

Frequently Asked Questions

CCAFS Flagship 1 and 2 call

Concept note process

Can concept notes be submitted in a language other than English?

No. Because concept notes will be reviewed by committees and CGIAR Center contact points, concept notes must be submitted in English.

Can any supporting documentation be submitted with concept notes?

No. Supporting document will not be considered in the evaluation.

Budget and funding issues

Are there restrictions to the amount of funds requested per project?

Although the current Flagship calls did not specify budget limits, the rule of thumb is that requested CGIAR funds for a project should be between about \$250k and \$1M per year – small enough to allow us to develop a strong and balanced project portfolio, and large enough to ensure that each project is at a scale that can lead to significant development outcomes. Projects are expected to leverage additional funds. The amount leveraged will be considered in the evaluation, as part of the “Value for money” criterion.

How many projects will be awarded under each Flagship?

The number of awards will depend on the sizes of projects that are finally approved. While the number of awards for each of the current Flagship calls could range from about 6 to 20 (based on roughly \$6M per year available for each, and \$250k - \$1M per year per project), the final portfolios are expected to be smaller than the maximum (i.e., roughly 7-10 projects under Flagship 1; 8-16 under Flagship 2).

What can award funds cover? Can personnel costs be covered?

Awards can cover staff and other necessary operational costs for participating institutions. For concept notes that are accepted, mutually acceptable budgets will be developed at the full proposal stage.

Is leveraging of other funds required?

Co-funding is expected, and will be considered in the evaluation as part of the “Value for money” criterion.

Where the call notes, “Also important is the amount of matching funds from bilateral sources that will be leveraged,” does this imply a general preference for ensuring funding from official bilateral agencies rather than other sources of funding?

No. In CGIAR jargon, “bilateral” refers to project funding from a specific donor to a specific CGIAR Center, in contrast to the consortium of funders that collectively allocate funds either through the CGIAR system or to CGIAR Research Programs (such as CCAFS). The intent is that the project should include complementary project funds, in addition to the funds to be awarded in response to this call.

The concept note template has a row for “bilateral funds” raised by CGIAR centers, and below one for “leveraged funds” (by non-CGIAR partners). What is the difference?

This distinction arises from the terms that the CGIAR uses for categories of funding. Both of these terms refer to a funding source other than those from the CGIAR Fund. “Bilateral” funds by definition go through a CGIAR Center. Since the CGIAR doesn’t have a general term for non-CGIAR funds that are raised by a non-CGIAR partner institute, we refer to this as “leveraged.”

Partner eligibility and roles

Referring to: "Any institution can submit a concept note, but a CGIAR Center must be a significant partner," should we contact the CGIAR Center before submitting, or can this be done later in the process?

In order for a concept note to be considered, it must be evident that one or more CGIAR Centers are seriously involved in the development and (if funded) implementation of the project concept.

The call notes that “any institution can submit a concept note, but a CGIAR Center must be a significant partner.” Can any partner lead a Flagship project, or does the CGIAR Center need to be the lead institution?

In terms of project management, there are no requirements about who should lead. Partners should organize in a way that makes sense to ensure that the work is completed and leads to the proposed development outcomes. Project management issues will need to be addressed more clearly at the full proposal stage. It must be apparent in the concept note that the CGIAR Center(s) play a serious role in design and implementation. Because of the mechanisms that are in place, awarded funds will be channeled through a participating CGIAR Center, who will be responsible for distributing funds among partners. Please note, the source of funding targets the CGIAR. Across the portfolio of Flagship projects, the majority of funds is expected to support the work of CGIAR Centers.

Can a CGIAR Center that has headquarters outside of a project's target region be the required CGIAR partner?

Yes, as long as it is clear that the project team has the capacity to achieve the research outputs and development outcomes.

Are there any restrictions on the types of organizations that can participate as funded project partners?

There are no restrictions on the types of organizations that can participate, other than those excluded by law or CGIAR policy (e.g., terrorist organizations, lobbying organizations).

How many concept notes can an organization submit in response to this call?

There is not a limit to the number that you may submit. But it is also highly unlikely that one organisation will receive many projects. Bear in mind that, for a CN to be considered, it must show serious partnership with at least one CGIAR Center, and partnerships and process that can realistically deliver development Outcomes at a significant scale within four years.

Thematic and geographic scope

Does a concept note have to be specific to the components of the Flagships, or can it relate more generally to the Flagship topic?

A concept note that does not align explicitly with one or more of the components described in the Flagship call will not be considered.

Can a concept note include more than one Flagship, or more than one component of a given Flagship?

A concept must be submitted to a single Flagship. A concept note may address more than one component within a given Flagship, but the "package" should make sense in terms of a coherent strategy toward one or more development outcomes. When putting together the entire CCAFS portfolio, synergies across Flagships will be considered and strengthened.

Is proposed work restricted to CCAFS focus regions and priority countries?

Proposed work is not restricted to CCAFS focus regions and priority countries. However, there is a strong advantage to aligning work where CCAFS has regional program leadership, established priorities and strategy, and a foundation of research and partnership. About 20%-30% of the eventual portfolio of funding across the 4 Flagships may be outside of CCAFS regions, to accommodate CGIAR Centers that work in other regions, and are in a position to make highly strategic contributions to the CCAFS research agenda and relevant development outcomes.

Is CCAFS interested in projects that are focused on a single region, or is there room to propose a project that include or compare multiple regions?

There is no preference for projects focused on one or multiple regions. The work should be well grounded in regional priorities. Working across multiple regions should add value that warrants the transaction costs.