Request for Trellis Fund Project Proposals

Feed the Future Innovation Lab
for Collaborative Research on Horticulture
(Horticulture Innovation Lab)

Date of Release: February 7, 2017
Applications Due: April 3, 2017
Funding decisions: Summer 2017
Funding Available Starting on: January 1, 2018
Project Completed by: December 31, 2018

Contents

INTRODUCTION

The Horticulture Innovation Lab's Trellis Fund is excited to announce another round of funding. For this round, we have increased the maximum funding per project to $4,000 USD in direct project costs, and we are seeking to award up to 15 horticultural projects. We encourage both new and previously funded organizations to apply. Once awarded, projects may begin on or after January 1, 2018, and must be completed by December 31, 2018.

The goal of the Trellis Fund is to connect local organizations in developing countries with U.S. graduate students who have agricultural expertise, generating benefits for both the students and the in-country institutions. Together, they collaborate on short-term projects to address horticultural challenges faced by local farmers. Trellis Fund projects may address horticultural crop production, irrigation, plant nutrition, pest management, postharvest practices, or marketing issues in relation to fruits, vegetables and high-value horticultural crops.

Organizations must complete and submit a proposal that includes the type of expertise they seek in a U.S. graduate student, as well as project goals, activities and gender equity strategies. Proposed projects may be stand-alone interventions or part of a broader project. Upon selection, the Horticulture Innovation Lab will match the proposal with a U.S. graduate student with the needed skillset, who will work with the organization as a consultant.

Organizations can use grant funds to pay for educational materials, demonstration plots, transportation costs, and to provide honoraria to the host organization staff for conducting adaptive research and/or extending new information to farmers. For each project, the Trellis Fund will also provide a separate fellowship to a U.S. graduate student to cover travel expenses to visit the host organization and for corresponding with the host organization via email and/or Skype. The graduate student will be required to travel to visit the host organization for approximately 1-2 weeks to meet his/her project partners and the client farmers. Whenever possible, Trellis Fund projects should also include a local university student in order to promote cross-cultural partnerships between young professionals. Awarded organizations are also responsible for covering all local transportation costs related to the project during the U.S. student's visit, including transportation to and from the airport.

The Trellis Fund prioritizes proposals that directly impact local farmers and focus on building local or organizational capacity to ensure long-term results. In addition, at least 50% of farmers impacted by the project must be women.

The Trellis Fund aims to empower smallholder farmers with new information as well as build long-standing relationships between host organizations and U.S. researchers. The creators of the Trellis Fund believe that local organizations can do amazing work, but they are often excluded from grant opportunities. Thus, the Trellis Fund is focused on local organizations. We invite you to work with us to demonstrate that programs aimed at local organizations can accomplish big impacts.

ELIGIBLE COUNTRIES

BANGLADESH	CAMBODIA	ETHIOPIA	GHANA	GUATEMALA
HAITI	HONDURAS	LIBERIA	MALAWI	MOZAMBIQUE
NEPAL	RWANDA	SENEGAL	TANZANIA	TAJIKISTAN
UGANDA	ZAMBIA			

*The Horticulture Innovation Lab reserves the discretion to decline proposals due to security concerns. If security concerns arise after the start of a project, student travel may be curtailed or delayed. However, every effort will be made to ensure that the project continues.

ELIGIBILITY
The Trellis Fund accepts proposals from local organizations in our eligible countries on topics related to fruit and vegetables along the value chain, including production, marketing, and consumption.

DURATION AND TIMING
Trellis Fund recipients will be expected to conduct approximately 6-month long projects including planning with the U.S. graduate student, a 1-2 week visit by the U.S. student, and post-travel communication and remote collaboration with the U.S. student. Projects can start any time after January 1, 2018 and must be completed by December 31, 2018.

TRAINING
Host organizations can train local farmers in the manner that they believe works best. We encourage organizations to use proven methods and to promote scientifically proven agricultural solutions. Trellis Fund money can be used to travel to farmers, to bring farmers to the organization for farmer field days, or to develop educational materials. Farmers cannot be paid to attend meetings or be reimbursed for travel, but the organization can directly pay for their transportation (i.e. hiring a van or bus). Any travel completed in-country with the visiting U.S. student must be budgeted for by the organization as part of the project funding.

REQUIREMENTS
Granted organizations will be responsible for completing their issued contracts, promptly responding to Trellis Fund coordinator communications, a mid-term Skype or phone interview with Trellis Fund coordinators, and a final report. They will also be responsible for following through with the monitoring and evaluation plans that they create and revise with their U.S. graduate student consultant.

PROPOSAL WRITING INSTRUCTIONS
Full applications for Trellis Fund awards must contain the following elements:
1. Cover Page **(1 page maximum):**

- Project Title
- Lead organization applying for the award, with number of staff
- Institutional mailing addresses
- Names, titles, email addresses, and telephone numbers of project leaders and collaborators
  - Please specify the individual(s) responsible for writing the proposal
- Signature and contact information for an authorized official who can sign contracts on behalf of the lead organization

2. Project abstract **(150 words maximum):**

- Project summary
- Targeted country and region or district within country

3. Justification **(300 words maximum):**

- Statement of the problem facing local farmers that this proposal seeks to address
- Approach to addressing the problem
- Objectives: The realistic and measurable goals you hope to achieve within the time period of your project and activities needed to meet those goals (bulleted list, e.g. • Provide postharvest training to 60 farmers)
- Identify who will be the direct and indirect beneficiaries of this project
- Expected Outcomes

4. Activities and methodology required to accomplish each objective **(500 words maximum):**

- Provide a detailed plan for how you will impact local farmers, taking into account how you will reach at least 50% women farmers.
- Will you conduct trainings?
  - o If so, how many training activities will you conduct?
  - o Approximately how many farmers will attend each training?
  - o Will you travel to the farmer's fields or will you bring them to the organization for training?
  - o Who will lead the trainings?
  - o Will you have a demonstration plot? If so, what is the approximate size of that plot?
- How are the farmer groups organized? (i.e. do you work with cooperatives, savings groups, families etc.?)
- What means of communication will you use to reach farmers (radio, visits, television, etc.)?
- Who will disseminate information to local farmers?
- Will you create educational materials? What will they be?

5. Activity timeline **(No maximum):**

- Please provide a list of planned activities, how many times each activity will be done, and an approximate timeline for each activity
- The format is optional. The table below is a suggestion.

Trellis Fund Project Activity Timeline		
Activity	**How many times will this activity be done?**	**What are the approximate dates of this activity?**
Example: 1. Train 30 farmers on seed storage at NGO's facilities	2 times	March 10, 2018 and July10-15, 2018

6. Gender **(300 words maximum):**

   - What percentage of farmers reached will be women?
   - How will you determine if women are positively affected by your project?
   - Are there any particular strategies that you will use to reach out to women in your project?
   - Please see Appendix B for detailed guidelines and expectations regarding gender in projects

7. Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) Plan **(250 words maximum)**:

   - Should answer the following questions:
     - How will you monitor the progress of this project? What are the means of verification you will use?
       - For example: monitoring progress towards 60 farmers trained through attendance registers from trainings/workshops, etc.
     - How will you evaluate the impact of your project? What are the means of verification you will use?
       - For example: baseline/endline survey of participants, which tracks number of project participants who have adopted improved technologies or practices as a result of your trainings, etc.
     - M&E plans will need to include the points listed in Appendix C.

   - This M&E plan will be considered a rough draft
     - Once matched, the U.S. graduate student will work with your organization to help refine the monitoring and evaluation plan for this project through the development of a logframe.
     - The student will be expected to submit this logframe within the first 2 months of your project. The M&E plan (including the logframe) must be finalized before the student's visit.
     - This activity is a good way for the student to familiarize him/herself with your project and for you to begin your collaboration together.
     - Please identify the staff member in your organization who will work on the monitoring and evaluation plan with the U.S. graduate student.

8. Graduate Student Engagement **(500 words maximum):** (50% of total review points will be award for this section.)

   Please specifically describe roles of the graduate student in the project. The U.S. graduate student will be committed to a 1-2 week visit to your organization as well as 100 hours of remote work from the United States.

   - Type of expertise that you seek from the U.S. graduate student (Please consider what is reasonable to expect from a student.)
   - List of tasks for the student that will occupy him/her for 100 hours prior to and/or after the project visit
     - For example: the development of specific educational materials, etc.
     - Be specific and creative! Also, consider the length of time required to complete each task. These 100 hours should **not** include the student's visit. These are 100 hours of additional labor before and/or after the visit.

- o Note: One of the first required tasks will be for the student and organization to refine the monitoring and evaluation plan (see Point 8 below for more details).

- Plan for student collaboration via email, Skype, and other communication methods (please specify) before and after visit.
  - o How often will you communicate with the student?
  - o Who will communicate with the graduate student?

- Student's trip to your organization
  - o Outline of the activities the student will be a part of during their 1-2 week visit.
    - Such activities can include: Project review and planning activities; site visits to clientele farmers; conducting training; etc.
  - o Plans for the student's modest accommodation for 1-2 weeks
    (Do not include accommodation costs in your budget because this will be covered by the student's fellowship. *Organizations are responsible for budgeting for student's in-country transportation, including to and from the airport.*)

9. Local university student participation **(200 words maximum)**

- Will you be able to identify a local university student to participate or intern with your project?
- Do you have a particular student in mind?
- How will this local student be able to contribute to your project?
- If your organization is unable to work with a local university student, please explain.

10. For Trellis Fund alumni organizations **(300 words maximum):**

If you have received a Trellis Fund grant in the past, please briefly describe that project(s) and respond to the following questions:

- How will this project build on the work of your previous project(s) with Trellis?
- What have you learned from your previous Trellis project(s) that will be applied to this proposal?

Note: This section is only for organizations that have received Trellis Fund grants in the past. Do not respond to this section if you have not received a grant from the Trellis Fund before.

11. Statement of institutional experience in the proposed region and working with local farmers **(200 words maximum)**

12. Resumes for project leaders and key project personnel **(1 page maximum per resume)**

13. Budget using the **Horticulture Innovation Lab Budget Form**.

SUBMISSION

Trellis Fund application and budget documents should be submitted electronically through our online system: **https://proposals.piestar.com/opportunities/horticulture/rfp/15**. Applicants will need to make an account before they can upload and submit their documents.

Applications should be in PDF format and budgets must be provided as an Excel spreadsheet using the following form: **http://horticulture.ucdavis.edu/main/trellis/2017_budget_template_trellis.xls**

Document Layout:

Paper size: 8.5" x 11"	Line spacing: single spaced
Margins: 1 inch on all sides	Minimum font size: 12 point of a standard font

DUE DATE

All applications must be received by the close of business at 5:00 p.m. Pacific Time, USA on April 3, 2017. Applications received after the deadline will not be considered for funding.

EVALUATION PROCESS & CRITERIA

Impartial reviewers from UC Davis, the Horticulture Innovation Lab Management Entity, and the Trellis Fund coordinators will evaluate all applications. The primary criteria for evaluating proposals:

50 Points - Project Impact: How well will the proposed project empower horticultural farmers with new information? How relevant is the adaptive research to local growers? Do the project activities have a viable plan to reach their targeted number of farmers impacted? Are at least half of the participants women? How well is the gender of stakeholders taken into account? How qualified is the host organization team to conduct the project? Does the host organization have sufficient experience working with local farmers and/or other relevant stakeholders?

50 Points - Graduate Student Engagement: How well would the proposed project engage the U.S. graduate student? Is the U.S. graduate student's desired expertise and role sufficiently defined? Do the activities/tasks expected of the graduate student seem appropriate? Does the organization seem capable of adequately hosting a U.S. graduate student for 1-2 weeks? Are the communication strategies between the organization and the U.S. student addressed in the proposal? Does the host organization plan to engage a local university student in this project? If so, how?

Each proposal is reviewed by a minimum of 3 reviewers, who will score proposals out of a maximum of 100 points, given the above criteria. Once the initial review of all submitted proposals is complete, the organizations with the top proposals will be contacted directly by the Trellis Fund coordinators to set up a video or phone interview. Final funding decisions will be made in Summer 2017 and all organizations will be notified of whether or not they will be receiving funding.

Recruitment of U.S. graduate students is expected to begin in September 2017, and matches will be made by mid-December 2017.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

For questions and clarifications, please e-mail Elyssa Lewis or Mike Wallace at **trellisfund@ucdavis.edu**. See our website for more information about the Horticulture Innovation Lab Trellis Fund and past Trellis projects **http://horticulture.ucdavis.edu/main/trellis.html**.

APPENDIX A: BUDGET AND ACTIVITY TIMELINE

Instructions

The goal of this program is to fund adaptive research and extension. We expect to fund research and extension-related costs. The Horticulture Innovation Lab will issue contracts as fixed-price agreements. The payment of the contract will occur in two installments, with the second one dependent upon successful completion of the agreed upon progress towards project activities. The activity timeline and a contract form will be used to determine if the organization is ready to receive their second installment of funding.

Recipients are encouraged to cost-share on Horticulture Innovation Lab project expenses as evidence of institutional commitment and support for the program; however, this is not mandatory.

Do not include the U.S. graduate student's accommodation costs in your budget. He/she will use his/her fellowship for the cost of air travel and modest accommodation. The student will have a limited budget and can only afford to stay in reasonably priced accommodations or with a host family. Please **do** include in your budget the cost of in-country travel that you will do with the U.S. graduate student during his/her visit, including to/from the airport and to/from farmer fields or project sites. Please note that the Trellis Fund and Horticulture Innovation Lab discourage the use of motorcycles or motorbikes for transportation. If this is the only option, and if the student agrees to use one **before** traveling to the country, a helmet in good condition must be provided.

The Trellis Fund cannot finance travel costs of government employees in countries where it is prohibited by USAID's in-country mission. Trellis organizations must possess an institutional bank account to receive funding.

Use the Excel budget form that accompanies this document.
(**http://horticulture.ucdavis.edu/main/trellis/2017_budget_template_trellis.xls**)

APPENDIX B: GENDER EQUITY STRATEGY

MINIMUM USAID GENDER GUIDELINES:
1. USAID guidelines on gender specify that ALL projects should be gender sensitive.

2. USAID guidelines ask everyone to do their utmost to include women as at least 50% of the beneficiaries in ALL areas of your project. This means that creativity should be employed to get around constraints to meeting this goal and, if you cannot do so, you must provide justification as to why.

PRINCIPLES:
1. Gender refers to social characteristics of men and women, such as their different roles within the family or in farming and the types of behavior expected of them. These issues speak to the ability of women and men in specific communities to carry out certain farming activities, to be able to travel outside their immediate area for training and meetings, to be sufficiently educated to participate in training, and so on.

2. Gender stereotypes will vary among cultural groups. It is necessary to be aware of how they function in each particular cultural group because they will affect constraints for both sexes. For instance, if you want to increase weeding of a man's crop and weeding is a woman's task in that culture, you may not get your practice adopted. Include in your proposal an assessment of how you will deal with gender constraints or stereotypes.

3. Gender issues also include who farms which crops and/or which practices they do in farming. How do men and women in the region use natural resources differently (water, firewood, etc.)? For instance, a woman may be unable to participate in formal employment or her restraints in mobility may result in her selling natural resources, such as firewood, to get cash.

4. Gender issues also exist in regard to scientists, extension agents, and students. Issues include the number of men and women participating in these roles and the differing perspectives about men and women that come from these roles.

5. Consider that one of the Horticulture Innovation Lab goals is to sensitize host country stakeholders at all levels - farmers, extension agents, local and national government officials, researchers, university faculty, etc. - to gender issues.

ADDRESSING GENDER ISSUES IN YOUR PROPOSAL
General:
1. Review your lists of farmers and consider the gender issues with each group

2. In writing your proposal, make the sex of your participants explicit

3. Go beyond the numbers to consider gender stereotypes that might hamper participation of one group or other and how you might creatively develop solutions.

Farm/Enterprise level:
Specify the gender division of labor for project activities in your target area. Make it clear in your proposal what these are and the implications for your proposal.

1. Identify constraints on women - mobility, resources, etc. - so you can include ways of dealing with this in your proposal.

2. Clarify whether you will be working with men or women producers, marketers, and other stakeholders, or both. If not with both, please explain why not.

3. 50% of the farmers trained must be women and they should be reached in an appropriate and meaningful way. Please explain why your organization's approach is meaningful.

Extension level:
1. Aim at working with a minimum of 50% women who can provide training or other leadership in delivering the project. If necessary, figure out how to find relevant women in or near the communities who might be able to work as assistant extension agents.

2. At the community level, take into account how men and women are organized into associations, how group activities are structured, and what tasks provide for group communication, such as doing laundry by the stream, or drinking tea under the shade tree.

APPENDIX C: MONITORING AND EVALUATION

Each organization will be responsible for carrying out the monitoring and evaluation plan that they design and refine with their U.S. graduate student. As part of the final report, each project will also be responsible for answering the following questions for Horticulture Innovation Lab in their final report:

    a. How many farmers and/or other stakeholders were directly engaged and provided with new horticultural information as a result of this project?
    b. How was the extension information delivered?
    c. Did farmers adopt new practices and/or technologies? If so, what where they?
    d. What were the barriers to adopting those practices and/or technologies that were not adopted?

APPENDIX D: HORTICULTURE INNOVATION LAB GOALS, OBJECTIVES, AND STRATEGIES

The Horticulture Innovation Lab builds international partnerships for fruit and vegetable research that improves livelihoods in developing countries. The Horticulture Innovation Lab has supported collaborations with more than 18 universities and 200 organizations on projects for smallholder growers around the world. Each of our non-Trellis projects includes partners from a U.S. university and from an organization in a developing country, particularly from those countries in Africa, Latin America and Asia prioritized by USAID. The program is funded by USAID and led by a team at the University of California, Davis, as part of the U.S. government's Feed the Future initiative.

Objectives
The Horticulture Innovation Lab objectives are:
1. To build local scientific and technical capacity,
2. To apply research findings and technical knowledge to increase small producers' participation in markets, and
3. To facilitate the development of policies that improve local horticultural trade and export capacity.

Major themes
In addition to horticulture issues, the Trellis Fund projects selected for funding by the Horticulture Innovation Lab are encouraged to address access to information, building research and extension capacity, technological innovations, nutrition issues and gender equity.

Our work is committed to these six pillars:

1. **Research across the horticultural value chain**: Improving horticultural systems, from seed to consumption, as a result of collaborative research.
2. **Nutrition-sensitive horticulture:** Improving the nutritional status of people as a result of including horticultural crops in diets.
3. **Empowering women and the most vulnerable:** Increasing empowerment of women and disadvantaged groups working in horticulture.
4. **Innovation and scaling:** Improving opportunities for smallholders and entrepreneurs in horticultural markets.
5. **Capacity building:** Increasing capacity of scientists, development professionals, farmers, students, intermediaries, and institutions to address horticultural challenges.
6. **Sharing information:** Improving access to reliable horticultural information.