

Request for Applications (RFA):

Feed the Future Innovation Lab for Crop Improvement Centers of Innovation

Preliminary information only. RFA to be released on March 1, 2020.

Vision:

The vision of the Feed the Future Innovation Lab for Crop Improvement (ILCI) is that **national breeding programs drive genetic gain for development of improved varieties for key product profiles that underpin economic growth, resilience and nutrition development goals**. To reach this vision, ILCI will focus on extensive partnership with breeding programs in East Africa, West Africa, South Asia, and Latin America and the Caribbean to meet broad objectives toward the goal of empowering and equipping National Agriculture Research Systems (NARS) institutions for rapid development and delivery of new and improved crop varieties through efforts of **regional Centers of Innovation for crop improvement**. The goal of ILCI is to partner with national programs that will **identify, develop, pilot and transfer appropriate tools, technologies and methods (TTMs), equipping them to deliver increased genetic gain and new products**.

Our operating model and philosophy at ILCI is focused on empowering NARS institutions to pave their own path towards sustainable, climate-smart, equitable and effective crop improvement programs. We believe NARS institutions should be driving the “modernization” agenda around crop improvement to fit their impact pathways and resource base. To this end, the RFA process for Centers of Innovation will be one of **co-creation** and visioning.

Eligibility:

- This RFA will support **National Agriculture Research System** institutions, [as defined by FAO](#).
- **NARS applicant must be actively involved in crop improvement research, with demonstrated variety development and release.**
- Projects funded under this RFA **must be led by a Principal Investigator (PI) based at a NARS** institution from a Feed the Future target or aligned country in East Africa (Ethiopia, Kenya, Uganda, Burundi, Malawi, Mozambique, Rwanda, Somalia, South Sudan, Tanzania, Zambia, Zimbabwe), West Africa (Ghana, Mali, Niger, Nigeria, Senegal, Burkina Faso, Democratic Republic of the Congo, Guinea, Liberia, Sierra Leone), Asia (Bangladesh, Nepal, India, Burma, Cambodia, Georgia, Tajikistan) and Latin America and the Caribbean (Guatemala, Honduras, El Salvador, Belize, Costa Rica, Nicaragua, Panama, Haiti, Mexico).

- Applications must clearly define all product profiles for target crops that the RFA will impact. ILCI target crops include RTBs, legumes (excluding peanut and soybean), sorghum and millets.
- Support from NARS institution leadership (DDG level) must be documented.

Desirable:

- Proposals demonstrating a track record and/or vision for tools, technologies and methods integration in crop improvement leading to varietal release
- Proposals including linkages to U.S. institutions and/or with co-PIs from U.S. minority serving institutions (MSIs). ILCI will facilitate linkages with MSIs should applicants require.
- Applications led by minority groups, women or early career researchers
- Partnerships with other NARS institutions, universities and institutions, and CGIAR centers in target regions
- Proposals submitted by interdisciplinary groups of PIs
- Proposals clearly indicating how becoming a Center of Innovation will increase benefits from crop improvement for women, youth, climate resilience and nutrition

Timeline:

Application period opens:	March 1, 2020
Deadline for letter of intent	April 10, 2020
Deadline for submission of final proposal:	July 5, 2020
Granting:	4th quarter of 2020
