight (7.5 points). The team includes a mixed group of students as part of the implementation team (7.5 points). **Total 15 points**
5. *Sustainability/Local Partner Engagement:* The extent to which grassroots food system innovations successfully meet stakeholder needs and are sustainable depends heavily on local organizational engagement, including farmer and trader associations, private sector forms or community-based NGOs. Therefore, applicants will be evaluated on their ability to engage local partners (10). The extent to which the funded activity will result in building and strengthening the capacity of the community and local organizations, and whether the activity itself is sustainable (5). Includes evaluation of local partner contribution (cash, labor, materials) and involvement as well as plan to continue and/ or build on project results (5). **Total** **20 points**
6. *Gender considerations:* The extent to which the proposed activity seeks innovative and gender-sensitive approaches that boost production/marketing/commercialization while also stimulate household consumption and promoting women’s access to markets. **Total 10 points**

**Further, the Malawi Grant Program will review the proposed budget (Annex B) to ensure its compliance and appropriateness.**

# **Award and Administration Information**

All grants will be negotiated, denominated, and funded in U.S. dollars, with funding being directed from MSU to the corresponding University in Malawi that houses the winning faculty member. Funds will then be disbursed by LUANAR and/or UNIMA to their respective faculty. Any funds for local partners will be disbursed by LUANAR and/or UNIMA.

Grant applications must be supported by a detailed and realistic budget.

Applicants will be informed in writing of the decision made regarding their application.

# **Special Requirements**

**Conflict of Interest:** Recipients will be required to disclose any real or potential conflicts of interest during the post award process as per MSU conflict of interest policy, see: <https://coi.msu.edu/>.

**Research involving Human Subjects:** If the research involves human subjects the applicant must show approval by an IRB review board or certify that the research will comply with MSU IRB policy. Found at: <http://www.humanresearch.msu.edu/>

**Export Control:** Funds provided pursuant to this APS process may not be expended by the Recipient in violation of the [U.S. Government‘s Export Administration Regulation (EAR)](http://www.bis.doc.gov/index.php/regulations/export-administration-regulations-ear) found in 15 CFR 730, et seq. The Recipient shall comply with any and all requirements and provisions of the EAR.

**Environmental Compliance:** The Foreign Assistance Act of 1961, as amended, Section 117 requires that the impact of USAID’s activities on the environment be considered and that USAID include environmental sustainability as a central consideration in designing and carrying out its development programs including those that could derive from the activities implemented under this RFA. This mandate is codified in Federal Regulations (22 CFR 216) and in USAID’s Automated Directives System (ADS) Parts 201.5.10g and 204 (<http://www.usaid.gov/ads/policy/200/200>), which, in part, require that the potential environmental impacts of USAID-financed activities are identified prior to a final decision to proceed and that appropriate environmental safeguards are adopted for all activities. Potential awardees under this APS are required to comply with environmental obligations under these regulations as applicable. In addition, Potential awardees must comply with host country environmental regulations unless otherwise directed in writing by USAID. In case of conflict between host country and USAID regulations, the latter must govern.

# **Additional Information and Support**

Questions can be submitted to [gcfsi@msu.edu](mailto:gcfsi@msu.edu). Questions will only be allowed until June 15, 2015.

**Annex A**

**GCFSI Malawi Grants Program Application**

**COVER PAGE (1 page)**

**Date:**

**Name of Proposed Project:**

**Name of University the Faculty Belongs to:**

**Name of the Principal Investigator:**

**Mobile Number(s) of the Principal Investigator:**

**Email of the Principal Investigator:**

**Names of other faculty who form part of the proposal team (if applicable):**

**Address/ Location in Malawi of Proposed Activity:**

**TECHNICAL APPROACH**

(Sections 1-8 below shall not exceed 10 pages, **EXCLUDING sections 5 and 8 below which should be included as annexes**)

* 1. **Proposal Summary** (No more than one page, to introduce proposed activity).
  2. Briefly state objectives, method, expected results, partnerships, and budget.
  3. How will you spend the money?
  4. How many people will benefit?
  5. Why it is important?
  6. What will it change in your community?
  7. **Problem Statement** (Concise statement of the problem to be addressed and what is being done).

1. Background on the problem.
2. Purpose of the proposed activity in relation to problem.
   1. **Project Objectives/Goals** (Describe the desired end result/overall objectives of the activity).
   2. How do your project goals align with the GCFSI and Feed the Future Program goals?
   3. What will this project change in your community?
   4. How is the project linked to national food security goals in Malawi?

**4. Program Design** (This is the most important part of the proposal and should be several pages long. Explain how the proposed project will test, pilot or scale innovations, what specific activities will be done, when the activities will be done, and who will be responsible for each activity).

1. Specific activities and milestones that will be achieved.
2. How many community members will be involved in implementing the activities?
3. Required resources/staff needed to complete these milestones. Who will oversee each activity?
4. Does your activity require the use of land? If so, provide proof of ownership/ permission.
5. Which legume (s) are you targeting
6. Sustainability plan- how you will continue the project after the 12-month grant period is done.
7. How will you build on this grant activity to continue improving your community?
8. **Project Evaluation Plan** (Explain how you will monitor the project progress and how you will measure success. Also, complete Monitoring and Evaluation Framework. **Not included in 10 page limit, please include in attachment A.**)

**Monitoring and Evaluation Framework**

|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Objective** | **Result** | **Indicator** | **Activities** | **Baseline** | **Target** |
|  |  |  |  |  |  |
|  |  |  |  |  |  |
|  |  |  |  |  |  |

**Terminology:**

* **Objective:** A statement of the condition or state one expects to achieve; must be SMART: Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Realistic, and Time-bound.
* **Result:** The intended outcome or impact.
* **Indicator:** A quantitative variable or unit measured over time that can help show changes in a specific condition (i.e.: the percentage of houses with increased income).
* **Activities:** A specific action or process that converts resources to help achieve results (i.e.: in month three of project, conduct two-day training on increased production and market linkages).
* **Baseline:** Information collected before or at the start of a project or program that provides a basis for planning and/or assessing subsequent progress and impact (i.e.: a pre-project survey).
* **Target:** The desired value, at the end of project, for the project indicators; indicates the number, timing, and location of that which is to be realized (i.e.: 75 percent of beneficiary houses with increased income).

1. **Short Introduction to your Team**
   * 1. What is your team structure and how many people work for your organization
     2. Name previous grants received for similar activities, if applicable

**7. Environmental Impact:** Please identify any reasonably foreseeable environmental consequences of your proposed activities, both positive and negative. If applicable, please describe environmental safeguards that will be adopted. Please indicate if you believe your project would qualify for one or more of the categorical exclusions detailed in 22 CFR 216.2, list which categorical exclusion(s) are applicable, and provide a short rationale for your determination (up to 1 page).

1. **Activities Timeline** (No grant activities in the first month to allow for payment request to be submitted and processed. See table next page. **Not included in 10 page limit, please include in attachment A.**)

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Phase | Month 1 | Mo. 2 | Mo. 3 | Mo. 4 | Mo. 5 | Mo. 6 | Mo. 7 | Mo. 8 | Mo. 9 | Mo. 10 | Mo. 11 | Mo. 12 |
|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Request and transfer funding | X |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| 2Task |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Task |  | X | x | x |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Task |  |  |  | x |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Task |  |  |  | x |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Task |  |  |  |  | X |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Task |  |  |  |  |  | X |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Task |  |  |  |  |  |  | x |  |  |  |  |  |
| Task |  |  |  |  |  |  | x | x |  |  |  |  |
| Task |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  | x | x | X |  |
| Submit closeout reports |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  | X |

**ANNEX B**

**Budget Template**

Complete separate **Annex B** with detailed budget information.

1. **Budget** **narrative explaining costs**. Include 1-2 pages with your budget which explains your budget costs. Include information about:
   * + - 1. How much are you requesting (maximum $50,000)
         2. What are the main budget line items
         3. How did you determine these costs
2. Did you receive quotations from multiple suppliers? If so, did you proceed with the lowest quotation?
   * + - 1. How will a local partner contribute to the project (labor, equipment, money)
         2. What is the value of the community contribution (tools that can be used, labor, a building for meetings, etc?)
         3. Will the project create income- if so, who will control or manage the income
3. **Budget:** Follow the provided template. Below are some budget considerations you must take into account:
4. **What needs to be included:** The budget must detail all estimated expenses for the grant period, including direct research implementation costs, international and domestic travel costs, ground transportation, meals and incidentals calculated based on the rates indicated in 2.d below. Grant funds must be used to carry out the project within a period of 12 months from the date of contract signing.
5. **Indirect Costs NOT ALLOWED:** If LUANAR or UNIMA do not have Negotiated Indirect Cost Rate Agreement (NICRA) with a U.S. Government agency, projects will not be permitted to charge an indirect cost rate but must instead directly budget for all administrative, support, and overhead costs. Plug figures (percentages) of administrative costs will not be allowed. MSU reserves the right to negotiate budget items before entering into a contract.
6. **International Travel:** Any international air travel to and from Malawi must comply with the provisions of the [Fly America Act as amended by the Open Skies Agreement](http://www.gsa.gov/portal/content/103191). Specifically, air tickets must be purchased from a U.S. carrier or from a U.S. or E.U. carrier if the traveler will transit an E.U. country.
7. **Per Diem (Meals) and Lodging in Malawi:** Meals and Lodging in Malawi, for Malawi faculty or students will only be paid if the team is traveling outside of their university area (LUANAR for travel outside of Lilongwe and for UNIMA travel outside of Zomba). Agreed and maximum rates are as follows:

* Breakfast: $8
* Lunch: $10
* Dinner: $12
* Lodging (outside of the universities’ lodging): $36 (not applicable when lodging in LUANAR or UNIMA facilities are proposed)

1. **Road Travel:** The maximum allowed rate for road travel is US$ 1.93 per liter of petrol (approximately MK 853/ltr.)

1. Innovation refers to technologies, products, or services, business or organizational models or institutional arrangements, or operational or production processes, that lead to substantial improvements in productivity or other solutions to development challenges. Innovations are not always something completely new or different, but may represent an important refinement that improves the performance of an existing technology, system, or methodology. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)