Call for Proposals

Eurasian Center for Food Security

Economic and Environmental Aspects of Food Security in Central Asia and Armenia

I. INTRODUCTION AND OBJECTIVE

The Eurasian Center for Food Security (ECFS) under Lomonosov Moscow State University was established in 2011. ECFS’ mission is to help enhance agricultural performance in the Eurasian Region and to ensure the sustainability of rural development and natural resource management by providing research and advisory services, with the overarching goal of increasing Russia’s contribution to global food security.

In support of its mission, ECFS, in partnership with the World Bank, has established a Collaborative Research Program aimed at fostering collaboration between ECFS, other Russian and Eurasian research organizations and international institutions on priority food security issues for the Eurasian Region. Collaborative research supported under the program is expected to make an original contribution to addressing food security issues in four focus countries, namely Armenia, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan and Uzbekistan and in the Eurasian region more broadly.

In this first call for proposals funding for travel is available for up to 3 international experts/researchers to visit and collaborate with ECFS on research projects and for up to 5 Russian experts/researchers to visit international research institutions to undertake collaborative research work. ECFS now invites interested researchers to submit Concept Notes for undertaking collaborative research in any of the priority thematic areas identified below.

For international experts proposing to visit ECFS:

1. Digital soil mapping for land assessment and conservation
2. Integrated use of climate, crop and economic models (e.g. IMPACT) to understand food security issues in Central Asia, Armenia and Russia

For Russian experts proposing to visit international institutions:

1. The use of salt-tolerant plants for saline soil reclamation
2. Hardpans as a limiting factor for agriculture in Central Asia
3. The use of humic substances for improving soil fertility in arid regions
4. Controlling irrigation-induced soil erosion and salinity in Central Asia and Armenia
5. Price volatility and the impact on food security in Central Asia and Armenia
6. Food security scorecards and links between different indicators of food security

II. SELECTION PROCESS

Interested applicants are now invited to submit a Curriculum Vitae (CV) and Concept Note using the provided template. All Concept Notes that are received will be screened for eligibility and then reviewed by an independent Technical Review Committee comprising three subject matter experts. The top ranked proposals would then be endorsed for support by the ECFS and the World Bank. The total number of concept notes eligible for funding will depend on the available funds and the quality of the proposals presented.

Confidentiality and conflicts of interest: Confidentiality is essential for ensuring the integrity of the technical review process and selection of proposals. Names of submitting researchers and personal details are kept confidential for the technical review. Identities of the technical reviewers will also remain confidential. During the review process, special care will be taken to avoid conflicts of interest.

III. PROPOSAL FORMAT

- Concept Notes should be no longer than five A4 text pages (not including reference list, tables, and graphics). All text should be in 12-point Times New Roman font, with 1.5 line-spacing and 2.5 cm margins on all sides.
- All the proposals shall be submitted in English.

Detailed information on the Concept Note format is provided in the attached template.

IV. ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA

Who can apply?

- Individual researchers working on issues related to food security in the Eurasian Region with a specific focus on Central Asia and Armenia.
- For International experts/researchers to conduct research at ECFS, preference may be given to those from institutions currently collaborating with ECFS and experts/researchers actively engaged in research in one of the thematic areas.
- For Russian experts/researchers submitting proposals, preference will be given to those planning to undertake research at a research institution located in ECFS’ four focus countries in Central Asia and Armenia. Russian experts/researchers must submit a Letter of Invitation/Acceptance from the host institution with their Concept Note.
- Experts/researchers selected for travel support are expected to complete their travel within 6 months of approval of the Concept Note.
- Experts/researchers submitting Concept Notes may not be close relatives of World Bank Group and ECFS staff members.
V. FUNDING AND PROJECT LENGTH

Researchers selected for travel support will be notified of the final decision, and will be asked to confirm their interest and availability for the program within 5 working days. Upon receiving the confirmation, a Terms of Reference will be agreed with the researcher and travel arrangements organized by the World Bank. The proposed duration for the period of travel should not exceed 3 months. Travel arrangements [travel tickets to and from the research destination, accommodation and subsistence costs] will be facilitated by the World Bank but experts/researchers would be responsible for obtaining necessary visas.

VI. RESEARCH OUTPUTS

Experts/researchers would be expected to submit the following outputs within three weeks of completing their travel:

- A full report in Russian and/or English and a short summary report (3-5 pages) for the ECFS website in Russian/and or English.

The final deliverables will be submitted to the Bank. ECFS and the Bank will review the reports. If the quality of a report is found to be unsatisfactory, the expert/researcher is expected to revise their report to address comments received from reviewers.

VII. HOW TO APPLY

- Concept Notes should be submitted via email to Ms. Kunduz Masylkanova (ecfs_research@worldbank.org) with a copy to Sergey Kiselev (office@ecfs.msu.ru). Please indicate "Proposal for Collaborative Research at ECFS" in the subject line.
- The Concept Note template, the assessment criteria and other additional information can be found at the ECFS web site: http://ecfs.msu.ru/en/news/news.php#220414
- For any questions, please contact Ms. Kunduz Masylkanova via email (ecfs_research@worldbank.org).

VIII. TIMELINE

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Deadline for the receipt of proposals</th>
<th>May 16, 2014</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Short-listed candidates selected and notified</td>
<td>June 13, 2014</td>
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<tr>
<td>Finalization of terms of reference</td>
<td>June 27, 2014</td>
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<tr>
<td>Research Program Implemented</td>
<td>Within six months of Concept Note approval date or tentatively December 19, 2014</td>
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IX. DOWNLOAD THE CONCEPT NOTE AND CALL FOR PROPOSALS

Download the Concept Note Template (Word).

Download Call for Proposals (pdf).