



Notice of Request for Information (RFI)

DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE [Docket No. USDA–2021–002]

Solicitation of Input from Stakeholders on Climate Smart Agriculture (CSA) Innovations

AGENCY: Foreign Agricultural Service, USDA.

ACTION: Request for Information.

DUE DATE: Written comments must be received by 5:00 pm EST on June 30, 2021 to be assured of consideration.

SUMMARY:

The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA), Foreign Agricultural Service, Office of Global Programs, Food for Progress branch requests comments from the public to inform its future food security and agricultural sector development programming. This Request for Information (RFI) offers the opportunity for interested parties to share challenges and propose interventions which may potentially contribute to the expansion of global agricultural production and trade in low- and middle-income countries (LMIC) committed to open and free enterprise while reducing their environmental impact. Responses should include as much detailed data, research, and suggestions as possible to facilitate and bring to scale transformative breakthroughs in climate-smart agriculture. **This is not a notice of funding opportunity or a request for proposals.**

BACKGROUND:

Food for Progress (FFPr) was originally authorized by the Food Security Act of 1985 and supports developing countries and emerging democracies to modernize and strengthen the agricultural sector, improve production, and increase trade in agricultural products. With reauthorization through subsequent Farm Bills and annual funds apportioned by Congress, U.S. agricultural commodities are awarded to partner organizations, sold on local and/or regional markets, and the proceeds used by USDA implementing partners to support agricultural productivity and/or trade development programs. The wide range of initiatives supported seek to meet food security and agricultural capacity building needs around the world.

This RFI is aligned with current U.S. policy and driven by the two most relevant Executive Orders:

- 1) Executive Order on America's Supply Chains: <https://www.whitehouse.gov/briefing-room/presidential-actions/2021/02/24/executive-order-on-americas-supply-chains/>

- 2) Executive Order on Tackling Climate Change at Home and Abroad:
<https://www.whitehouse.gov/briefing-room/presidential-actions/2021/01/27/executive-order-on-tackling-the-climate-crisis-at-home-and-abroad/>

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:

The Food for Progress branch, in alignment with the U.S. Government's Global Food Security Strategy and USDA's sustainability goals and priorities, seeks written input to help it better incorporate CSA programming into its focus on international agricultural capacity building and trade promotion. To do so, it must learn from the experiences of the broader international development community, its stakeholders, and the food industry in enhancing food security and livelihoods along with farmer productivity within the context of environmentally sustainable agriculture. FFPr further seeks to prioritize activities which ensure support for equity and fairness towards indigenous communities, women, and youth along the entire agricultural value chain of its targeted crops.

QUESTIONS FOR STAKEHOLDERS:

FAS seeks responses to any of the following questions with which stakeholders have had experiences or insight, whether it be concrete successes, lessons learned, or envisioned concepts. Please identify whether a response applies to a specific crop, commodity or demographic. For greater clarity, the questions are grouped into sections on:

- 1) Enabling Environment,
- 2) Mitigation,
- 3) Adaptation, and
- 4) Productivity

1) Enabling Environment

- a) What traditional or innovative **financing** mechanisms (including "climate finance" instruments such as "green bonds") have given you the most success in your CSA programming? Which seem to offer the greatest potential for scaling up? Which have or could leverage significant additional public and private investment, including the Green Climate Fund, Global Environmental Fund or others? Please provide a basic description of any financing mechanism recommended.
- b) What **trade barriers** (including regulatory, Sanitary and Phyto-Sanitary (SPS), rural infrastructure, or other) have inhibited your work in CSA and how? If these barriers have been overcome, how?
- c) What initiatives or project components have you undertaken which have proven to mitigate or increase **resilience to pandemics** (such as COVID-19, Ebola, etc.) that have or could have effects on rural and agriculture sector development?
- d) What are key lessons learned by your organization about promoting **equity and fairness** to indigenous communities, women, and youth along the value chain on CSA development projects?

- e) How equitably distributed to **vulnerable groups** are the benefits of the value chains on which you have focused?
- f) What successes has your agricultural development programming had in encouraging **policy shifts** to better accommodate CSA?
- g) What experience and evidence do you have of **negative externalities** affecting demographic groups or geographic areas outside the focus of your agricultural development work?
- h) What have you done to ensure your program does not lead to deforestation or the elimination of marshlands and/or swamps?

2) Mitigation

- a) In terms of your organization's experience with **agricultural activities to mitigate Greenhouse Gas (GHG) emissions**, which type of mitigation practices have been particularly well received and adopted by farmers? In addition, which have been more challenging to apply or adopt? Please specify if focused on carbon dioxide, methane or nitrous oxide.
- b) In terms of your organization's experience with **agricultural activities contributing to carbon sequestration** (in soils or perennial/tree biomass), which type of mitigation practices have been particularly well received and adopted by farmers? In addition, which have been more challenging to adopt?
- c) What CSA mitigation priorities have you identified for the focus of your future work to assist farmers/producers?
- d) What advances, commitments, and opportunities have you identified and/or implemented to mitigate the **environmental impact/footprint of your institutional operations**?

3) Adaptation

- a) What types of CSA adaptation practices (including locally specific adaptations emerging during project life) have been particularly well received and **adopted by farmers**?
- b) What types of CSA adaptation practices have **struggled to gain farmer acceptance**?
- c) What **CSA adaptation priorities** have you identified for your future work to assist farmers?
- d) Do you perceive **particularly urgent needs in any value chains or sectors for adaptation** work?

4) Productivity

- a) What were your **most successful experiences** in increasing agricultural productivity while decreasing the value chain's environmental impact?
- b) What do you see as the **biggest opportunities** over the next 5 to 10 years to increase agricultural productivity while decreasing the value chain's environmental impact?
- c) What do you see as the **biggest challenges** over the next 5 to 10 years to increasing agricultural productivity while decreasing the value chain's environmental impact?

SUBMISSION ADDRESS:

Respondents should submit their comments to PPDED@fas.usda.gov.

ADMINISTRATIVE GUIDELINES:

Submissions should be no longer than 8 pages, using 12-point Times New Roman font, single-spaced and with 1-inch margins. We welcome supplementary materials which can help support feedback in the submissions. Please do not include information of a confidential nature such as sensitive personal data or proprietary information. Responses to this notice are not offers and cannot be accepted by the Federal Government to form a binding contract or issue a grant. Information obtained as a result of this notice may be used by the Federal Government for program planning on a non-attribution basis. Please be aware that your comments may be posted online. A follow-up meeting may be held with those who respond to the RFI.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT:

Kevin Alonzo, 202-720-0313, Kevin.Alonzo@usda.gov. Done in Washington, DC, this 11th day of June.