



FEED THE FUTURE

The U.S. Government's Global Hunger & Food Security Initiative

Central America Regional Request for Applications (RFA)

Technologies for climate smart agriculture for small-sized farms in Honduras and Guatemala

FEED THE FUTURE
INNOVATION LAB FOR HORTICULTURE



USAID
FROM THE AMERICAN PEOPLE

HORTICULTURE
INNOVATION LAB

UC DAVIS
UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA

Horticulture Innovation Lab
Department of Plant Sciences
University of California, Davis
One Shields Avenue
Davis, CA 95616 USA
Website: <http://horticulture.ucdavis.edu/>

Questions and answers relevant to all possible applicants will be posted here, [Central America RFA Question and Answer Document](#), **Deadline for questions is January 28, 2023**, and questions and answers will be posted on a rolling basis.

Two webinars will be provided to present information on the RFA and answer any questions about the RFA:

1. First Webinar is January 24th at 2:30pm to 3:30pm CST. Link for Webinar: [Central America Webinar One Link](#)
2. The Second Webinar is January 27th at 2:30pm to 3:30pm CST. Link for Webinar: [Central America Webinar Two Link](#)

Contact information: For questions about budgets or contracts, please contact Katie Schroeder at kschroeder@ucdavis.edu or +1-530-752-3522. For programmatic questions and questions about RFA please email Dr. Julio López Montes at jlopez@zamorano.edu or Patricia Arce at parce@zamorano.edu

Lead Principal Investigators (PI) are required to complete short LASER PULSE video training sessions on research for and with disadvantaged groups, and locally-led research.

Timeline:

- Request for applications: January 15, 2023 - February 20, 2023.
- Deadline for application questions: January 28, 2023
- Applications due **February 20, 2023, 6:00 pm CST** to the Horticulture Innovation Lab via PiestarRFx ([RFA Piestar Submission Link](#)) or emailed (please see instructions on how it should be packaged below) **ONLY** if there are difficulties accessing Piestar to horticulture@ucdavis.edu.
- Review of applications: February 21– 28, 2023
- Notification of funding: March 06, 2023
- Projects begin: May 1, 2023

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Introduction

The Feed the Future Horticulture Innovation Lab program advances bio-physical and social knowledge and innovation within the horticulture sector, specifically in Africa, South Asia, and Central America. Our global research network works with and promotes local leadership to advance horticulture and social innovations, empowering smallholder farmers to earn more income while better nourishing their communities.

The Horticulture Innovation Lab is currently soliciting full technical applications from regionally-based organizations to **research appropriate technologies for climate smart agriculture for small-sized farms in Honduras and Guatemala**. The selected research projects will be funded at \$250,000 up to \$750,000 depending on the scope of work, over a period of approximately 3 and 1/4 years. A total of approximately \$1.2 million will be awarded, through which we aim to fund 2-4 projects. We encourage applications for a single subtheme, and collaborative projects that cover multiple sub-themes.

The Horticulture Innovation Lab is looking for research applications led by local organizations that are relevant to, and appropriate for smallholder farmers and disadvantaged populations in focus countries, Honduras and Guatemala. The research should result in useful recommendations and key takeaways for future Horticulture Innovation Lab research and development. Successful teams will include multiple disciplines, including agribusiness and nutrition experts, as well as horticulturists, agronomists, sociologists and economists.

Eligibility Criteria

The lead applicant organization and lead principal investigator must be from a USAID Feed the Future country from within the Central America region - specifically Honduras and/or Guatemala. Applicants can be from academic institutions, government sectors (including national agriculture research services), private entities, or other community-based organizations. While international collaboration is allowable, intellectual lead and management should remain in the region. This includes but is not limited to leading efforts in determining research methodology, implementation, and information dissemination, such as publications and conference participation. Priority will be given to research projects with budgets that include a majority of funds to regionally based partners.

Regional Horticulture Context and Background

For additional information, please review the Horticulture Innovation Lab's Central America Regional Horticulture Report Drafted by the Zamorano University: [Central America Report Link](#).

At the regional-level, there is little technical cooperation or formal system of technical assistance across Honduras and Guatemala. Additionally, there is no defined regional process to prioritize

research meant to address challenges in the horticulture value chain. Finally, the lack of access to improved technologies, low levels of product safety and quality, as well as low levels of productivity and income generation, discourages young men and women from participating in the horticulture sector. However, this also represents an opportunity to establish interactive and agile networks across the Central American region to support the horticulture sector.

In Honduras and Guatemala, increased costs for agricultural inputs have adversely limited production and hampered efforts to control pests and diseases at the field-level. There is little or no access to credit for small farms, and, if crop insurance is available, it is often too costly to afford for farmers with small or medium-sized plots. Farmers in the region also lack government-led agricultural support programs, including technical advisory services. Farmers lack access to appropriate technologies for production, postharvest management, and processing of horticulture crops, and labor shortages hamper the ability to overcome technology deficiencies. There is also great fluctuation and variation in the prices of horticultural products, and producers do not have first-hand information on markets. The consequences of these challenges can be severe. The lack of credit and costly inputs, for example, reduce the possibility for crop diversification or adopting improved technologies to better adapt to climate change. Farms have suffered landslides and long periods of rain or drought, resulting in crop losses, and without crop insurance or diversified cropping systems, losses can be total.

There is also an unequal distribution of assets, wealth, and land tenure. As a consequence, women lack representation and equity in the agricultural sector. In addition, many young people do not see agriculture as a viable economic pursuit due to a lack of information and/or because they come from households where subsistence agriculture is practiced and are unaware of the benefits and opportunities that this sector can provide. For youth in Honduras, these circumstances lead them to look for other options to generate income or to emigrate from the country.

Research is needed to find solutions to these challenges to increase resiliency and adaptability in the face of climate change. Horticulture research needs to also incorporate activities that seek to promote gender equity and youth engagement in Honduras and Guatemala.

Horticulture Innovation Lab Background

The Horticulture Innovation Lab facilitates locally-led and globally supported research and networks that address regional horticulture challenges and opportunities and enable women, youth and other marginalized groups to successfully engage in horticulture value chains. Our research advances resilient, climate-smart horticulture production and agribusiness development. We support adaptive research, and research that enables farmers to have greater access to markets through innovation. Additionally, the Horticulture Innovation Lab is interested in addressing both supply and demand of fruits and vegetables which includes research questions concerning nutrition education, economics, behavior change, and social preferences.

The Horticulture Innovation Lab's goals associated with battling malnutrition, improving equity and inclusivity, engaging youth, enhancing resilience, and providing income to smallholder farmers aligns well with the U.S. Government's Feed the Future Initiative. Feed the Future pursues two paths: (1) addressing the root causes of hunger that limit the potential of millions of people; and (2) establishing a lasting foundation for change by aligning USAID resources with

country-owned processes and sustained, multi-stakeholder partnerships. Through USAID leadership in this initiative, we advance global stability and prosperity by improving the most basic of human conditions – the need that families and individuals have for a reliable source of quality food and sufficient resources to access and purchase it.

Horticulture Innovation Lab projects and initiatives focus on three key Feed the Future Global Food Security Strategy (GFSS) objectives and five cross-cutting themes.

GFSS Objectives:

1. Inclusive and sustainable agriculture-led economic growth
2. Strengthened resilience among people and systems
3. A well-nourished population

GFSS Cross-cutting Themes:

1. Gender equality, equity and participation
2. Youth opportunities
3. Nutrition and food safety
4. Resilience and risk management
5. Inclusion

The Horticulture Innovation Lab focuses on resilient horticulture management systems and horticulture enterprise development and commercialization. The program emphasizes research where horticulture can complement and diversify staple crops, extend cropping and marketing seasons, systems approaches to horticulture value chains, and increase the production and consumption of nutritious horticultural products. Thus, the Horticulture Innovation Lab supports research projects to improve seed systems, sustainable production of horticultural crops, postharvest practices, food safety, market access and linkages, nutrition, and engagement of women, youth and other disadvantaged groups in the horticulture sector.

Feed the Future Information

Feed the Future and other U.S. government priorities – including global health and climate change – allow us to confront the growing challenges of global poverty, disease, water scarcity, climate change and depleting natural resources. By addressing these complex challenges, we protect our own security and lay the foundation for a more peaceful and prosperous future for all. More information on Feed the Future can be found at <http://www.feedthefuture.gov>.

Cross-cutting themes of Horticulture Innovation Lab

Gender Equity

The Horticulture Innovation Lab is committed to ensuring that our research projects are impactful for smallholder farmers and their communities, including women and those from other marginalized groups. Women play a critical role in horticultural production, processing and marketing, but often face constraints beyond those faced by men. They may have limited access to land, credit, information and inputs as well as greater time commitments and constraints in making decisions about the use of resources. Other factors such as ethnicity, caste/class, marital status, decision making ability, and age also affect one's ability to participate fully in the horticultural value chain. Research and intervention projects that do not factor in these differences or challenges along the value chain may not have the desired effect and may even exacerbate existing inequalities.

To ensure our projects will have the greatest impact on the wellbeing of people in smallholder households and to increase equality, the Horticulture Innovation Lab is committed to funding projects that thoughtfully assess and incorporate issues of gender and inclusion through all stages of research and implementation.

Please see Appendix I For Additional Information

Youth Engagement

Providing a path to meaningful economic engagement through horticulture is an integral focus of the Horticulture Innovation Lab. The Horticulture Innovation Lab recognizes that addressing challenges and opportunities for regional horticulture is an intergenerational mandate and demands the active engagement and integration of youth. As agriculture-based activities account for nearly 50% of youth employment, investments that support broad-based horticulture value chain growth are part of an effective youth livelihood strategy. To foster youth engagement, horticulture value chains need to promote and broaden opportunities that are profitable, less physically arduous, offer quick returns and have low asset requirements. Facilitating the capacity of youth to innovate is critical to increasing the production and consumption of nutritious horticultural products.

The Horticulture Innovation Lab is committed to funding projects that harness youth's potential through youth-focused initiatives that integrate a positive youth development approach, elevate youth voices, and segment and tailor interventions to the needs of the heterogeneous youth population.

Please see Appendix II for Additional Information

Nutrition and Horticulture

We will support research that improves understanding of nutritious crops from production to consumption. This includes furthering understanding of horticulture for nutrition interventions and their impact on behavior and dietary diversity. Food safety development and practices are essential in addressing health in the communities our networks serve. Research projects will be nutrition sensitive and incorporate appropriate nutrition objectives and benchmarks throughout the project term.

Please see Appendix III for Additional Information.

Climate change adaptation and mitigation

The productivity of many fruits and vegetables is sensitive to small variations in weather conditions. Untimely rainfall or too high or too low nighttime temperatures, for instance, can lead to flower drop in fruit trees. Heat stress also affects the viability of pollen in fruiting vegetables. Weather conditions and water supplies also affect fruit quality and shelf-life. As a result of these issues, climate change significantly increases the production risk to smallholder fruit and vegetable farmers. Innovations that provide irrigation, good drainage, climate-smart varieties, grafting, and protected cultivation help farmers to reduce some of these risks by making farm output more predictable. Projects are therefore advised to promote the use of technologies that enable farmers to adapt to climate change.

Fruit and vegetable production systems are not major contributors to greenhouse gas emissions, but they can nevertheless use a lot of agrochemicals, water for irrigation, plastics for production and packaging, and energy for transport of fresh produce. Many vegetable systems are intensively cultivated and rely heavily on external inputs, especially pesticides, which may not be sustainable. There is much scope to employ more regenerative production practices in fruit and vegetable production systems to reduce the environmental footprint of these systems and increase resilience. For instance, it is recognized that good soil health, including ample amounts of organic matter and a healthy soil biome, can make plants more resistant to biotic and abiotic stressors and even improve the nutritional value of the produce. Projects should therefore emphasize the use of technologies and practices that help to regenerate soils.

Resilience

The high value of fruit and vegetables offers attractive opportunities for smallholder farmers and other value chain actors to sustainably improve their livelihoods. However, the commercial production of fruit and vegetables requires significant investments, and market buyers can be unreliable, and market prices uncertain. This often leads to farmers being price-takers. As a result, production of fruit and vegetables is often associated with a high financial risk, which can form a major obstacle for smallholder farmers to engage in these crops despite the prospect of high returns. Projects therefore need to be aware of the various risks smallholder farmers face and reduce these risks to manageable levels. A reliable supply of affordable and high-quality inputs,

a diverse portfolio of crops, effective and safe methods to manage crop pests and diseases, financial literacy and access to financial services, and predictable sales outlets and prices are key aspects of resilient and profitable smallholder production of fruits and vegetables.

Capacity Strengthening

The production of fruits and vegetables often requires more knowledge and expertise compared to most staple food crops. For instance, at the farm-level, vegetables may require seedling nurseries, fruit trees require careful pruning to optimize fruit yield and quality, and both fruit and vegetables require careful pre- and postharvest management. Lack of appropriate knowledge and skills can be a major constraint for smallholder farmers, particularly women and marginalized social groups, to engage in the fruit and vegetable sector. On a larger scale, the Horticulture Innovation Lab is interested in supporting and participating in healthy regional academic and expert eco-systems. To this end, our work aims to support peer to peer learning, curriculum development, networking of regional experts, and shared-knowledge activities to support joint goals (e.g. farmer, extension, private industry connections). This applies to current experts and the next generation of scientists.

Horticulture Innovation Lab Consortium

UC Davis leads the Horticulture Innovation Lab Consortium. The Consortium consists of partners from Florida A&M University, Michigan State University, Texas A&M, and World Vegetable Center, along with subject matter specialists in gender, youth and nutrition, from Penn State University, Making Cents International, and the Institute for Global Nutrition at UC Davis. To learn more about this group please visit our [Consortium Partners webpage](#).

Recognizing horticulture's unique capacity to impact gender equity, youth engagement and household nutrition, the Horticulture Innovation Lab's consortium has three specialists dedicated to these themes. Their roles as specialists include, among other things, guiding overall programmatic activities toward positive impacts in these areas and providing expertise to research projects.

Research Description

Research Priority

The research priority is to identify the most effective and appropriate climate smart agriculture technologies and practices for small and medium-sized farms in Honduras and Guatemala. Producing nutritious fruits and vegetables sustainably and safely while facing the impacts of climate change will require the efficient use of resources and the capacity to produce horticulture crops in changing weather patterns. Climate-smart agriculture is needed to achieve food security and maintain or increase agricultural productivity.

The effects of climate change are already evident. For example, there are declining yields of fruits, vegetables, and staple grains in certain regions and more frequent extreme weather events. Maintaining current yields and achieving food and nutrition security will require significant investments in climate change adaptation measures. It is necessary to develop and scale technologies that build resilience and adaptability for farmers and also help farmers build up the natural resources available to them. Research activities should focus on and join efforts to produce food sustainably and adapt production systems to be resilient to climate change.

Climate-smart agriculture is an approach that helps guide the actions needed to transform and reorient agricultural systems to effectively support development and ensure food security in the context of a changing climate. Climate-smart agriculture pursues three main objectives:

1. Sustainably increasing agricultural productivity and incomes
2. Adapting, and building resilience to climate change, and ,
3. Reducing and/or absorbing greenhouse gasses, to the extent possible.

To introduce innovations and technologies to countries in Central America, research applicants should focus their efforts to determine optimal climate-smart agriculture technologies and practices to support small and medium-scale horticulture farmers, thus helping to improve livelihoods, create more and better jobs, promote gender equity and youth engagement, and produce safe, quality, and nutritious fruits and vegetables.

Archetype Description

An archetype was created to help focus the impact of research activities. Research activities should address small and medium producers with a focus on young mothers aged 35 years old or younger. Typically, rural mothers in this age group have several children, lack autonomy in the home, and may own or have access to a small area of land for agricultural production for home consumption or sale of small quantities for income. These small production areas can be a source of dietary diversity through the provision of nutritious fruits and vegetables. Additionally, peri-urban and rural mothers can at times have limited access to water for production, little or no access to financing, and they may or may not be associated in formal groups and/or cooperatives. Associations with formal groups or cooperatives is desirable, as these groups provide benefits for producing horticulture crops and accessing markets. For the research activities addressed in this RFA, the young mother may come from the rural or peri-urban rural sector.

Research Goals and Subthemes

For the research on climate-smart agriculture technologies for small and medium size farms in this request for applications, it is necessary for applicants to address one or more of the following themes:

Subtheme 1: *Determining which protected structures and irrigation technologies (including practices) that can be used with protected structures are suitable for small scale production.*

Protected agriculture encompasses the production approach in which horticultural crops are sheltered and protected with plastic covers, shade netting, anti-pest netting or other types of material that allow for the control of environmental conditions such as temperature, humidity, light, and insect access.

In addition to protecting plants against the attack of pests and diseases, which allows for better crop management and pest control, crops under protected structures can be of better quality and safer for consumption since the indiscriminate use of pesticides is avoided.

Irrigation management is essential for climate smart agriculture because it maximizes efficient use of this critical resource and can allow for off-season or drought production. An example of a technology suitable for use with protected structures is **drip irrigation**, since this supplies water to the crop in a localized way, thus saving water and increasing efficiencies in the production of horticulture crops.

To achieve this subtheme, it is necessary to work on the following research goals:

Goals

- Determine the availability and access of various kinds of protected structures that allow small-scale farms to produce safe, quality horticulture crops efficiently for food security and income generation.
- Identify barriers to adoption of these structures or technologies faced by women and mitigate these barriers.
- Examine how cooperatives and organized groups of farmers can increase exposure to effective technologies, thus increasing opportunities for small-scale growers to choose the best technology depending on their agroecological area.
- Determine methods for strengthening the capacity of these organizations to ensure equal and meaningful participation for female producers.
- Understand methods for or the impact of technologies to increase vegetable consumption among the producers and local communities.

Subtheme 2: Technologies (including practices) for soil health and the incorporation and effect of water-efficient vegetable production on soil health.

Soil management through climate-smart agriculture leads to the adoption of **conservation agriculture practices** to protect and maintain soil health: crop diversification, minimal soil tillage and permanent soil cover. In addition, by performing this type of practice it allows the saving of irrigation water, gradually increases the organic matter of the soil, suppresses weeds, in addition to reducing the costs of machinery, fuel and time.

To achieve this, it is necessary to work on the following research goals and sub goals:

Goals

- Determine most suitable soil health practices/technologies to increase crop production and profitability.
- Identify barriers faced by women to adoption of these practices or technologies and mitigate these barriers.
- Determine best approaches that increase biodiversity and soil quality for smallholder farmers.
- Determine strategies and type of training for farmers to increase efficient use of water for vegetable and fruit production that also lead to increased soil health.

Sub Goals

- Analyze different crop management systems that promote crop diversity and soil health.

- Determine the impact of diverse types of soil amendments, use of cover crops and/or management of basic elements for pH and soil structures.
- With input from producers (female and male), select the most applicable/suitable technologies that reduce the amount of water used for food production per production area and increase soil health.

Subtheme 3: *Post-harvest technologies for quality safe, secure, and nutritious produce.*

One aspect of climate-smart agriculture is preventing post-harvest losses. Reducing postharvest losses also can include preharvest practices as pest and disease damage harm both the quality and quantity of agricultural products. Postharvest management practices need to result in safe and high-quality horticulture crops for consumers to access these highly nutritious products.

To achieve this, it is necessary to work on the following research goals:

Goals

- Determine technologies suitable for smallholder growers that increase the shelf life of products.
- Determine technologies that improve the postharvest handling of products to improve their quality and safety for food security.
- Determine the best way that a cooperative can scale up a technology to other members, especially for women and young people.
- Determine strategies through the implementation of postharvest technologies and practices that also can enhance dietary diversity.

Trellis Fellowship Fund

The Horticulture Innovation Lab's Trellis Fellowship Fund project connects U.S.-based graduate students with organizations in Africa, South Asia, and Central America to help foster collaborative research and build networks globally. The Innovation Lab's Consortium Partner, Florida Agricultural and Mechanical University (FAMU), will be implementing the Trellis Fellowship Fund from 2023 to 2026. FAMU will annually select graduate students from 1890 Land Grant Universities in the U.S. to participate in a Trellis Fellow Fund Project. These students will be responsible for research activities both remotely - approximately 100 hours a year -and also in-country, through a two-week visit to research sites. Each year, a new group of students will be selected to participate in the project. In the first year, one Trellis Student will participate per region, then in subsequent years approximately three students per region will participate (a total of ten per region over four years).

The Trellis Fellowship Fund Project will also connect the U.S.-based graduate students with in-country graduate students. Typically, one U.S.-based graduate student is paired with one in-country student each year to work together on accomplishing the research goals. Applicants should highlight how they will work with and support in-country graduate students and connect them with U.S.-based graduate students to conduct the Trellis Fund related research. Generally,

FAMU will cover all costs associated with the US based graduate student and the research project applicant will cover costs of in-country students.

As a part of the application to this RFA, applicants need to outline how these U.S.-based and local graduate students would be incorporated into the project's research activities. The research or activity that is designated to be part of the Trellis Fellowship Fund Project can be multi-year, as new students will have the opportunity to build on the prior research activities of their colleagues. The Trellis Fellowship Fund Project should: 1) explain the work to be conducted or contributed to remotely during the 100 hours the student will provide from the US; 2) explain the partnership between the US based and local student 3) provide a significant activity/output that contributes to overall goals of the research project during the two-week period that the student is in-country. Furthermore, there should be a brief discussion of how the U.S.-based student can be hosted while in-country. FAMU will cover the expenses for travel and lodging, but guidance should be provided in terms of locations that the students could stay, in-country ground logistics, and how the in-country organization will facilitate their involvement in the field. Not all funded research projects will be matched with a Trellis Fellowship Fund Student, so the Trellis Fellowship Fund Project should be additional and not critical to the overall goals of the research project.

The research designated to be part of the Trellis Fellowship Fund activities does not need to be a completely separate research activity. The goal of this Trellis-related research is to contribute to the overall research objectives stated in the application. Applicants need to consider what aspects of the overall research activities can benefit from a U.S.-based and local graduate student's contributions and describe how those students will be integrated into those aspects of the project.

Finally, more information on previous Trellis Fellowship Fund Projects can be found [here](#).

Application Preparation and Submission Instructions

Applications can be submitted:

1. Submitted through this link: [RFA Piestar Submission Link](#)
2. **ONLY** if you are not able to access Piestar, then 1) technical application can be submitted as a PDF document, 2) budget justification as a PDF document 3) documentation of cost-share, and Supporting Budget Letters combined as a separate PDF document, and 4) an excel document for the budget with annual and cumulative totals for the prescribed categories. These documents should be emailed to horticulture@ucdavis.edu

Applications in PDF format should be formatted as 8.5" x 11" pages, single-spaced, 1-inch margins on all sides, Times New Roman, font size 12. Applications not submitted in the correct format will not be reviewed.

Important:

- *Applicants can address one or more of the research goals and/or subthemes. The proposed budget should accurately reflect the cost of the proposed research activities. Applicants submitting applications addressing a subset of the RFA will be required to work collaboratively with other lead organizations conducting research on the remaining components of the RFA. Subthemes and goals addressed need to be clearly defined in the application.*
- *The selected research projects will be funded at \$250,000 up to \$750,000 depending on the scope of work, over a period of approximately 3 and 1/4 years. A total of approximately \$1.2 million will be awarded, through which we aim to fund 2-4 projects. We encourage applications for a single subtheme, and collaborative projects that cover multiple sub-themes.*
- *The research projects must end by August 1, 2026, but can end earlier if the applicant believes objectives can be achieved prior to that final end date. The start date of research activities should be approximately May 1 2023.*

USAID LASER PULSE Training

All Lead Principal Investigators submitting an application **are required** to take the LASER PULSE designed training.

Training 1: Embedded Research Translation <https://laserpulse.org/course/laser-pulse-introduction-to-embedded-research-translation-training/>

Training 2: Gender Analysis in Research and Application
<https://laserpulse.org/course/gender-analysis-in-research-and-application/>

Lead PIs will need to create an account on laserpulse.org. On that home page there is a Join/Login radio button on the Welcome page. Each PI will need to be logged into laserpulse.org with an account to access the required course.

Upon completion, a digital certificate is automatically generated by the system when Lead PIs complete the course. This certificate needs to be included in the Technical Narrative application package. **Registration email from LASER PULSE after submitting login information can take up to 24 hours or one business day.** (Depending on network settings, applicants may need to check their SPAM folder)

Sections of the application

I. Cover Page

The Cover Page can be made in accordance to your institution's requirements but must include the following:

- Project title
- Lead institution applying for the Award
- Names, titles, mailing addresses, email addresses, and telephone numbers of Principal Investigators and Collaborators
- Signature and contact information for authorized official from the Lead Institution.
- Contact information for person to contact for application questions
- Contact information for person responsible for negotiating final contract
- Subthemes and research goals addressed in bullet point format

II. Project Summary Page

The Project Summary Page is limited to one page and should include only the following: 1) 200 to 250-word abstract (to be used when describing the project to USAID, reviewers, media, and other interested persons). 2) Up to five keywords. 3) List of countries and regions in each country where the project will take place. 4) Subthemes and research goals addressed in the application 5) Total amount of funds requested.

III. Technical Narrative

A) Introduction

Introduction should include, but is not limited to, a statement of the problem, project justification, research approach, including relevant literature and methodology, subthemes, and goals addressed, and expected outcomes. (~2 pages recommended)

B) Overall objectives addressed, with a focus on regional priorities and subthemes

Include a description of how the project fits with the objectives of Horticulture Innovation Lab, Feed the Future, and the Regional Priority, Archetype, Subthemes, and Research Goals. (~1 page recommended)

C) Specific project objectives

Include a list and description of project objectives based on Subtheme(s) addressed. Description of pathway to broad application and effects (~1 page recommended)

D) Activities and methodology

Outline the activities and methodologies required to accomplish each objective. Successful applications should include the project research plan and outline how research is to be conducted, analyzed and disseminated. (~5 pages recommended)

E) Roles of partners

Indicate the team members whose expertise is critical to each phase of the project and the role the partners or individuals played in project development. (~1 page recommended).

This section can also address areas of the research project that could benefit from expertise that may not be available within the applying organization or organizations. Revealing these areas that could be strengthened with outside expertise will not disadvantage the application as we will incorporate post-award an opportunity to build collaborations.

F) Timeline of activities

Include a timeline to accomplish activities and expected outcomes. (~1 page recommended)

G) Outreach, capacity strengthening, information dissemination

This section should include explicit details of how project outputs will be disseminated to local stakeholders as well as how the project strengthens knowledge, information, and extension ecosystems. Furthermore, thoughtful consideration of the modes of information delivery are crucial (i.e. if a workshop is planned, there should be concrete reasons as to why a workshop is a better outreach method than other methods). Provide a list of possible outreach activities and deliverables. Additionally, please discuss any relevant publications, who will be responsible for lead authorship, and plans to translate research results for public consumption and on-the-ground application. (~2 pages recommended)

H) Trellis Fellowship Fund Project Incorporation

Describe how the proposed project would incorporate the involvement of graduate and undergraduate students from Trellis Fellowship Fund and from focus country(ies) in the research activities (Please refer to Trellis Fellowship Fund section for more details). In this description, applicants should highlight how they will work with and support in-country graduate students and connect them with U.S.-based graduate students to conduct the Trellis Fellowship Fund related research. (~1 page recommended)

I) Additional Expertise as requested

The Horticulture Innovation Lab has reserved funding for additional expert consultants as requested by successfully awarded projects. If successfully awarded, what additional expertise and/or networking might this project be interested in and why? For instance, is there benefit in having international knowledge sharing; peer-to-peer training; interdisciplinary collaborators; etc... that could be met through outside expertise? Please describe. (~0.5 page recommended)

J) Sustainability

Indicate how the project activities will be sustained beyond the funding cycle. (~1 page recommended)

K) Gender and social equity

Gender and social equity are central to achieving Horticulture Innovation Lab goals. This section should outline how gender and other inclusion issues were taken into consideration in developing this application, how constraints that limit women, urban poor, refugees and other vulnerable/marginalized groups' participation in horticultural development will be identified and

addressed, and how household and community level gender issues will be approached to achieve gender parity and achieve project objectives. Successful applications will give meaningful consideration to gender and inclusion issues in the design of their program, and are reflected throughout the applications. Guidelines to the Horticulture Innovation Lab's gender and social equity principles can be found in Appendix I. (~1 page recommended)

L) Youth engagement

There is a critical need in agricultural research for a "pipeline" of interested youth who are willing to focus their careers on advancing agriculture in their home countries. Engaging youth and creating opportunities for youth from a variety of segments (from vulnerable communities, young mothers, etc.) in horticulture agribusinesses and other entrepreneurial activities is a priority for the Horticulture Innovation Lab. Please describe, **as appropriate**, the specific youth segmentation targeted and how their unique needs have been considered, and how your project plans to utilize a Positive Youth Development approach to positively engage with youth and support their families to create livelihood opportunities for youth through horticulture. See Appendix II for more information. (~1 page recommended)

M) Nutrition

A well-nourished population is one of the key objectives of the Horticulture Innovation Lab, and is uniquely important in poverty reduction. This section should highlight the ways in which the proposed project will integrate nutrition sensitive practices into the project design and activities. This section should include a plan to assess the possible nutrition-related outcomes of the project, both positive and negative. Please show how your project plans to address the specific nutrition deficiencies in the area of work. Successful applications will identify which of the 7 pathways between agriculture and nutrition will be addressed, how they will be targeted and the logic behind them (see Appendix III). Successful applications will show that they understand the causal links between their intervention and their outlined nutritional impacts. The intervention will be designed to optimize those linkages.
(~1 page recommended)

N) Monitoring and evaluation plan

Projects funded to address the goals of the Horticulture Innovation Lab will be evaluated based on a results-based (logical) framework and all applications must include a monitoring and evaluation (M&E) plan. As part of this framework, integrated into this M&E plan should be points to re-evaluate and reflect on progress in order to determine if alternative approaches are needed to achieve research objectives. Projects will address Objectives through defined Activities that will have specific Outputs/Deliverables and Indicators of Success. Monitoring and evaluation plans will be refined during the initial phases of the project and used to assess progress toward objectives. Applications must include baseline assessment in terms of the topic area and region. Within this framework, we define the following terms and provide a sample table below:

1) Objectives

A statement of intention. Objectives should be specific, measurable, achievable, realistic and time-bound and address the Priority and specific Subtheme (e.g. identify strategies that will reduce food safety risks when using cow manure as fertilizer for vegetables; conduct a market analysis of tomatoes in Rwanda to identify opportunities for smallholder farmers).

2) Activities

Research or training/outreach programs intended to achieve the objectives (e.g. determine the best size of compost pile to speed efficient composting; evaluate methods to capture urine for use as fertilizer, & conduct a 3-day workshop and demonstration for women's farmer groups)

3) Deliverables/Outputs

Expected results of the activities (e.g., extension manual, publication of research results, number of men & women farmers trained in new technology).

4) Indicator of Success

How will you decide if your activity was successful? These are usually expressed as targets (e.g., X number of trainees implementing improved practices, X number of households surveyed, report on topic Y produced, training participants increased their knowledge of topic Y by X%).

5) Documentation of Progress

How will you objectively document the progress of your activities? The objective documentation will be a combination of periodic reports that include data on progress and additional information deliverables that are outward facing for broad information dissemination and sharing of impact. (e.g., results of pre- and post-training quizzes to document knowledge gained, attendance registers, report submitted to appropriate person, photos of trainees implementing improved practices, blogs describing a success or key moment of progress in the project, fact sheets)

6) Responsible Person or Party

Who will be responsible for carrying out the activity and ensuring that the outputs/deliverables are achieved on time? Please also describe the time-points during the project when reflective action will be taken. For instance, how are the activities undertaken in the first year expected to influence the implementation of later activities? At what point will the success of an activity be judged? What steps or actions would be taken if an activity is deemed unsuccessful in order to keep the project as a whole on track?

7) Objectives and indicators instructions (matrix)

Applicants need to complete the Monitoring and Evaluation (ME) table below. Template for ME Table can be found through this link: [Template for ME Table](#).

For every subtheme addressed in the proposed research project, list the specific objectives established to address the subtheme. Under each objective, capture key research activities proposed to address that objective, along with providing additional details about the activity across the columns of the table. Please add additional rows if more Objectives and/or activities are needed. If the application addresses multiple subthemes, please duplicate the table to capture objectives and activities proposed to address that subtheme. These table(s) will not count toward any page limit set in the application.

Subtheme Addressed:				
Objective 1:				
Activities	Outputs/ Deliverables	Indicator of Success	Documentation of Success	Responsible Person/Party
List all activities that fall under this objective (one per line)	List all outputs associated with each activity	Describe how success of this activity will be gauged	Describe what documentation will provide the evidence of the activity's success	List the person or party responsible for this activity and monitoring its success

Objective 2:				
Activities	Outputs/ Deliverables	Indicator of Success	Documentation of Success	Responsible Person/Party
Add more rows for additional Objectives or Activities as needed. And additional tables if multiple Subthemes are addressed in the application. This table will not count toward the application page limit.				

O) Statement of institutional experience

Include a description of the international development, horticulture, economic, sociological, and agribusiness experience, as appropriate, for each institution involved in the project and a description of successful projects conducted by institutions in similar project area(s). (1 page limit for each institution)

P) Curriculum vitae (CV)

Include one curriculum vitae or bio-sketch for the lead principal investigator, Co-principal investigator(s), and key project personnel. (2 pages maximum per CV)

Q) LASER PULSE Certificate

Certificate(s) verifying Lead PI(s) took required LASER PULSE courses

Budget instructions

Instructional Video on Budget, Budget Justification, Costshare and UEI: [Budget Informational Video](#)

Template available to be used for the budget can be found using this link: [Budget Template](#)

I. Budget

Budget must be submitted in an Excel budget sheet with annual and cumulative totals for the prescribed categories. Please note that any funds to be spent in Ethiopia or Burma requires prior written approval from USAID, which will be requested if the project is selected for funding. Budget template available if desired.

II. Budget justification and cost sharing narrative

Prepare institutional budget justifications for the following categories in the order below (a separate budget justification is required for each institution receiving funds, no page limit). *Label the top of each budget justification with the name of the institution and the total dollar amount per year.*

Example Budget Justification Can be Found Using this Link: [Example Budget Justification](#)

A) **Sr. Personnel** (salary and fringe benefits)

Provide names and titles for all senior personnel, including those who are not being paid against the project. State the appropriate amount of effort as a percentage or calendar months for each key person on the project. Senior personnel from another institution should be reflected on the corresponding budget justification for that institution.

B) **Other Personnel** (salary and fringe benefits)

Provide the title/position/role for all support personnel. Administrative salary generally is not allowed as a direct cost.

C) **Materials and Supplies**

List specific supplies and costs if possible; if specifics are unknown, list specific categories of supplies. No miscellaneous or contingency categories are allowed. All goods and services must meet the source, origin, and nationality requirements set forth in [22 CFR Part 228 for the authorized geographic code 937](#). The following goods are restricted and may

not be purchased without prior approval: agricultural commodities, motor vehicles, pharmaceuticals, contraceptives, pesticides, used equipment, fertilizer.

PRIOR APPROVAL will be deemed to have been met when:

- The item is of US source/origin;
- The item has been identified and incorporated in the program description or schedule of the award (initial or revisions), or amendments to the award; and
- The costs related to the item are incorporated in the approved budget of the award.

Please reference ADS 312 for a complete list of eligible and ineligible commodities:
<https://www.usaid.gov/ads/policy/300/312>.

D) **Travel**

Domestic: Detail domestic travel using applicable rates (mileage, etc.).

Foreign: Provide a full explanation for each anticipated international trip—this explanation needs to include the following information (per trip):

- Names and/or number of travelers
- Destination country
- Duration of travel

Provide the method of calculation for each international trip including applicable per diem rates. All USAID funded travel must be purchased in compliance with the Fly America Act. Entry to and exit from the U.S. must be on a U.S.-registered carrier.

Travel budget must include air travel and lodging for the principal investigator plus at least one host country collaborator to attend the annual Horticulture Innovation Lab Annual Meetings during the project period, in 2023, 2024, 2025 and 2026 in Kenya, Nepal, Ghana, and Honduras, respectively. Please budget for these locations, but recognize they are subject to change.

E) **Equipment**

Equipment is defined as tangible, non-expendable property having a useful life of more than one year and an acquisition cost of \$5,000 or more per unit. Motor vehicles and used equipment are not allowed. All goods and services must meet the source, origin, and nationality requirements set forth in 22 CFR Part 228 for the authorized geographic code 937. Detail each piece of equipment by name/model/type. Construction costs are not allowable.

F) **Subawards**

Briefly list each subaward here and include yearly and cumulative budget amounts. Each subaward will have its own, separate budget justification.

G) **Participant Training**

Guidelines for participant training are found in ADS Chapter 253 – Training for Capacity Development. <https://www.usaid.gov/sites/default/agency-policy/253.pdf>

Note: Trainers and facilitators are not participants and should not be included in this section of the budget. Participants cannot be employees or collaborators on the project.

Detail each training program separately. Each training program must have a title/description, proposed country, approximate number of participants, and approximate dates. Costs for each program must be broken down into three categories:

1. **Travel** (cost of transportation to and from the training site and travel within the training site. All USAID funded travel must be purchased in compliance with the [Fly America Act](#). Entry to and exit from the U.S. must be on a U.S.-registered carrier.)

2. **Instruction** (books, equipment, supplies, course handouts, registration fees, academic tuition and fees)

3. **Participant costs** (per diem, medical exams, visa fees, health and accident insurance premia, federal/state/local income taxes)

· For all in-country training, costs and allowances may be proposed by the training provider for review and approval by the Management Entity.

· For third-country long-term training (6 months or greater), costs and allowances may be proposed by the training provider for review and approval by the Management Entity.

For U.S. long-term training (six months or greater), the Institute for International Education (IIE) for the Department of State researches and publishes the long-term training allowance rates for U.S. training sites which are available on request. USAID uses these rates to guide its long-term training monthly maintenance; however, Sponsoring Units have the flexibility to determine the final rate allowances that are reflected in the training budget. Allowances that are not considered appropriate are not to be paid. In some instances, a Participant may not need the entire range of potential cost elements. Not all Department of State allowances apply to USAID participants. Reference ADS 253 for a complete list of allowable costs.

H) **Other Direct Costs**

Some examples are non-participant graduate student tuition/fees, greenhouse fees, maintenance agreements, honoraria, repairs, analyses, services, and long-distance toll

charges. All goods and services must meet the source, origin, and nationality requirements set forth in 22 CFR Part 228 for the authorized geographic code 937. Travel fees and insurance should be included under "Travel" or "Participant Training" as appropriate.

I) **Indirect Costs**

U.S. Institutions may recover their full federally-negotiated indirect cost rate (a copy of the current F&A agreement should be attached to the application). U.S. Institutions and foreign entities with no federally-negotiated rate may claim the de minimis of 10% of modified total direct costs for their indirect costs or budget for actual general/administrative costs as direct costs in proportion to their project needs.

J) **Cost-Sharing**

Cost-sharing is required at 25% of the total federal funds requested from the Horticulture Innovation Lab. This requirement may be waived for local organizations within the region of focus. Please contact the Horticulture Innovation Lab for further information. The cost-share must consist of non-federally funded contributions that meet the criteria detailed in 22 CFR 518.23. Cost-sharing may include, but is not limited to: 1) principal investigator/senior personnel effort; 2) in-kind contributions; 3) cash contributions; 4) unrecovered indirect costs; 5) indirect costs on principal investigator/senior personnel effort. **Cost-sharing documentation from the contributing entity must be provided at the time of application submission.** In most cases, this will ideally be in the form of a letter signed by the authorized organizational representative or can be a non-official document detailing cost-share or why a waiver is needed. Some items that are ineligible for cost-sharing are existing equipment, administrative services, office and lab space, and administrative fees in lieu of indirect costs. The required cost-share may come from any combination of the main institution and subaward(s) as appropriate. Provide a detailed cost-sharing narrative listing institution(s), dollar amounts, and descriptions.

If you are requesting a waiver of the cost share requirement, please include an explanation or justification for the waiver in your application in a separate letter or within the budget justification document. Requesting and potentially receiving a waiver of the cost share requirement will not be considered during the review process of applications in determining awarding funds. If a waiver has been requested and the application chosen for funding, a discussion will take place to determine if a waiver will be granted and the terms of the waiver.

III. Supporting Budget Letters

The following supporting budget letters must be attached.

- A) Federally-Negotiated Indirect Cost Rate agreements for any institution (main and sub) that requests indirect costs (if available).

- B) Signed letter(s) of commitment or support from all subawardees to the main applicant including any pledged cost-share dollars. The letter(s) should be signed by the authorized organizational representative(s).
- C) Signed letter of commitment or support from the main applicant's institution that supports the level of cost-sharing on the application. The letter should be signed by the authorized organizational representative.

IV. SAMS.gov and Unique Entity ID

A Unique Entity ID (UEI) number is required to receive funding from United States federal agencies, including USAID. **Awarded applicants for this RFA must have a UEI number in order to receive funding.** If your organization does not have a UEI number or only has a DUNS number, please initiate the application process to receive a UEI as soon as possible (even before your application is accepted). Note, that the UEI is not exclusive to this RFA, but can be used to apply for any US federal funding.

To learn more about this, please visit: <https://sam.gov/content/duns-uei>

V. Subrecipient Commitment Form and Mini Audit Form

For reference, these forms will be required by UC Davis for subawardees. Applicants can review to familiarize themselves with needed information if their applications are selected for funding. Link for documents: [Subrecipient Commitment Form](#) and [Mini-Audit Form](#)

Evaluation Criteria

Application Evaluation Process

Applications will be reviewed by at least three reviewers external to the Horticulture Innovation Lab Management Entity using a process developed by the LASER (Long-term Assistance and Services for Research) PULSE (Partners for University-Led Solutions Engine), a five-year, \$70M Cooperative Agreement (#7200AA18CA00009) funded through USAID's Innovation, Technology, and Research Hub. Reviewers are solicited worldwide and have relevant experience to the topic areas and region. When possible, the external reviewers will be topical experts based in the relevant region. External reviewer ratings and comments will be combined to determine which applications best meet the criteria. Final approval of all Horticulture Innovation Lab projects is made by the Horticulture Innovation Lab Management Entity in consultation with the USAID AOR.

1. (35%) Research Merit: This criterion encompasses the potential to advance knowledge in the field, as well as the soundness of the methodology. The application will be judged on the following elements:

- a. **Scientific merit:** Is the technical plan for carrying out the proposed activities well-reasoned, well-organized, and based on a sound rationale? To what extent do the proposed activities appropriately build on existing, completed research or learning projects?
- b. **Novel ideas and approaches:** To what extent do the proposed activities explore creative, original, or potentially transformative concepts that will advance knowledge, understanding, and practice? To what extent do the proposed activities avoid duplication with on-going research or learning projects?
- c. **Resources and capacity:** Are there adequate resources and capacities for the PI (at the prime institution and through partnering/collaborations) to carry out the proposed research activities? Are the qualifications of the individuals, and the institutional experience, appropriate for the proposed activities? Is the budget for the proposed work sufficient?
- d. **User participation and application:** How are potential users involved in the identification of researchable challenges and possible solutions of this research? Are there appropriate mechanisms in place to ensure applicability of innovations / solutions that are developed through this research? What group of people does this research aim to benefit and are they accounted for?

2. (35%) Broad Effects: This criterion encompasses the potential to benefit society and contribute to the achievement of specific, desired outcomes for the region; and will be judged based on these questions:

- a) **Potential positive outcomes:** To what extent does the project have the potential to deliver significant and effective solutions to opportunities presented in the sub-themes and broader regional goals?
- b) **Potential scale:** What is the likelihood that the research findings are translated into practice, policy, or products in the region? What partners are involved to ensure this translation?
- c) **Effective dissemination to users:** How well does the proposed research project identify relevant gender issues for the specific context and how has consideration of these contributed to the overall research design? What other relevant social identities must be considered and how are they included? How does the research project plan on getting information about innovation / solutions generated by the project to potential users (e.g. rural women)?

3. (30%) Structure for success: This criterion focuses on the mechanisms in which the research project plans to achieve its research goals. The Horticulture Innovation Lab prioritizes research imagined and implemented by local food system actors. We aim to promote existing leadership and expertise and strengthen capacity and networks to support healthy innovation systems. In addition, the Horticulture Innovation Lab focuses on system-level challenges, and thus expects system-based approaches, such as interdisciplinary and intersectoral collaborations. Successful applications will consider these principles in application development, where appropriate.

- a) **Regional Leadership:** Are project leaders based in the region? Will regional research partners be conducting most of the on-the-ground activity, including trainings and capacity strengthening? Will in-country research leads be responsible for information dissemination such as publications and conference participation? Are local students being engaged? Additionally, is the added value of global network participation demonstrated? (For instance, knowledge exchange on a certain topic will foster development of new solutions or the project team does not have the required expertise in their network.)
- b) **Networks:** How does the project team strengthen local and regional research and innovation networks through engagement between universities, national partners, private sector, etc.?
- c) **Cross-cutting collaborations:** Does the project have an interdisciplinary and/or intersectoral research team and have they demonstrated the applicability and added value of each member of the team? Are there team members that will bring different regional perspectives?
- d) **Reflexive decision making:** Is there a monitoring and evaluation plan that indicates the stages of the project where reflexive action will be taken? Are benchmarks established so progress toward achieving objectives can be measured? Are the indicators of success measurable and the documentation of success legitimate?

Appendix

Appendix I - Gender and Social Inclusion Assessment

Principles

1. Gender refers to socially defined characteristics of men and women, including their different roles and responsibilities within the family, community or in agriculture, and the types of characteristics and behavior expected of them (for instance, women as caring and faithful; men as strong and independent). These issues speak to the ability of women and men in specific communities, among other things, to carry out certain farming activities, and to be able to travel outside their immediate area for training and meetings, to have access to resources or to be sufficiently educated to take full advantage of training.
2. Gender norms vary among cultural groups and across time. It is necessary to be aware of how these norms function in the particular cultural group where you are working because they will affect specific constraints and opportunities for all genders, and they will affect your project's ability to meet outcomes. For instance, if you introduce a technology that is dependent on women's labor, but women do not control the income generated, they may withhold their labor. Also note these norms can be quite location specific, even within the same country and ethnic group so do not make a priori assumptions. Include in your application an explanation of how you will identify and address location-specific norms.

3. Gender issues also speak to who farms which crops and/or which practices do they do in the horticulture value chain, as well as who makes decisions about production, marketing and the use of income. This can also affect project outcomes. For example, women may want to adopt a technology, but lack the access to credit or the ability to make production decisions to do so. Gender norms also affect our 'theories of change.' We may anticipate that increased income will lead to better household nutrition, but numerous studies have found that that is more likely when women have decision-making power over the use of income.

4. All interventions, including technologies and practices, have gender implications. Assess how your proposed intervention will affect intra-household dynamics including labor-use, decision making, control of income or assets, etc. Applications must consider whether an intervention will exacerbate or alleviate intrahousehold inequities.

5. Gender issues also exist in regard to scientists, extension agents and students. Impacts among these groups can translate both quantitatively (numbers represented or involved), and qualitatively (men's and women's perspectives and priorities). Applications should address the role of gender at these professional levels, as well as at the farming level.

6. Applications must consider that one of the Horticulture Innovation Lab's 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 and address this priority in applicant approach.

The Horticulture Innovation Lab Management Entity can provide further help in formulating gender-sensitive criteria and considerations for your specific project. It can also offer training of trainers for teachers and trainers so they can incorporate gender training in their courses throughout the course of your project.

Farm/Enterprise level:

- 1) Specifying the gender division of labor for relevant activities in the application's target area. Clarity in the application of what these are and the implications. If unknown, an application's explanation is needed addressing how the applicant will identify them.
- 2) An application's identification of constraints on women - mobility, resources, time, etc. – and approach for methods of addressing these.
- 3) Clarification in the application on whether applicants will be dealing with men or women producers, marketers, and other stakeholders, or both. If not with both, please explain why not.
- 4) In addition to being gender sensitive, we ask you to be farmer sensitive. Applications will be evaluated on methods for engaging or consulting with farmers and other stakeholders throughout various phases of implementation. An application's clarity in connecting proposed activities, research, and interventions to the expressed needs of the diverse farmers and other stakeholders.

Extension level:

- 1) Applications should aim to have at a minimum 50% women participation rate in project activities. If necessary, collaborate with appropriate women in or near the communities who might be able to work as assistant extension agents. An application's consideration of the constraints female trainers or participants may have is a selection criteria. For instance, a project may want to provide extension workers with bicycles but women in that area have traditionally not ridden bicycles. How will the proposed project or applicant handle this?
- 2) Discuss in your application the constraints in your research area; relevant constraints on women/men farmers could be part of the selection criteria. Reviewers will consider application's effectiveness in assessing whether it is more appropriate and beneficial to have mixed- or single-gender groups, ensuring that trainings are offered at times and locations that enable women's participation, and addressing constraints that women may face in participation such as childcare.
- 3) At the community level, an application's effectiveness in taking into account how men and women are organized into associations, how group activities are structured, and what tasks provide for informal group communication such as doing laundry by the stream, or drinking tea under the shade tree.
- 4) Clarity of an application's gender assessment of the information knowledge transmission systems and their association with a defined problem statement.

Training:

- 1) Short-term in-country training programs should be designed to include both sexes.
- 2) All courses should provide gender training at some level relative to the course subject and level.
- 3) Degree and certificate training should be offered to students of both sexes. The guidelines you should include in your application should be on the lines that 50% women is the desired percentage and the minimum percentage of female students should be 33%. If the percentage of women will be lower than 50% please provide an explanation for this and state what the project will do to ameliorate the situation.

Scientists:

- 1) Applications should include women scientists in both the US and host countries in project design and implementation. If this is not feasible, applications need to describe the constraints that have prevented this.

Appendix II – Youth in Development

Sizeable youth populations are both an opportunity and a challenge. Development can be accelerated when the majority of youth in any country are able to make significant contributions to economic, social, and political life in a way that lifts countries out of poverty, ensures greater stability and promotes healthier societies. Alternatively, peace, progress and prosperity are held back when countries are unable to meet the basic needs of their youth. With few exceptions, in the coming decades, developing countries have or will have a population age structure that favors economic growth. For some countries, the window to capitalize on this opportunity is short, while for others, it is just opening or still a few decades away.

To address this employment challenge and reach our poverty reduction goals, youth need to be empowered with profitable and desirable opportunities. Many of these opportunities are found within rural and urban food and agriculture systems. For those youth who see their best prospects and pathway out of poverty as being outside of agriculture and in urban areas, urban livelihoods and migration afford a degree of livelihood independence from climate risks and can provide a more stable source of income that can be used for investment on- and off-farm. This stability builds resilience both for those migrating and for those who remain in rural areas and are connected to them (via social capital and remittances).

Rural to urban migration has been a historically inexorable force as youth seek employment, education, and opportunity in cities. Nonetheless, rural and urban youth, particularly young women, can benefit from and drive inclusive agriculture-sector growth through employment and entrepreneurship opportunities across value chains. Additionally, empowering youth with nutrition education and services is important to improve nutritional status and gender equality outcomes. As many pregnancies occur during youth, investing in adolescent girls is especially important, since pregnancy and birth in adolescence are related to a number of poor outcomes for mother and child, including low birth weight, which is associated with an increased risk for stunting.

Programs that utilize a Positive Youth Development (PYD) approach have increasingly demonstrated that building the intellectual, physical, social, and emotional competence of youth is a more effective development strategy than one that focuses solely on correcting problems (Scales, Roehlkepartain, & Fraher, 2012). Incorporating a PYD approach during program design and using indicators of positive development to evaluate the program can help to assess trends in positive outcomes over the life of a project. When applied across multiple projects and sectors, implementers can ensure PYD program effectiveness within and across sectors, provide evidence for increased funding, and set the stage for program sustainability and scale-up. Implementers can incorporate and measure PYD in youth programming to improve program performance over time, contribute to the body of evidence on PYD, and ultimately influence multi-sector outcomes and impact. For more information on PYD and tools for implementation, visit the Youth Power website: <https://www.youthpower.org/>

Horticulture Innovation Lab projects will integrate youth issues, with particular attention to adolescent girls and young women, into programming and policy, and promote young people's role in their design and implementation to reduce poverty, improve nutrition, and help men, women, and households become more resilient. Activities engaging youth will use proven methods that foster effective learning and excite young people, such as hands-on, experiential learning relevant to local needs and potential employment opportunities. In addition, we will promote digital technologies, which are proving to be a powerful pull factor for regaining the excitement of youth in agriculture, due to more dynamic information sharing, opportunities to think creatively, and new business models in the agricultural sector.

Examples of activities we will support that contribute to this result include:

- Addressing barriers and risks that disproportionately affect young people's ability to enter into and profit from agricultural activities, including activities outside production
- Extending and innovating demand-driven agricultural education, extension, and applied research to build practical technical skills that empower youth in local agricultural systems and build resilience

- Applying technology to engage youth, with an emphasis on digital technologies such as mobile money, mobile devices, and the internet
- Developing agricultural business and entrepreneurship skills, including financial management and related skills needed for youth to succeed as producers, processors, input suppliers, or other entrepreneurial actors in the agriculture sector
- Developing youth-friendly nutrition services and nutrition-specific programming
- Developing innovative and appropriate business models and sources of capital to promote financial inclusion, business mentorships, and business advisory services

Appendix III - Nutrition and Horticulture

A well-nourished population is one of the key objectives of the Horticulture Innovation Lab, and is uniquely important to poverty reduction. Poor households often subsist on singular and staple-based diets that are lacking in many of the essential vitamins and nutrients needed for healthy growth. These populations often lack access to nutritious foods like fruits, vegetables (as well as animal source foods). Lack of diversity in the diet (low dietary diversity) is strongly associated with deficiencies of essential micronutrients such as vitamin A, folate (vitamin B9) iron, and zinc. We know that micronutrient deficiencies that start during childhood have long-term health and nutrition consequences that affect their cognitive and physical development, and overall well-being of those children. Children and women of reproductive age are especially vulnerable because they have particularly high micronutrient requirements.

Poor diet quality and micronutrient malnutrition affects not only the poorest of the poor, but also low/middle-income populations across the developing world. These families often rely on cheap sources of energy and consume excessive amounts of energy-dense, nutrient-poor foods, a situation that leads to increased risk of overweight, obesity, and related chronic diseases. Limited availability of nutritious foods such as fruits and vegetables, lack of disposable income, lack of knowledge and information, and general lack of demand for nutritious foods are critical factors that limit poor people's access to and consumption of fruits and vegetables.

Improvements in local and regional horticulture could help address two key components of food insecurity; inadequate access to and availability of micronutrient-rich fruits and vegetables. High-value horticulture improves access through income generation all along the value chain and by making nutritious foods more available in local and regional markets. The most successful horticulture interventions also address the third component of food insecurity; food use, through behavior change communication, nutrition counseling, and other avenues.

Key concepts to consider:

1. What is malnutrition? Malnutrition can be defined in two ways, chronic (long term) or acute (short term). Chronic malnutrition leads to stunting or low-height-for-age in children, whereas acute malnutrition leads to wasting, or low-weight-for-height children. Acute malnutrition is short term and can be immediately deadly. This type of malnutrition is best treated through clinical means where children can be closely monitored and cared for. Chronic malnutrition happens over the long term, when children do not have

access to proper health and diverse diets. Their growth (physical and cognitive) becomes stunted and they are at a higher risk of additional health related difficulties for the rest of their life.

2. Dietary diversity—how many food groups a person routinely eats—can be used as a proxy for the nutritional adequacy of a diet. Eating a variety of fruits and vegetables is key to achieving dietary diversity and meeting daily micronutrient needs.
3. Double burden of malnutrition: As diets shift in developing countries, malnutrition can include both people who are undernourished and people who are overweight. Undernutrition and overnutrition can co-exist, even in the same household. Increasing fruit and vegetable consumption is one of the few dietary strategies that can help improve both situations.
4. The 7 pathways through which agriculture impacts human nutrition:
 - a. Own production -> food consumption
 - b. Income -> food purchase
 - c. Income->healthcare purchase
 - d. Food prices ->food purchase
 - e. Women's time use ->care capacity
 - f. Women's workload -> maternal energy use
 - g. Women's control of income -> resource allocation
5. Nutrition through the value chain: Along the value chain there are many points to intervene to improve nutrition; some of these are described below.
 - a. Outreach- behavior change communication, nutrition counseling;
 - b. Inputs- diverse and quality seeds, water and sanitation, proper use of chemical inputs;
 - c. Production- nutritious crops, on farm diversification, nutritional value at harvest, women's time and labor;
 - d. Storage- food safety considerations, postharvest practices that can maintain nutritional quality of crops, reducing overall losses;
 - e. Processing- maintaining nutritional quality of final product, food safety, reducing overall losses, packaging;
 - f. Distribution- food safety, proper cold storage and handling;
 - g. Marketing- increasing demand of nutritious crops and products, creative marketing campaigns;
 - h. Consumption- promotion of nutrition messages, behavior change, cooking classes, home gardens for consumption.