



## CALL FOR CONCEPT NOTES

Bound by complex two-way linkages, agriculture and health are essential for reducing poverty, food insecurity and malnutrition. In April 2006, the Alliance Executive of the Consultative Group on International Agricultural Research (CGIAR) endorsed the *Agriculture and Health Research Platform* (AHRP) as a basis for further research, capacity strengthening, and communications within and beyond the CGIAR. The Platform has since established a long-term collaboration with the health sector following an October 2006 meeting in Geneva with representatives of the World Health Organization (WHO). This was further advanced at a multistakeholder workshop, co-hosted by WHO, in June 2007 in Geneva where research priorities were identified, opportunities for collaborative research explored, and a consensus established on the governance of the platform. A health advisory group of global public health experts advises the Platform, along with a core research group comprising representatives of the CGIAR centers, WHO, FAO and several NGOs and academic institutions. IFPRI coordinates the work of the Platform on behalf of the CGIAR.

Further details can be found here: <http://www.ifpri.org/themes/aghealth/aghealth.asp>

The emerging research agenda of the Platform takes account of the broader concerns of stakeholders and policymakers in the agricultural, nutrition, and health communities. The Platform has identified several research priorities that would benefit from greater intersectoral collaboration. Research is intended to focus on mitigating negative effects on agricultural activities while maximizing opportunities for agriculture to benefit health, and better health to benefit agriculture. The ultimate goal is to undertake cutting-edge research at the intersections of agriculture and health that seeks to maximize impact on the rural poor.

### Eligibility criteria

Concept notes that address one or more of these key themes (as described further below) are encouraged. Proposed research should also focus on issues:

- that are of concern to *both* agriculture and health sectors;
- that are better addressed *jointly* by health and agricultural researchers working together (and not by either sector acting alone);
- that lend themselves to participatory and transdisciplinary methods and approaches;
- that proactively address cross-cutting issues including gender and equity;
- for which a clear magnitude of need has been established;
- for which results have potential for large-scale impact;
- where opportunities for undertaking the work are clearly evident;
- where the probability of success is high.

Research is also encouraged that draws on innovations within the Ecohealth approach as pioneered by IDRC ([www.idrc.ca/en/ev-3314-201-1-DO\\_TOPIC.html](http://www.idrc.ca/en/ev-3314-201-1-DO_TOPIC.html))

Multi-country/multi-site regional or international studies are encouraged.

It is not necessary to only focus on one of the three thematic priorities – research that addresses interactions between these themes is encouraged.

This initiative is not region-neutral. A special emphasis will be placed on work in Africa and Asia. As a very rough guide, it is intended that approximately 55% Platform activities *in toto* will engage with African stakeholders, 30% with Asian stakeholders and 10%, Latin American.

Finally, the budgets of proposed research studies need not be limited to the funding ceiling of this call (\$230,000) – indeed cofunding by other development partners and donors is encouraged. Such cofunding will need to be indicated in the budget section. Research studies may be of 1-3 years duration.

### **Format**

Please submit concept notes of 5-8 pages that clearly state: problem statement, brief literature review, objectives, research questions, methods, expected outputs, outcomes and impact; partners and indicative budget. Funding up to a maximum of US\$ 230,000 is available for selected studies. Concept notes will be reviewed by an independent panel, and several concept notes selected for development into full proposals.

Concept notes should be emailed to the AHRP Coordinator at [s.gillespie@cgiar.org](mailto:s.gillespie@cgiar.org)

Deadline: 11 May 2008

### **Research Themes**

The following three themes are current priorities of the Platform for which proposals are encouraged in this first wave of research. (In addition to these three themes, large-scale work that relates agriculture to HIV/AIDS and to avian influenza is already underway.)

- *Nutrition, diet, and health.* Food quantity and food quality are the primary linkages between agriculture, nutrition and health. While lack of energy is generally an issue only in highly food-insecure areas, micronutrient malnutrition is much more widespread and pervasive. As problems of insufficient and poor quality food persist, changes in the global environment are creating new emerging nutritional issues such as the “nutrition transition” – a process by which globalization, urbanization and changes in lifestyle are linked to excess energy intake, poor quality diets, and low physical activity which lead to rapid rises in obesity and chronic diseases even among the poor in developing countries. Another major long-wave issue is the challenge that climate changes poses on agriculture-nutrition-health pathways. How to adapt to this changing environment, address the double burden of under- and over-nutrition, and maintain adequate food supply while increasing the production of low cost high-quality foods to improve diet quality among the poor? How to promote and exploit the link between agricultural biodiversity and dietary diversity for better nutrition?
- *Water associated disease and water management.* The linkages between agriculture, water, health and disease are fundamental to the disease burden on rural communities. Land and animals need water, forests are breeding sites for vectors of diseases, aquaculture depends on water, and families need water for consumption and for hygiene. There are multiple pathways by which agriculture, water and health interact, some

beneficial (e.g. irrigation increases agricultural productivity) and others detrimental (e.g. irrigation water may increase malaria); and the relationships are often bi-directional (e.g. water affects agriculture and vice versa; water affects health and vice versa). Research needs in this area range from acquiring new knowledge about the interactions between agriculture, water and health, to developing joint thinking and efforts to disseminate and apply this knowledge more widely and effectively, and to carrying out specific case studies using integrated applicable solutions that can be brought to scale. How to maximize the productivity and poverty-reducing potential of irrigation while minimizing the risk of malaria and other water- and vector-borne diseases? The health aspects of wastewater use in agriculture are increasingly important as this water resource is available particularly to the peri-urban poor. The overriding influence of climate change is also a relevant concern for this theme.

- *Food safety and growing complexity in food supply chains.* In developing countries diarrhea from foodborne and water-associated diseases kills an estimated 2 million people annually, and is predominantly linked to the lack of access to safe water, inadequate sanitation and poor hygiene, particularly among the rural poor. Capacity for prevention and control is limited, but options for an integrated water management approach for agricultural and domestic needs are substantial. Zoonoses represent another major food safety challenge. Effective, fair, equitable, intersectoral collaboration between agriculture and health organizations on research and action to prevent and control animal borne/food borne microbial zoonotic diseases is key. Other important research issues relate to impacts of – and developing policies to address -- changes in the global environment due to globalization, the rise in importance of supermarkets, changes in food demand, and the impacts of the Green Revolution on human and animal health.

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