



RESEARCH PROGRAM ON  
**Climate Change,  
Agriculture and  
Food Security**



## Call for Concept Notes

### CCAFS Flagship 2: Climate Information Services and Climate-Informed Safety Nets

#### **Summary**

The CGIAR Research Program on Climate Change, Agriculture and Food Security (CCAFS) is making a call for concept notes for innovative research-for-development that contributes to the resilience and adaptive capacity of agriculture through climate information services and climate-informed food security safety nets. Concept notes must specify not only the research outputs that are being proposed, but also a clear set of development outcomes, and a plausible theory of change on how this research will contribute to the larger goals of CCAFS and the CGIAR Intermediate Development Outcomes that CCAFS is adopting. Concept notes should generally align with priorities and theories of change specific to each of the regions where CCAFS works. This document describes CCAFS Flagship 2, regional priorities as they relate to Flagship 2, concept note submission process and format, and how concept notes will be evaluated.

CCAFS is a research program that involves all 15 Centers of the CGIAR, in a strategic partnership with FutureEarth, that addresses the challenge of ensuring food and rural livelihood security in the face of a variable and changing climate. The overarching objectives of CCAFS are: (1) To develop and test pro-poor adaptation and mitigation technologies, practices and systems; and (2) To provide diagnosis and analysis that will ensure cost effective investments, the inclusion of agriculture in climate change policies, and the inclusion of climate issues in agricultural policies, from the sub-national to the global level in a way that brings benefits to the rural poor.

#### **What is Flagship 2 about?**

##### **Vision**

The vision that motivates Flagship 2 is that the livelihoods of farmers across Asia, Africa and Latin America are supported by effective climate information services, and protected by timely and well-targeted food security safety nets.

##### **Targets**

By 2024, locally-relevant climate information services; effective, climate-informed advisory services; and timely, well-targeted safety net interventions will enhance the resilience and adaptive capacity of 10 million farmers, at least 50% of whom are women, to climate-related risk in CCAFS regions. By 2018, five major international or national food system organizations (e.g., humanitarian response, government food security planning, food trade) will be using tools informed by CCAFS science to manage the impacts of climatic extremes on food security.

##### **Approach**

Climate-smart agriculture must be underpinned by effective climate information services and climate-informed safety nets as agriculture becomes increasingly information-dependent,

traditional knowledge struggles to keep up with the pace of change, and greater climatic extremes challenge the capacity of small-scale farmers. Climate information services that are credible, accessible, equitable, and aligned with agricultural advisory services will support small-scale farmers and the institutions that serve them. Shared knowledge about the changing risks due to a variable and changing climate will inform selection of appropriate climate-smart technologies and practices. CCAFS will identify mechanisms to integrate climate information and services into decision support tools and processes used by governments and development actors for targeting investments in agriculture. Advance information about the upcoming growing season will contribute to enabling small-scale farmers to intensify production, adopt improved technology and practice, invest in their soils in climatically favorable seasons, and to protect scarce assets in unfavorable seasons. Improved climate-related information will also support public, private and civil society actors in the food system – whose decisions impact rural food and livelihood security – to manage the impacts of climate shocks. Whenever the impact of a climate shock, such as drought or flooding, exceeds the capacity of small-scale farmers to cope, climate-informed, timely, well-targeted safety net interventions will build adaptive capacity by protecting food security, productive assets and infrastructure. The resulting security will foster investment in climate-smart technologies and practices. The safety net aspect of the research involves the participation of public and private sectors, and actors involved in the management of the whole food chain and those involved in emergency relief. It will thus also have outcomes for food security and crisis management beyond the farm.

## **Components**

Flagship 2 project funds will be allocated among four components:

### ***2.1 Climate-based methods and tools for seasonal agricultural prediction and early warning***

Climate-based agricultural forecasting and early warning systems, coupled with appropriate response mechanisms, can enable governments and humanitarian organizations to protect rural communities from the impacts of adverse extremes; and enable rural communities to intensify production when conditions are favorable, while protecting their livelihoods against the long-term consequences of adverse extremes. Prior Theme 2 activities in this area include seasonal crop production forecasting, and several innovations (high-resolution historic meteorological data, web-based climate information products) that enhance the ability of national meteorological services to provide information tailored to the needs and scale of agricultural decision-making. A major output of this work, still under development, is the CCAFS Regional Agricultural Forecasting Toolbox (CRAFT). Examples of initiatives that would fit this component of Flagship 2 include: improving forecasts of agriculturally-relevant meteorological variables and time scales, particularly seasonal; improved methods to provide historic and forecast climate information tailored to farmers' needs; development, evaluation, capacity-building and applications of tools (e.g., CRAFT) to forecast seasonal climate impacts on crops, rangelands, biological threats or irrigation resources; and development of early warning systems for climatic extremes and their food security impacts. Climate-based prediction and early warning must be connected to decision-making in order to achieve development Outcomes. It may therefore be appropriate to integrate this component with other Flagship 2 components. This area of work will generally require strong climate science partnerships. Global and regional institutions or programs, with activity and capacity that are relevant to CCAFS, include: IRI (global), RIMES (S and SE Asia), SERVIR (E Africa, S Asia, Latin America), FEWSNet (E and W Africa, S Asia), AGRHYMET (W Africa) and ICPAC (E Africa).

### ***2.2 Knowledge and methods for designing and implementing equitable climate information and advisory services for smallholder communities***

In the face of increasing uncertainty, climate information and advisory services offer great potential to inform farmer decision-making, enable farmers to better manage risk and take advantage of favorable climate conditions, and help farmers adapt to change. Climate services

are receiving increasing attention globally among development organizations as a way to support climate change adaptation and immediate development goals. This active area of Theme 2 research has included: understanding good practice from existing initiatives across Africa and S Asia; piloting participatory action research to co-design and evaluate climate services with farmers at CCAFS sites; equipping intermediaries who work with farmers to communicate climate information; ICT-based communication; identifying and addressing bottlenecks to scaling up; addressing gender and social equity challenges; and South-South knowledge exchange. Examples of initiatives that would fit this component of Flagship 2 include: piloting farmer participatory action research and evaluation around climate services; developing capacity of national meteorological services and NARES to provide information and advisory services tailored to farmer needs; institutional or ICT-based climate information communication channels; evaluation of existing climate services for agriculture; and initiatives to address gender and social inequities in climate services. Projects dealing with this component will generally require meaningful climate science and climate services partnerships in order to be effective. Relevant organizations working on technical or implementation aspects of climate services for agriculture include: WMO-GFCS (global), Climate Services Partnership (global), IRI (global), U. Reading, World Vision, CARE, and IFRC (via their Climate Center). Major development funders with interest in climate services for agriculture include: WB-PPCR, USAID Global Climate Change Office, IFAD-ASAP, DfID, Norway (funding GFCS), and UNDP.

### ***2.3 Food security safety nets and policy interventions for dealing with impacts of climate-related shocks***

Where a climate-related shock may exceed the capacity of rural communities to cope, a range of safety net and related policy interventions have the potential to prevent long-term loss of livelihood potential. Timing is particularly important when food insecurity reaches a point that requires outside assistance, as delayed intervention can lead to long-term loss of livelihood potential and increased vulnerability. Theme 2 work in this area has included information and evidence to support: sub-national food security and disaster risk reduction planning, food security humanitarian response, and national social protection programs. Examples of initiatives that would fit this component of Flagship 2 include: integrate improved climate or early warning information into food security planning or response processes; evidence to support changes in the nature, timing or targeting of food security safety net interventions; mechanisms to coordinate action between local agricultural development efforts, and food security management at a national or regional level. The programs, institutions and policy environments that are the target of this component often operate in isolation from agricultural development. While this component is essential for a comprehensive approach to building resilience of agriculture to climate-related risk, few CGIAR Centers have significant work in this area. Viable projects dealing with this component will therefore likely require meaningful partnerships with, e.g., food security information and response organizations. Global institutions and initiatives that may be relevant include: IPC (food security Integrated Phase Classification), WFP, FAO, FSIN (Food Security Information Network), FEWSNet, UNDP (particularly S and SE Asia). Regional organizations with relevant interests or mandate include: CILSS-AGRHYMET (W Africa), IGAD (E Africa), NEPAD (Africa), ASEAN (SE Asia).

### ***2.4 Knowledge and methods to design and target equitable weather-related insurance programs that benefit smallholder communities***

Well-designed and appropriately targeted insurance can contribute to the resilience of farmers to a variable and changing climate by protecting productive assets; and by enabling access to credit and improved technologies and practices. Emphasis is on index-based insurance that targets weather-related risks. Concept notes should specify what function insurance will play (e.g., productive safety net, enabling access to credit or uptake of climate-smart technologies and practices, income or consumption smoothing), and how it will be integrated with other adaptation or development interventions. Concept notes should also be clear about how the CGIAR will partner with other organizations for research and outcomes, and about the added

value that the CGIAR brings. While the majority of CGIAR Centers do some work on insurance, greater integration across Centers will likely increase opportunity to partner effectively with relevant development and private sector partners, and position the CGIAR's insurance research community to deliver greater development outcomes. Examples of initiatives that would fit this component of Flagship 2 include: methods to target appropriate insurance designs to specific climate-related development challenges and contexts; improving index or contract design; addressing behavioral and economic constraints to index insurance uptake; and understanding and addressing constraints to scaling up sustainably. Relevant development initiatives are generally more geographically targeted for insurance than for the other three components of Flagship 2. Significant relevant initiatives that are seeking to bring insurance to smallholder agriculture in CCAFS regions include: R4 Rural Resilience Initiative (E and W Africa), Syngenta Foundation (Kilimo Salama, E Africa), and the Weather Risk Management Facility (WRMF). Relevant institutions involved in technical or implementation aspects of insurance for smallholder agriculture include: WFP, IRI, WB, OXFAM America, World Vision, and several organizations in the insurance industry. Major relevant funders include: USAID, IFAD, GIZ; and the philanthropic arms of SwissRe and Syngenta.

## Regional Priorities

Project design should be tailored to particular regional and national contexts. CCAFS Regional Programs (East Africa, West Africa, South Asia, Southeast Asia, and Latin America) have invested heavily in strategic partnerships, stakeholder processes to identify research needs and Outcome opportunities, and pathways toward major Outcomes. Regional priorities and impact pathway summaries, currently undergoing vetting and refinement, are [available here<sup>1</sup>](#) and should be considered in project design.

## Process

This call is being released on 13 December 2013. Concept notes should be submitted by 1 March 2014. Any institution can submit a concept note, but a CGIAR Center must be a significant partner. We are especially interested in engaging the global change research community, in a manner that brings the complementarities between the global change and CGIAR research communities to bear on the challenges outlined in this call. Projects should be proposed for 4-year implementation, preferably be grounded in CCAFS Regions<sup>2</sup>, and have clear indicators and intermediate outcomes after 2 years.

We encourage interaction with the CCAFS leadership in the development of ideas for this call, until 15 February. The key people to discuss ideas with are:

- Flagship Leader: James Hansen ([jhansen@iri.columbia.edu](mailto:jhansen@iri.columbia.edu))
- Latin America Regional Leader: Ana Maria Loboguerrero ([a.m.loboguerrero@cgiar.org](mailto:a.m.loboguerrero@cgiar.org))
- West Africa Regional Leader: Robert Zougmore ([r.zougmore@cgiar.org](mailto:r.zougmore@cgiar.org))
- East Africa Regional Leader: James Kinyangi ([j.kinyangi@cgiar.org](mailto:j.kinyangi@cgiar.org))
- South Asia Regional Leader: Pramod Aggarwal ([p.k.aggarwal@cgiar.org](mailto:p.k.aggarwal@cgiar.org))
- South East Asia Regional Leader: Leocadio Sebastian ([L.Sebastian@irri.org](mailto:L.Sebastian@irri.org))
- Resource person for Climate Services: Arame Tall ([a.tall@cgiar.org](mailto:a.tall@cgiar.org))
- Resource person for Food Security Safety Nets: Michael Sheinkman ([m.sheinkman@irri.org](mailto:m.sheinkman@irri.org))

Concept notes should be sent to Torben Timmermann ([t.timmermann@cgiar.org](mailto:t.timmermann@cgiar.org)) using the template at the end of this document, by 5 pm CET on 1 March 2014. Any general queries about process can also be addressed to Torben.

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<sup>1</sup> <http://ccafs.cgiar.org/sites/default/files/files/Table%20showing%20draft%20regional%20priorities.pdf>

<sup>2</sup> 60-80% of CCAFS funds will go to the targeted regions, thus allowing for some work to be carried out in other regions.

## Evaluation process and criteria

Concept notes will be evaluated using a Delphi process, based on the criteria described below. Project concepts that are successful in the first evaluation by CCAFS management and externally commissioned reviewers will present at the CCAFS Science Meeting the week of 7 April 2014. Further evaluation will take place during that meeting, including a Delphi evaluation process to rank concept notes, and a dynamic process that may involve integration across concept notes and selection among high-ranking concept notes to develop a desired portfolio of projects. Successful concept note proponents will then need to provide more detailed project proposals for funding to commence 1 January 2015. Initial funding will be provided for 2 years (2015-2016), with a further 2-year renewal depending on progress. A total of up to about US\$6m of annual funding will be made available for successful projects.

Evaluation of individual concept notes will be based on six criteria:

### **1. Delivery of Outcomes (25%)**

This criterion includes contribution to the Flagship Outcome targets, the magnitude of the proposed Outcome, and the likelihood of achieving the Outcome. How compelling is the proposed Outcome? Based on the evidence given, what is the likelihood of achieving the Outcome? How effectively does the proposed project incorporate the partnerships and processes needed to deliver the Outcome? Are suitable intermediate indicators identified to gauge progress toward the Outcome?

### **2. Alignment with CCAFS theory of change and regional priorities (20%)**

Projects should be consistent with the CCAFS theory of change ([see CCAFS draft Phase 2 proposal](#)<sup>3</sup> for more detail on this). Regional-focused concept notes (as opposed to global ones) will be evaluated on degree of focus on CCAFS [regional priorities](#)<sup>4</sup>, which have been derived through extended interaction with stakeholders, and degree to which the project is likely to contribute to the regional impact pathway. While project concepts outside of CCAFS focus regions are possible, at least 80% of the CCAFS portfolio is expected to be in the focus regions and countries.

### **3. Value for money (15%)**

The score for this criterion will be based on the magnitude of the Outcomes proposed and the budget requested. Also important is the amount of matching funds (from bilateral sources) that will be leveraged. What is the evidence that the project will be able to raise the expected bilateral funds (including external funds leveraged by non-CGIAR partners, if relevant)?

### **4. Demonstrated capacity and partnerships (20%)**

How strong is the evidence that the project team has the required breadth of expertise? Are appropriate external technical partners engaged substantively in project design and implementation? Some topics in this call are beyond the traditional mandate of CGIAR Centers, meaning that successful projects will require external partnerships with institutions with a proven track record that complements CGIAR research for development capacity.

### **5. Innovation (10%)**

CCAFS is looking for novel ways to generate solutions, and innovative or creative approaches will be rewarded. This evaluation criterion will be especially considered in generating the

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3

<http://ccafs.cgiar.org/sites/default/files/files/CCAFS%20Phase%202%20Second%20Order%20Draft%20plus%20ToC.pdf>

<sup>4</sup> <http://ccafs.cgiar.org/sites/default/files/files/Table%20showing%20draft%20regional%20priorities.pdf>

portfolio of projects, with the aim of including some higher risk innovative approaches along with low risk more standard approaches.

**6. Attention to cross-cutting issues (10%)**

CCAFS prioritizes certain cross cutting issues, which include gender, partnerships, inter-Center collaboration, collaboration with Future Earth, open-access data and communications. Projects that embrace these principles are encouraged.

## Concept note template<sup>5</sup>

<b>CCAFS Flagship</b>
<i>Line 1: CCAFS Flagship where this project falls</i> <i>Line 2: Specific Flagship component(s) being addressed (e.g. 1.2, 2.1 etc.)</i>
<b>Title</b>
<i>Give a title for this project (max 2 lines)</i>
<b>Regional Focus</b>
<i>Geographic region in which this project will take place.</i> Delete all but one of the following: <b>Latin America, West Africa, East Africa, South Asia, South-East Asia, Other</b> (specify), <b>Global</b> (if a global activity, not regional).
<b>Target countries</b>
<i>List the countries where research will take place, if relevant</i>
<b>Target CCAFS sites (climate smart villages)</b>
<i>List CCAFS sites, if any, that will be involved. Consult these at: <a href="http://ccafs.cgiar.org/regions">http://ccafs.cgiar.org/regions</a></i>
<b>Project summary</b>
<i>Describe the basic idea of this project, in a format suitable for general readership on the web (max 10 lines)</i>

End Page 1

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<sup>5</sup> This concept note must be a maximum of four pages. Do not change the font. The blue text may be removed.

<p><b>Key research outputs (Criteria 5)</b></p> <p><i>Research products that will be developed to deliver the Outcome (e.g. prioritization tools, CSA evidence, etc.). What are the new innovations? Who is going to be doing what research activities, and what do they aim to accomplish during the project? (max 6 bullets)</i></p>
<p><b>Outcomes after four years (contributes to Criteria 1 and 3)</b></p> <p><i>Outcome statement. What will the next-users do differently (e.g., policies, investments, services, practice) as a result of project outputs? Be specific, relative to the Targets of the Flagship (max 10 lines)</i></p>
<p><b>Contribution to CCAFS theory of change and regional impact pathways (Criteria 2)</b></p> <p><i>Very brief narrative of assumptions made in the project, and strategies to ensure that research outputs will contribute to the theory of change of CCAFS, and the regional impact pathways. If your activity requires inputs from other projects in order to achieve Outcomes, then include them in the theory of change (max 10 lines)</i></p>

End Page 2

**Contribution to CGIAR Intermediate Development Outcomes (IDOs) as specified in [CCAFS Phase 2 document](#)<sup>6</sup> (contributes to criteria 1 and 3)**

**Gender and social differentiation**

*How will this activity contribute to increased control, by women and other marginalized groups, of assets, inputs, information and decision-making? Give a concrete measurable contribution (measurable by end of 2016). (max 6 lines)*

**Adaptive capacity**

*How will this activity increase capacity in low-income communities (and supporting organizations) to adapt to climate variability, shocks and longer-term changes leading to more climate-resilient livelihoods? Also give a concrete measurable contribution (measurable by end of 2016). (max 6 lines)*

**Policies**

*Answer as relevant (max 6 lines):*

- *Number of countries where CCAFS science will inform agricultural, climate or food security policies (by 2016). Number of individuals that will benefit (by 2023).*
- *Resulting annual percent increase in investment in climate-smart agriculture (by 2018).*
- *Number and identity of global, regional, national development organizations using CCAFS-derived tools and approaches to inform climate-smart agriculture investment (by 2018).*

**Food security**

*How will this activity increase and stabilize access to food by rural and urban poor? Give a concrete measurable contribution (measurable by end of 2016). (max 6 lines)*

End Page 3

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6

<http://ccafs.cgiar.org/sites/default/files/files/CCAFS%20Phase%202%20Second%20Order%20Draft%20plus%20ToC.pdf>

<b>Budget (US\$ per year) (Contributes to criteria 3)</b>				
	<b>2015</b>	<b>2016</b>	<b>2017</b>	<b>2018</b>
Requested funds ("CGIAR Window 1/2")				
Bilateral (raised by CGIAR Centers)				
Leveraged (by non-CGIAR partners) <i>If secure, please give email address of contact person.</i>				
Total project budget				
<b>Primary partners that will receive funding (contributes to criteria 4)</b>				
<i>List in bullets key partners who will receive project funding, including role, and ballpark percent of budget assigned to each.</i>				
<b>Other partnerships for enabling outcomes (contributes to criteria 4)</b>				
<i>List the partners involved (not receiving funding) for out-scaling and achieving impact (e.g. international climate finance orgs, governments, development agencies), including role.</i>				
<b>Evidence of capacity (contributes to criteria 4)</b>				
<i>Brief summary of evidence that the project team has the required breadth of expertise, and/or that external technical partners provide the necessary capacity (max 6 lines)</i>				
<b>Degree of focus on cross-cutting issues of importance to CCAFS (criteria 6)</b>				
<i>Briefly describe how gender and social differentiation, inter-Center collaboration, capacity building, and open-access data are to be considered in this project (max 6 lines)</i>				

End Page 4

## Annex 1: Glossary of Terms

**Activity:** What research, training, engagement and other things do we need to do in order to achieve an output? In relation to CCAFS in general, an “activity” relates to a bundle of work that is planned and reported on, to a value of roughly \$250,000 per year (although there is quite a lot of flexibility regarding this number).

**Attribution versus contribution:** The Consortium Office is expecting CRPs to take full responsibility for putting in place the partnerships to deliver on outcomes and impacts. We are fully responsible for achieving our activities and outputs. But responsibility for achieving outcomes and impacts is not 100%. What can be done at the CRP level?

- First, we take responsibility for outcomes and impact in terms of identifying what we are trying to influence with our activities and outputs, and putting in place the partnerships and collaborative mechanisms to make this happen.
- Second, we take responsibility for identifying and facilitating the changes that are necessary to create an environment that enables outcomes and impacts. This is a transformation in the research for development process.
- Third, we monitor outcome and impact targets (as in an early warning system) to see if what we are doing is leading to the outcomes and impacts we have identified as desirable, even though those outcomes and impacts are well down the line and mostly out of our control. This is also a transformation in the research for development process – we need to take responsibility for monitoring things out of our control.

**End-user:** The population that we want to benefit from the target impact. The population of end-users is usually quite massive, making it unfeasible for a project or program to work with them directly to achieve an impact.

### **Indicator:**

**Process indicator:** an indicator that tracks key stages in a process that leads to outputs and outcomes. In relation to flagship projects, there should be at least one process indicator per year for each activity proposed.

**Outcome indicator:** an indicator that tracks the achievement of an explicit outcome or end-point of some action.

**Impact:** What change do we wish to see for end-users? An impact is long-term (10, 20, 50 years), and usually occurs sometime after a program or project has closed. An impact occurs because of many things, including variables outside the control of a program. Therefore, a program can claim to have contributed to creating an environment that enables an impact, but cannot generally claim to be responsible for the impact. By the time an impact happens, it is 95% out of the control of the program implementers. Most impact pathways will have early impacts leading to later impacts.

**Impact Pathway:** A representation of the steps within a theory of change; does not capture cross cutting strategies that inform, influence and contribute to the desired change. The basic steps in an impact pathway are activities with deliverables, outputs, outcomes and impacts.

**Next-user:** The group of boundary partners that can create an environment that enables the target impact for end-users. This group can also be large, but targeting our activities to achieve outcomes at the next-user level is feasible.

**Outcome:** What changes in next-users need to happen so that an enabling environment is created and the impact target can occur? Most impact pathways will have early outcomes in terms of knowledge, attitude and skills changes leading to later outcomes in terms of changes in practice. By the time an outcome happens, it may be at least 50% out of the control of the program implementers.

**Outcome Mapping:** Tools for developing an impact pathway.

**Output:** What will we produce so that next-users have the necessary knowledge, skills and attitudes to achieve an outcome? In relation to flagship projects, an output is the result of a set of activities.

**Partners:** Individuals and organizations that we strategically choose to work with because of their expertise, network and influence with next-users.

**Project:** A set of coherent activities (see above) undertaken to produce outputs and then outcomes.

**Theory of Change:** A hypothesis about how a project or program will contribute to a desired change. A TOC states the assumptions that were made concerning each step in the impact pathway, and the strategy that will be implemented to ensure that there is movement between each step in the impact pathway.