REQUEST FOR APPLICATIONS (RFA)
RFA No. EOAI/SDC/BvAT/2020-07
Issue Date: 20-07-2020

PROJECT TITLE: MAINSTREAMING ECOLOGICAL ORGANIC AGRICULTURE (EOA) INTO AGRICULTURAL SYSTEMS IN AFRICA FOR THE PERIOD 2019-2023 (PHASE II)

Dear Applicant,

Biovision Africa Trust (BvAT) acting on behalf the African Union-led EOA Continental Steering Committee (CSC) and the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC) is pleased to release a Request for Applications (RFA) to recruit suitable consortia of partners to implement activities of the Ecological Organic Agriculture Initiative (EOA-I) Phase 2 in their countries based on the scope of work contained herein. The project grants will be awarded and implemented in accordance with the EOA-I grants management policies and procedures.

The annexes accompanying this Request for Applications are:

1) Annex A: Phase II Project Document (ProDoc) that can be accessed through these links (English) or (French).
2) Annex B: Cover Letter (Sample Format) accessible through these links (English) or (French).
3) Annex C: Technical Application template accessible through these links (English) or (French).
4) Annex D: Detailed Budget template accessible through these links (English) or (French).

This RFA does not obligate BvAT to execute a sub-grant, nor does it commit it to pay any costs incurred in the preparation and submission of the applications. Furthermore, BvAT reserves the right to reject any and all applications, if such action is considered to be in the best interest of the EOA Initiative. Applications are submitted at the applicant’s own risk. All preparation and submission costs are at the applicant’s expense.

Thank you for your interest in being a partner in the EOA Initiative in Africa.

Sincerely,

David Amudavi (PhD)
Project Coordinator, Ecological Organic Agriculture Initiative
BvAT Executive Director
Nairobi, Kenya
1. PROJECT BACKGROUND AND SCOPE OF WORK

1.1. Overview of the EOA Project

The Ecological Organic Agriculture (EOA) Initiative is an African Union-led continental undertaking currently implemented in nine countries namely Benin, Ethiopia, Kenya, Mali, Nigeria, Senegal, Tanzania, Uganda and Rwanda. It is implemented under the guidance and oversight of the AU chaired Continental Steering Committee (CSC) to establish an African organic farming platform based on available best practices; and to develop sustainable organic farming systems and improve seed quality.

The EOA Initiative envisions achieving resilient and vibrant ecological organic agricultural systems for enhanced food and nutrient security and sustainable development in Africa. Its mission is to promote ecologically sound strategies and practices among diverse stakeholders involved in production, processing, marketing and policy making to safeguard the environment, improve livelihoods, alleviate poverty and guarantee food security among farmers in Africa.

The EOA-I is anchored on 6 interrelated strategies of (i) Research, training and extension, (ii) Information and communication, (iii) Value chain and market development, (iv) Networking and partnership, (v) Policy and programme development, and (vi) Institutional capacity development according to its 10-year Strategic Plan (2015-2025). Phase I supported by the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC) funded project, Pillars 1 to 3 were retained while Pillars 4 to 6 [Networking and Partnership (Pillar 4), Policy and Program Development (Pillar 5) and Institutional capacity development (Pillar 6)] were combined to form Pillar 4, the Management, coordination and governance for enhanced coordination, advocacy, networking and institutional capacity building. The pillars have been revised to bring the focus of Value Chain Approach, Inter and Intra pillar synergies into a closer perspective.

In Phase II (2019-2024) again supported by SDC, the initiative will be implemented under the following 4 Pillars: (i) Research and applied knowledge, (ii) Information communication and extension, (iii) Value chain and market development, and, (iv) Management, coordination and governance. The four pillars comprehensively capture the Initiative’s five-year Action Plan anchored on six interrelated strategies mentioned above.

Project Goals and Objectives

The overall goal of this initiative is to mainstream EOA into national agricultural production systems by 2025 in order to improve agricultural productivity, food security, access to markets and sustainable development in Africa.

The objectives of the Phase II of the EOA-Initiative linked to the Action and Strategic Plans has five objectives which are:

1) To improve quality of life for all households in EOA implementing countries by mainstreaming ecological organic agriculture practices and technologies into the national agricultural systems;
2) To avail information and knowledge needed by EOA value chain actors through demand driven, multi-disciplinary, gender sensitive, participatory research and repositories;
3) To enhance adoption of EOA technologies and practices through systematic dissemination of research and experience-based information, knowledge and training of value chain actors;
4) To substantially increase share of quality organic products at local, national, regional and international markets through value chain development and market strengthening; and
5) To enhance structured management and governance of EOA through coordination, networking, advocacy, multi stakeholder platforms and capacity building leading to positive changes in agricultural systems in Africa.

1.2. Scope of Work

Applicants are required to propose their own implementation strategies to cover the scope of work described below, introducing interventions that are appropriate to their organizational strengths, and demonstrating how they contribute to the goal and objectives of this initiative.

Pillar 1- Research and Applied Knowledge (RAK)
Pillar 2- Information Communication and Extension (ICE)
Pillar 3- Value Chain and Market Development (VCMD)
Pillar 4- Management, Coordination and Governance (MCG)

**Project Pillar 1: Research and Applied Knowledge (RAK):** This pillar focusses on priority and farmer-led research, the outputs of which should be disseminated by Pillar 2 to potential users, namely all the actors in the value chains including organic farmers, input suppliers, traders, consumers and ultimately to policy makers for influencing relevant policy and legislation. Policy makers need to appreciate the value and impact of research to consider increased attention and support. Activities under this pillar should include identifying information and knowledge gaps in consultations with the stakeholders including farmers; demand-driven information generation, innovative, participatory, gender sensitive, interdisciplinary, and multicultural research processes; collating and validating available information and knowledge on practices and technologies and; packaging it into accessible repositories for dissemination and use by the various target groups along the EOA value chains.

**Project Pillar 2: Information Communication and Extension (ICE):** This pillar supports dissemination of information and knowledge to various target groups. It links with SDC Project Pillars 1, 3 and 4 by ensuring that information and knowledge generated by Pillar 1 is further repackaged and disseminated through effective and specific user targeted formats to reach the various target groups along the value chains. The pillar is expected to leverage on information and communication strategies developed during the first Phase in which partners commissioned studies across the initial 8 partner implementing countries to identify information and communication gaps of EOA practices and technologies across various stakeholders.

**Project Pillar 3: Value Chain and Market Development (VCMD):** This pillar presents the greatest opportunity for making a difference in the outcomes of the EOA Initiative. In this Phase, the focus will be on value chain approach, a departure from the fragmented implementation approach used in Phase I, where focus was on unrelated value chains scattered in various regions within each country. The value chain approach will enable pillar partners to optimize
achievement by focusing on selected commodity value chains in common regions with greater pillar synergy and coherence through joint planning and implementation. Besides, this Phase will employ the market systems development (MSD) approach to address systemic failures in the EOA sector market and ensure stronger participation by small-scale organic farmers in order to enhance production, incomes, food and nutrition security. The strategy will enhance access to business support services and market intelligence including the 4Ps (products, prices, places and promotion) to EOA value chain actors. It will also develop new market channels and strengthen existing ones through consumer awareness campaigns and other forms of facilitation, making the markets more accessible to producers and buyers.

**Project Pillar 4: Management, Coordination and Governance (MCG):** This pillar focuses on coordination, networking, advocacy and institutional capacity building. It will cover core areas of the original last three pillars in the EOA strategic plan: Networking and Partnership (Pillar 4), Policy and Program Development (Pillar 5) and Institutional Capacity Development (Pillar 6). The promotion of EOA is a complex and multi-disciplinary process that calls for efficient cooperation and communication among relevant stakeholders at all levels including governments, farmers, civil society, private sector, and the international community. Effective implementation of the EOA Initiative requires strong institutions with effective, functional and responsive administrative and operational systems.

2. **APPLICATION DETAILS**

2.1 **Who can apply**

The EOA-I participating countries: The Call is intended for 9 countries currently of eastern and west Africa (Ethiopia, Kenya, Tanzania, Rwanda, Uganda, Mali, Nigeria, Benin and Senegal). Consortia of partners willing to work together on the Initiative are encouraged to apply. The qualifying consortia of partners should bring together partners with the necessary technical expertise in the 4 key pillars of EOA-I (Pillar 1- Research and Applied Knowledge; Pillar 2 Information Communication and Extension; Pillar 3- Value Chain and Market Development and Pillar 4- Management, Coordination and Governance. The partners should also have good established networks in the organic sector, with the government and a good track record with donors and development partners. The lead consortia partner should have a good track record of financial management. The consortia should at any given time comprise of at least 3 partners all drawn from the country of application and covering the technical pillars.

The consortia of partners should be part of (either already or willing) the EOA-I National Platforms in the countries of application. This is an initiative supported by country multi-stakeholder form (National Platform). The consortia can consist of a mix of civil society, learning institutions, research institutions and private institutions. The lead organization, coordinating the initiative, has to be defined. The lead organisation will be the intermediary for all communication between the consortium partners and the Executing Agency (BvAT) and will be responsible for supplying all documents and information needed by the Executing Agency.

2.2 **Project activities that can be funded**
The project activities should be within the guidelines of the EOA Phase II ProDoc that can be accessed through this link (English) or (French). They should address the concrete development challenges in the organic sector (government, civil society, private sector) and refer to policy frameworks at national/regional/global level. The activities shall facilitate information generation through research work, uptake of information to the target beneficiaries the small-scale farmers and policy makers, value chains, market development and linkages and establishment of network’s and platforms for information sharing.

The activities have to be in line with the AUC decision on organic farming passed during the Eighteenth Ordinary Session, 24-28 January 2011, EX.CL/Dec.621 (XVIII), Global frameworks and partnerships such as the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) (1, 2, 3, 12, 13, 14, 15 and 17), the African Agenda 2063, International Assessment of Agricultural Science and Technology for Development (IAASTD), Comprehensive African Agriculture Development Programme (CAADP), The United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCC), and the “Report of the Special Rapporteur on the right to food” call for new institutional and organizational arrangements to transform agricultural and food supply systems towards ensuring food and livelihood security, in a stable environment, fully supported by appropriate and implementable government policies and strategies.

2.3 Duration of Funding

**Intended Duration of Grants:** The maximum duration of SDC’s contribution to the initiative is 2 years. The first disbursement from BvAT should occur within the first quarter of 2021, with the earliest possible start of funding being 2 January 2021.

2.4 Funding

a. **Fixed Fund** (Jan 2021- April 2023): USD 121,900


**NB: The innovation challenge fund to be competed for annually**

BvAT reserves the right to vary the actual value of individual grants provided and to accept any or none of the proposals received.

**Funding Model:** The funding model has two components - the **fixed fund** and the **innovation challenge fund** and both are open for application at the country level through the consortia of partners.

The **fixed fund model** will be considered for all the countries while the **innovation challenge fund** will be considered for a few high-quality proposals, meaning from a few countries. This granting model of having two fund options aims at generating partner interest in organic agriculture, encouraging participation and collaboration, entrenching implementing partner commitment, fostering synergy and promoting resource mobilization amongst organic stakeholders to bring organic agriculture to scale in policy, plans and programs.

The fixed fund model will use in-country competition through consortia proposal applications. The fixed fund is a funding pool that will be accessible through open competition among applicants (in consortia) within the participating countries. The fund will be shared equally
amongst nine (9) successful consortia based on the funding requirement of their proposals. The fixed fund comprises of 55% of the total EOA-I grant funding pool.

Only applications from partners in consortia will be accepted and not applications from single organizations or individuals. Each consortium will be encouraged to propose flagship projects around which the potential partners will implement activities along the four pillars in order to tailor to the specific country needs. The best two proposals will be submitted from every participating country by the National Steering Committee (NSC) on behalf of the National Platform.

The innovation challenge fund shall be 45% of the total grant funding pool. It will be awarded to the 2 to maximum 4 consortia that have the best rating across the two regions in relation to last year’s performance in terms of achievements and sound project cycle management including reporting (as major decisive allocation 1st criterion), demonstration of matching funds (2nd criterion), indication of sustainability, scalability and innovativeness (3rd criterion) of the consortia proposals. The 1st criterion will only apply to previous CLOs/PIPs’ performance but not on the new applicants. The 2nd and 3rd criteria will apply to all consortia, whether current or new. The RFA will consist of both the fixed fund and the challenge fund applications.

**Intended Start Date of Grants Use:** 01-01-2021.

### 3. ELIGIBILITY REQUIREMENTS

#### 3.1. Eligible organizations

Applicants MUST meet all of the requirements below:

- a. Be local, indigenous organizations with more than 75% local people in management
- b. Be legally registered in the country of operation
- c. Be tax compliant according to the laws and regulations in the country of operation
- d. Be established for a minimum of 3 years
- e. Have demonstrable experience in organic/sustainable agriculture
- f. Have experience in managing donor-funded projects
- g. Have a Board of Directors or similar arrangement for governance
- h. Must have or be willing to have membership to the national platform in the country of operation

#### 3.2. Geographic focus: Only applications from organizations registered and operating in the nine (9) participating countries will be considered.

#### 3.3. Ineligible expenses

EOA-I grant funds may not be utilized for the following purposes:

- a. Construction or infrastructure activities of any kind
- b. Ceremonies, parties, celebrations, or “representation” expenses
- c. Alcoholic beverages
d. Purchases or activities unnecessary to accomplish grant purposes as determined by the EOA-I

e. Prior obligations of and/or, debts, fines, and penalties imposed on the Grantee, Creation of endowments.

4. APPLICATION PROCEDURE

All information about this Call is publicly available on https://gms.eoai-africa.org website and partners will be expected to apply online through the EOA-I web-based online grants management system. The evaluation of the proposals is divided into three stages: 1\textsuperscript{st} review by the Projects Review Committee (PRC) selected by the country’s EOA National Steering Committee, 2\textsuperscript{nd} review by the National Steering Committee (NSC) itself and final review by the Executing Agency (BvAT) and the Donor (SDC). The PRC will submit 3 best proposals to the NSC who will further review and select the best 2 proposals from these at country level and submit to the Executing Agency. The Executing Agency will review and endorse the best proposal for approval by the donor. The Executing Agency reserves the right not to select any proposal from the short-listed pool of applicants at country level and its decision is final.

4.1 Time frame and targeted dates

Key dates in the application process will be as shown below:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>#</th>
<th>PROCESS</th>
<th>DATE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Release of RFA</td>
<td>20-07-2020</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Seeking of clarifications by applicants</td>
<td>20-08-2020</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Response to applications by BvAT</td>
<td>20-08-2020</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Submission of Proposals</td>
<td>18-09-2020</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

4.2 Creation of Applicant Profiles

All interested applicants will be required to create accounts in the EOA-I web-based grants management system, found at https://gms.eoai-africa.org/profile in order to access the published RFA and respond to it. The RFA will be open for a maximum of 60 days (2 months).

4.3 Request for clarifications by interested organizations

Opportunity will be provided for further information regarding the RFA. Interested applicants will be free to submit questions/requests for clarification within 30 days of the date of issuance of the RFA.

4.4 Response to clarification requests/questions by Executing Agency
Clarifications needed will be made on rolling basis of receiving requests. They shall be sent to all the concerned applicants without identifying the source, and also posted to the EOA-I website and the EOA-I grants management web-based system dashboard.

4.5 Holding an applicants’ conference

The Executing Agency will, if necessary, within 5 days of responding to the clarifications, organize a bidders’ conference for further engagement, guidance and clarifications. This may be conducted through video conferencing or online webinars. The documentation of the bidders’ conference shall be available for filing and availing to the public to also benefit those who did not attend the sessions.

4.6. Submission/Receipt of full proposals

All proposals prepared according to the guidelines provided shall be submitted through the online system within 60 days of sending out the RFA. The Grants application template and Budget template would be used to submit the technical proposal and budget respectively within the web-based system. Applicants will also be required to agree to the following provisions within the system and provide the needed information in the four forms before proceeding to apply and submit their applications:

- Declaration of Conflict of Interest form
- Conflict of Interest Incident reporting form
- Declaration of Confidentiality and Impartiality form
- Declaration of non-collusive bidding form

The above provisions will be entrenched within the web-based system and the applicant has to accept the terms and conditions within.

Applications shall be submitted by the lead organization of a consortium. All information received by the national platforms and executing agency during the application process will be considered proprietary and held in strictest confidence.

In addition to the application forms applicants should submit the following documents:

- Copy of valid registration certificate.
- Copy of the organization’s charter and by-laws.
- Copies of last three (3) years of annual financial reports, income/losses report (balance) sealed and approved by licensed audit firm.

Applications that are not submitted according to the formats requested and in accordance with the instructions in this RFA may be considered as non-responsive and may be disqualified.

The application elements and guidelines are summarized below:

A. Section I: Applicants Information (Consortium). The applicant provides basic contact information of the consortium partners and of the lead organization regarding the status of the organization.
B. **Section II (Project Description).** The applicant describes overarching program elements such as the title of the project, objective of the grant and the linkage to EOA-I objectives, results and indicators for measuring results, the activities, beneficiaries, and plan for disseminating activity deliverables.

C. **Section III (Project Implementation Plan).** This section covers information regarding project implementation, including proposed personnel and descriptions about each activity.

   i. **Each activity must be:**
      - Complete and sound
      - Integrated and scheduled with dependent tasks
      - Assigned to a responsible and relevant partner
      - Defined in terms of resources required
      - Concluded with a viable milestone of achievement - milestones must be linked to results.

   ii. The activities listed must show a logical, thoughtful approach to the overall implementation plan. Activities should describe actions and be logically sequenced. Each activity must contribute to the achievement of a specific objective.

   iii. Applicant describes any relevant material assumptions made and/or conditions precedent required for the achievement of the grant objective.

D. **Section IV (Experience and Capacity).** Applicant describes previous or on-going experience implementing similar activities. This is a critical factor in assessing the capacity of the applicant to implement the activity. Applicant also provides contact information of references that can speak to the applicant’s past performance and capabilities.

   ⇒ The application must be signed by an authorized agent of the Applicant
   ⇒ Issuance of this RFA does not constitute an award or commitment on the part of the Executing Agency (BvAT), nor does it commit BvAT to pay for costs incurred in the preparation and submission of an application. Further, BvAT reserves the right to accept or reject any or all applications received.

5 **EVALUATION CRITERIA**

All applications will be subjected to evaluation criteria with the following 5 steps:

   1) Compliance/eligibility check
   2) Technical evaluation
   3) Financial evaluation
   4) Capacity/risk assessment
   5) Negotiations

The evaluations for the two types of funds will be conducted at Country level and at Executing Agency level (BvAT) but may include representatives from the Donor (SDC) and any other 3rd party as may be deemed necessary as follows:
Types of Fund and Technical Evaluation

a) Fixed Fund

First level evaluation at country level

This will be conducted by the national platform's Project Review Committee (PRC). This evaluation will select the best 2-4 best proposal(s) in line with the EOA-I project in the specific country. These will be submitted to the NSC for further reviews, consultations and submission of the best 2 proposals to the Executing Agency through the system.

Second level evaluation at Executing Agency level

The Executing Agency (EA) will review the best 2 country consortia proposals submitted and rapidly compare with the other proposals in the system. Should the EA not support the proposed selection, it shall provide its comments and recommendation to the NSC for consideration. Following consultation and mutually settling on the best proposal per country, the EA will submit the best selection to the donor for further review and approval of award for the fixed fund, consisting of 55% of the whole grant allocated equally to the successful 9 country consortia. In this phase of EOA-I SDC grant, this selection process shall be finalized by end of October 2020. In this phase the fixed fund will be applied as of January 2021 for all the 9 countries.

Under the second phase of the EOA Initiative (2019 – 2023), for the fixed fund applications which start in January 2021 and expected to proceed and awarded by early November, all consortia should submit applications with a general time horizon of up to 2023 and a specific budgeted work plan proposal for the period Jan-December 2021.

b) Innovation Challenge Fund

Applications for the innovation challenge fund will be evaluated by the Executing Agency using criteria for value add to project activities. This fund will be awarded to most enterprising and innovative country proposals meriting additional funding (i.e. 1-2 countries per region, totaling 2-4 across East and West Africa).

During application for Fixed Fund, applicants will also be expected to provide a defined minimum set-up budget and suggestions of what they would achieve significantly if they were to benefit from the innovation challenge fund to be awarded for the same period of January-December 2021.

In consecutive years, all the successful consortia from the 9 countries will always be requested to submit budgeted work plan proposals with the fixed grant budget and a small proposal for utilizing additional funds from the innovation challenge fund.

Duration of evaluation
The evaluation process will take **not more than 30 days** from the date of closure of submission of application. More time may be allocated to this process if it is practically impossible to finalize evaluation due to competing interests and/or receipt of high number of proposals.

**Notifications to applicants**

Applicants will be notified of the status of their application at the conclusion of the whole evaluation process.

**Compliance/Eligibility Check**

The PRC shall within **5 days** after RFA deadline conduct a compliance check using RFA requirements checklist below. The applications shall be subject to technical evaluation with non-compliant ones being rejected, and the applicant notified of the rejection.

**The compliance check shall be documented.**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Mandatory requirements</th>
<th>Compliance status</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1 Met deadline for submission</td>
<td>Y/N</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 Submitted both technical and financial proposals</td>
<td>Y/N</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 Submitted mandatory documents for each consortium member should include: Operational manual(s) (HR, procurement, financial, travel, administration, anticorruption, etc), registration certificates, tax compliance certificate, audit reports and management letters for 3 immediate previous years to check for legality, compliance and good organizational practices.</td>
<td>Y/N</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4 Met institutional eligibility criteria, i.e. submitted application as a consortium- individuals and single organizations are not eligible</td>
<td>Y/N</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5 Should have completed self-assessment questionnaire</td>
<td>Y/N</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**5.1 Technical Evaluation**

Technical review will be conducted by the PRC on behalf of the National Platform at country level to short-list most feasible applications and by the executing agency to select and award. This will be undertaken using the template below;

**Evaluation criteria**

The criteria for selection should be discrete, measurable, exhaustive and verifiable components of the services required and provide a basis for assessing each applicant's capability to provide the required services. The process should eliminate applications that might present a substantial technical or commercial risk to the EOA-I project.
Any changes in the evaluation criteria before or during the evaluation process shall be communicated to all the applicants. This shall be done before the reviewed criteria are applied.

### Fixed Fund evaluation criteria

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Evaluation Criteria</th>
<th>Sub-Criteria</th>
<th>Sub criteria score</th>
<th>Criteria Score</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Feasibility of Design &amp; Approach</td>
<td>Appropriateness of the approach- a clear rationale, evidence-based approach clearly linking activities to results. The proposed activities directly relate to or lead to achievement of the objectives set out in the RFA.</td>
<td>5</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Evidence and appropriateness of a strategy for local commitment/ ownership; and links to and use of appropriate partners.</td>
<td>5</td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td>Clearly identified mechanisms for monitoring and evaluation (M&amp;E) with objectively measurable indicators.</td>
<td>5</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Innovativeness of the approach- either proven to be effective or new and untried approaches with promise.</td>
<td>5</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Clear identification of target beneficiary, their needs and link of project activities to meeting the needs.</td>
<td>5</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Management &amp; Programmatic Capacity</td>
<td>Quality &amp; appropriateness of relevant project personnel - technical and support personnel</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Adequate institutional set-up to handle projects of the size/complexity as the EOA-I project (systems – e.g. financial, HR, procurement, governance, policies, procedures)</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Experience in handling similar donor funded projects- including development of self-sufficient, sustainable activities.</td>
<td>5</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gender Inclusivity</td>
<td>Demonstration of how the proposed project activities will ensure participation of, and benefit, of women, youth and men.</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Scalability of the Intervention</td>
<td>Demonstration of a clear vision, drivers, strategy and pathway for scaling up as partnerships, enabling environmental factors, and the target beneficiaries.</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sustainability strategies</td>
<td>Exit strategy and appropriateness of strategy to ensure stakeholder participation and ownership, communication/public awareness, and raising of extra funds.</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td></td>
<td>80</td>
<td>80</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The evaluation criteria are described in more detail below to guide evaluators during the evaluation process.
**Feasibility of Design & Technical Approach.**

This will examine the quality and feasibility of the proposed technical approach and methodology to produce the intended outcomes, the innovativeness of the interventions, and the work plan for achieving project objectives leading to significant impacts on organic agriculture in the country; proposed mechanisms for monitoring and evaluation (M&E) with objectively measurable indicators; and, identification of target group(s), their needs and how the proposed activities will lead to addressing target groups’ needs and provide other opportunities.

**Management and Programmatic Capacity.**

The application should demonstrate the organization’s preparedness and effectiveness in terms of institutional and governance structures, technical capacity, and financial management capability. The appraisal will be based principally on reference checks related to the EOA-I; the background, qualifications, reputation, appropriateness and skills of its key personnel; and achievements (including development of self-sufficient, sustainable activities) of the organization involved.

**Relevant Work Experience.**

Relevant work experience implementing similar activities as outlined in the RFA to demonstrate confidence in undertaking the proposed EOA project activities.

**Gender Inclusivity.**

The extent to which the proposal represents a strong commitment to ensuring access and equity between genders especially the involvement and inclusion of women. The project should NOT disadvantage women. There is need to describe what will be done to include women and women's perspectives in the design, implementation and evaluation of the project. There should be evidence of, in least, 40% female representation amongst target project beneficiaries.

The evaluation of gender awareness should consider questions such as, (1) Does the proposal provide an answer to the issue of gender inclusivity and in what ways? (2) Does the proposal provide evidence or examples of women engagement to show distribution of benefits? and, (3) Does the proposal demonstrate an understanding of the objectives of the gender inclusivity and awareness?

**Scalability of the Intervention.**

This will consider the practicality of the expansion of the proposed activities to cover a wider geographical region to reach more individuals, the capacity to manage the scaled-up activities, ability to access the resource requirements for the scale up and overall cost effectiveness of a scale-up. Cost effectiveness compare the resource requirements and the overall impact that may be achieved from the scale up.

**Sustainability Strategies.**

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The extent of community engagement & ownership in the project, level of integration of the project into what beneficiaries do, effectiveness of capacity development of beneficiaries, linking of this project to other programmes/projects, evidence of resource mobilization (number of new donors and grants), evidence of political buy-in and integration into national programmes, simplicity of the proposed project activities/approaches (the simpler it is the more sustainable it becomes).

NB: Project Cycle Management (PCM) performance of the previous year will be taken into account for organizations that may not necessarily be the same organizations acting as CLOs and PIPs.

5.1.1 Innovation challenge fund evaluation criteria

Technical review for the Innovation Challenge Fund will be conducted by the PRC on behalf of the National Platform at country level using similar criteria below to short-list most feasible proposal and for consideration by the executing agency to select and award.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Evaluation Criteria</th>
<th>Sub-Criteria</th>
<th>Sub criteria score (Max Points)</th>
<th>Criteria Score</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Feasibility of Design &amp; Approach</td>
<td>Innovativeness of the concept in the proposal</td>
<td>10</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Appropriateness of the proposed approach- a clear rationale for project intervention, evidence-based approach clearly linking to results. Proposed activities directly relate to or lead to achievement of the objectives</td>
<td>10</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>A clear demonstration of how the project will improve impact in selected outcomes.</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Elaboration of monitoring and evaluation (M&amp;E) mechanism with objectively measurable indicators.</td>
<td>10</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Clear identification of target beneficiary and needs to be addressed by the proposed project activities.</td>
<td>10</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gender Inclusivity</td>
<td>Demonstration of how the proposed project activities will ensure participation of, and benefit, both male and female beneficiaries.</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Scalability of the Intervention</td>
<td>Demonstration of a clear vision, strategy, drivers and pathway for scaling up (such as partnerships, enabling environmental factors) and the target beneficiaries.</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sustainability strategies</td>
<td>Exit strategy and evidence and appropriateness of strategy to manage stakeholder participation and ownership, communication/public awareness, and raising of extra funds.</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>80</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Applicants will be required to attain a minimum score of **60** scores in order to be considered technically capable to implement the proposed project.

### 5.2 Financial Evaluation

Financial evaluation will be conducted to ensure there is value for money for the project. It will involve a detailed assessment of the proposed budgets and ensuring the costs therein represent a fair reasonable and allowable in pursuing the objectives of the project.

Financial evaluation will be conducted using the financial evaluation checklist below. The findings of the financial evaluation will inform the budget negotiations. The executing agency will conduct a second level financial evaluation.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Criteria</th>
<th>Score (Max Points)</th>
<th>Comment</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Budget clearly delineates costs of the project to be met by the funding source</td>
<td>3</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Budget is realistic, reflects the work plan/scope of work and it is sufficient to cover the cost of the project activities</td>
<td>4</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Budget includes reasonable and realistic costs</td>
<td>4</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Costs reflect accurate calculations</td>
<td>2</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Budget does not contain amounts for unexplained purposes (i.e., miscellaneous)</td>
<td>3</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Activity costs are at least 70% of the total costs</td>
<td>4</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>TOTAL SCORE</strong></td>
<td><strong>20</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Applicants will be required to attain a minimum score of **15** scores in order to be considered financially capable to implement the proposed project.

### 5.3 Combination of Technical and Financial Score

The final technical evaluation scores from the consensus meeting shall be combined with the financial evaluation score to attain the total score.

### 6. SCORING METHODOLOGY

Scoring methodology is a guide on how evaluators will score. Each score value is given a description that must be achieved for the score to be given. Evaluators will score the applications as guided by the scoring methodology in the RFA.

#### 6.1 Individual scoring

Each evaluator will review and score individually the proposal, both technical and financial. The scores and comments will be recorded on the ‘individual evaluation score sheet’. No evaluator can see another’s score to avoid undue influence in the scoring.
Each evaluator may change their scores on both technical and financial evaluation of each application before the lapse of the evaluation period after which no further changes can be made.

6.2 Overall scoring

The evaluation team will apply the following scoring methodology to score overall the proposal on a scale of 1-5, with 5 being the highest score for the best proposal.

6.3 Consensus meeting

On the lapse of individual scoring timeframe, the PRC members will hold a consensus meeting to discuss and agree on the final scores for each application. The PRC will discuss all the individual evaluations and make necessary changes to the individual proposal scores. Changes made will be effective based on voting with simple majority and the reason for any change shall be documented. A reviewer with dissenting opinion regarding the score changes will provide his/her opinion before the PRC Chair submits the agreed on best proposals with their scores.

6.4 Capacity/Risk Assessment

This will be done at three stages:

a) Applicants will undertake a self-assessment using the questionnaire provided in Annex 11
b) PRC will undertake a desk review of the documentation submitted by the top 3 applicants
c) Executing Agency will undertake an in-depth pre-award rapid risk assessment of the top 2 applicants using assessment tool in below to verify whether the successful applicant possesses the necessary organizational and financial capacity to manage the EOA-I grant.

The benefits of this assessment include:

- Determining whether the applicant’s systems are able to efficiently and effectively support the utilization of the grant to be awarded.
- Identifying capacity gaps that will need to be addressed to enable efficient utilization of the grant to be awarded.
- Determining the risk exposure levels and develop appropriate mitigation measures.

The following criteria will be used to rate the results of the capacity/risk assessment:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Score Range (1-4)</th>
<th>Capacity Level</th>
<th>Risk Level</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.0-1.4</td>
<td>Inadequate</td>
<td>Critical</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.5- 2.4</td>
<td>Weak</td>
<td>High</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.5- 3.4</td>
<td>Adequate</td>
<td>Medium</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.5-4.0</td>
<td>Strong</td>
<td>Low</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
A **minimum score of 2.5** MUST be attained by the applicant to be considered of having adequate capacity or medium risk.

### 6.5 Negotiations

The executing agency will negotiate with the top applicant who meet the capacity/risk assessment threshold on the scope of work, suggested approaches, targets, project timelines and rationalization of budgets. Based on the negotiations held, the executing agency may either recommend full award or no award.

**Evaluation of the innovation challenge fund applications**

The evaluation of the challenge fund applications will follow the same procedure as the fixed fund applications except that the challenge fund applications will be evaluated ONLY by the executing agency.

### 6.6 Approval

The executing agency will submit to the donor for further appraisal and approval of the following documents:

1. The evaluation report will contain details of:
   - Applications received
   - Compliance check results
   - Technical evaluation results
   - Capacity/risk assessment results
   - Financial evaluation results
   - Negotiations details
2. Revised technical proposals
3. Negotiated budgets for all the applicants
4. Recommendations for award.

**Decision-making for the grant**

The donor will review the documentation and may make any of the following decisions: (1) accept the decision as is, (2) partially accept the decision and/or (3) take decisions for changes before award is made.

### 7. AWARD

Once the award decision has been made, the executing agency will issue an award notification to the successful applicant(s). The award notification shall be made **within 3 days** from date of award decision.

#### 7.1 Award Notification & Acceptance

On receipt of the award notification, the successful applicants will be given award offer **within 3 days**. This will be followed by issuance of a grant agreement.
7.2 Regret Notification

All unsuccessful applicants shall be notified of regret within 5 days from the date of the award decision. The notification (will include the reasons for not being awarded.

7.3 Grant Agreement

The executing agency will issue grant agreement to successful applicant (s) not more than 5 days after the recipient’s acceptance of the award offer for signing by representatives from both parties.

8. ANNEXES

Annex A. Phase II Project Document (English) or (French)
Annex B. Cover Letter (Sample Format) (English) or (French)
Annex C. Technical Application template (English) or (French)
Annex D. Detailed Budget template (English) or (French)