

First Call for Expression of Interest for Small Grants for Action Research

Due by 15 March 2008



Programme for Land and Agrarian Studies (PLAAS)

www.plaas.org.za

School of Government University of the Western Cape Private Bag x17 Bellville 7535 t: +27 21 959 3750/3733 f: +27 21 959 3732

Securing Women's Access to Land: Linking Research and Action A Small Grants Project in Southern Africa

**Funded by the International Development Research Centre (IDRC)
In Collaboration with the International Land Coalition (ILC) &
Makerere Institute of Social Research (MISR)**

Overview

The Programme for Land And Agrarian Studies (PLAAS) is launching a call for **expressions of interest** for the inception phase of a new project *Securing Women's Access to Land: Linking Research and Action*. The aim of the project is to learn from women and their lived-experiences at the grass-roots, and respond to their needs through action research. The research processes and outputs are not ends in themselves but will provide evidence and a platform to promote and advocate for a transformative agenda that supports rural women to improve their access to and control over land and other critical resources, as well as improves their livelihoods. The overall project initially supports action research in two sub-regions, namely, East Africa and Southern Africa, but is expected to be scaled out to seven other sub-regions in the world in the future. This particular call focuses on small grants for action research in **Southern Africa**, and will generate locally-based knowledge by supporting civil society and women's organizations that have significant experience in supporting women's land (and other) rights, and are seeking to strengthen already existing research and advocacy capacities. The project is also part of a wider programme that intends to generate knowledge, promote the uptake of research results through capacity strengthening of civil society organizations, opening of spaces for dialogue involving policy makers and donors, and involve a broad variety of stakeholders at the global level to provide feedback and continuously refine the research and action agenda. Small grant awardees will therefore benefit from capacity strengthening research and advocacy activities, regional exchange visits, policy round-table discussions, mentored fieldwork support and participation in an active community of learning.

To be eligible for the call for small grants, proposed activities must demonstrate clear leadership and/or a significant role taken by a Southern African community-based organization (CBO) and involving researchers and activists, and must be implemented in Southern Africa¹. This call will fund four small grants in Southern Africa (including South Africa, Madagascar and two other countries in the sub-region), whereby one small grant up to a maximum of US\$50,000 will be awarded per country. Expressions of interest should clearly describe action-research activities of proposed projects; capacity building activities; dialogue, participatory and collaborative processes between researchers, policy makers, vulnerable women and men, and other stakeholder groups; and outcomes and impacts at the grass-roots level.

Expressions of interest should be prepared using the subject headings provided at the end of this document, and must be received by PLAAS by March 15, 2008.

¹ Eligible Southern African countries for the overall project include: South Africa, Madagascar, Mozambique, Lesotho, Swaziland, Namibia, Botswana, Malawi, Mauritius, Comoros, Zimbabwe, Zambia.

Submit Expressions of interest to PLAAS by email to Ritu Verma at rverma@uwc.ac.za with subject, “PLAAS Call for Expressions of Interest for Small Grants”.

Background

Access to and control over land and other natural resources is crucial for sustainable livelihoods, resource management and overall rural development, yet major socio-cultural, economic, political, and institutional challenges prevent the economically poor from gaining secure tenure rights – and such challenges are more acutely felt by vulnerable women. Inequitable access to land, inputs such as seeds and fertilizer, information, credit, labour, training and other resources constrain women’s productivity and ability to cope. Women also have inequitable decision-making power and their use rights are often vis à vis men — which are easily lost if they are widowed, divorced or orphaned.

Critical research has shown that the greatest roots of inequity lie in gender, socio-cultural, political relations of power that are nonetheless continually being negotiated, contested and resisted at the individual, household, community and national levels, and are shaping and shaped by broader political, economic and socio-cultural relations. Development, the market, the state, culture, global forces and overlapping property rights regimes critically impact on women’s land use and access.

The debate on women’s land rights has reached a critical point, at which there is sufficient understanding of the need for improving women’s access to and control over land, but obstacles persist in practice due to inequitable gender power relations governing society and the lack of policy and/or its implementation. Though advances have been made, links between research and advocacy need to be improved to promote a transformative agenda.

PLAAS is pleased to announce the launching of a new project that focuses on securing women’s access to land. With support from the International Development Research Centre (www.idrc.ca), PLAAS is coordinating a 30 month project that will focus on a small grants programme in Southern Africa which is aimed at supporting action-oriented research projects that link to advocacy in producing credible evidence. The inception phase has recently started. To enhance ownership of the research and action agendas and define the details of the programme, PLAAS is also actively liaising with potential partner organizations and interested individuals in the sub-region. It is expected that the project will expand in other countries, and potential organizations are encouraged to get in contact with the project coordinator for future announcements and further information and updates.

For this purpose, PLAAS, in collaboration with two partner institutions, namely, the International Land Coalition (ILC, responsible for overall administration www.landcoalition.org) a secretariat of the International Fund for Agricultural Development in Italy, and the Makerere Institute for Social Research (MISR, responsible for Eastern Africa) of Makerere University in Uganda, is undertaking the research project, with the overarching aim of learning from women and responding to their needs through applied action research, as follows:

Objective 1: Supporting action-oriented research and advocacy projects in producing credible evidence in Sub-Saharan Africa through a small grants programme jointly coordinated with sub-regional research institutions;

Objective 2: To influence the formulation and implementation of policies relevant to women’s access to and control over land in Sub-Saharan Africa, through national and regional advocacy based on research results;

Objective 3: To refine the research & action agendas on women’s access to and control over land by strengthening multi-stakeholder dialogue and partnerships at the regional and global level.

Research carried out under this project will focus on a) legal frameworks/policy – implementation gaps; b) women’s agency; c) linkages between land and other resources; d) gendered implications of social/economic changes (especially HIV/AIDS, conflict, migration); and e) other critical areas of interest based on grass-roots experiences that affect women’s rights to land (i.e. common property, rights of indigenous peoples to land, adaptation and vulnerability to climate change, overlapping of customary and statutory laws, women’s rights and status vis à vis men’s identities, backlash and shifting gender relations, etc.). It will not only provide evidence but also a platform to promote and advocate for a transformative agenda that supports economically poor women to improve their access to and control over land and other natural (and productive and symbolic) resources, and will be integrated with the wider advocacy relationships and programmes of PLAAS and its collaborating institutions.

The overall result expected will be an enhanced understanding of complex power relations and how they continue to hinder women's access to land. By learning from women themselves and sharing and scaling up this knowledge in trying to influence the formulation and implementation of relevant policies, women's role as change agents will be strengthened. All interested organizations and individuals are also invited to join the DGroup on *Women's Rights and Access to Land*, located at http://www.dgroups.org/groups/genderandland/index.cfm?op=dsp_info.

Eligibility

As mentioned above, to be eligible for the call for small grants, proposed activities must demonstrate clear leadership and a significant role taken by a Southern African community-based organization (CBO), researchers and activists, and must be implemented in Southern Africa. Letters of interest should clearly describe capacity building activities of the proposed project; action-research activities; dialogue processes between researchers, policy makers, vulnerable women and men, and other stakeholder groups; and outcomes and impacts at the grass-roots level.

In addition, to be considered for funding, expressions of interest must meet all the following criteria:

- Projects must contribute to the project's objectives as outlined above and demonstrate a clear focus on gender, land rights and women's access to land. They should have an action research component, as well as a policy, advocacy and activist component.
- While CBOs should take a lead or a significant role in the project, they are also encouraged to form collaborative partnerships with research institutions, NGOs and policy/advocacy institutions.
- The CBO and the project must be based in Southern Africa (i.e. including one of the following, South Africa, Madagascar or any other country in Southern Africa).
- The project leaders must include experienced researchers, development practitioners and activists from Southern African countries, who have i) contributed to relevant research, capacity building and advocacy/policy efforts, ii) have been or are currently involved in relevant gender research, development and/or policy/advocacy organization, and/or iii) have experience in planning, implementing and carrying out action research or development projects in the field focussing on women's and access and control over land. Note that the core team may include expertise from other parts of the sub-region, or developed countries, as appropriate. Experts from developed countries may be involved as resource persons or advisors, for example.
- The proposed project must contribute to and/or include capacity strengthening.
- The expression of interest must outline plans for engaging with vulnerable women and men as well as other key stakeholders such as policy makers, civil society, local or other government departments, NGOs, the private sector and research institutions.
- The expression of interest must be submitted using the subject headings provided in the next section.
- Key project leaders and participants must be available to attend a one week project inception workshop in the first or second week of May (dates to be confirmed).
- The expression of interest must be received by March 15, 2008.

Guidelines for Submitting Expressions of Interest

Format – Expressions of Interest submitted are advised to use the following subject headings and should be approximately 3 pages (not including CVs):

- Title of project
- Organizations involved, their mandates, roles and contact details
- Background information of organizations (especially past and relevant engagement and work undertaken on women's access and rights to land issues, and their outcomes and publications)
- Project focus and rationale
- Overall objective
- Gaps in research that will be identified and filled through action research
- Background information about communities where action research will be carried out
- Overview of methodology
- Team composition
- CV of project leader and key team members
- The training and capacity strengthening needs of the project team
- Participation and ownership by local communities of the research
- Engagement strategy for influencing policy and advocacy.

Submissions - Submissions will be accepted by email or fax. Please submit expressions of interest to rverma@uwc.ac.za with the subject: "PLAAS, Call for Expressions of Interest for Small Grants". Email submissions will receive an email acknowledging receipt of your submission.

Deadline for submission – Expressions of Interest must be received by PLAAS by **March 15, 2008**, and those that meet the eligibility criteria above will be reviewed by the end of March 2008. Proponents of those projects selected for development will be notified in early April 2008, and will be asked to participate in a project inception workshop in early May.

Evaluation - Only those Expressions of Interest that clearly meet the eligibility criteria outlined above will be further evaluated. Expressions of Interest will be reviewed by a team of PLAAS staff and technical experts on gender and land rights. Teams whose Expressions of Interest receive a favourable review will be contacted to further develop their expressions of interest into full project proposals, taking into account the comments of review panelists and with guidance from PLAAS staff.

In the evaluation process, the (1) potential, (2) likelihood of success, and (3) speed and spread of each project's contribution to the objectives and target outcomes of the PLAAS project will be weighed. Successful expressions of interest selected from this call will be contacted and invited to develop detailed full-length proposals that will further elaborate the subject headings above as well as develop additional areas of information including: summary of research proposal, general and specific objectives, details of methodology, team organization, CVs of all team members, results and dissemination, knowledge and partner mobilization, letters of support from partner organizations, monitoring and evaluation, time-table and a detailed project budget. Key project leaders and participants must be available for a one week project inception workshop in the 1st or 2nd week of May, 2008.

Contact Information

For further information, please contact the project coordinator for Southern Africa:

Ritu Verma
Senior Researcher
PLAAS
Email: rverma@uwc.ac.za

Tel: +27-(0)21-959-3750
Fax: +27-(0)21-959-3732