



Invitation to apply:

SEARCA Seed Fund for Research and Training (SFRT) Program

GUIDELINES FOR RESEARCH PROPOSAL APPLICATION

1. PROJECT ELIGIBILITY

Subject Matter: The proposed project should be aligned with Inclusive and Sustainable Agricultural and Rural Development (ISARD), the overarching theme of SEARCA's 10th Five Year Plan (FY 2014/2015 - 2018/2019), along at least one of the following elements:

Social Inclusion in Agricultural and Rural Development

- Participation of poor and vulnerable sectors of rural societies in food and agricultural value chains and agribusiness commodity systems;
- Food and nutrition security for poor and vulnerable sectors of rural societies ; and
- Productivity-enhancing innovations and modern technologies.

Sustainable Agricultural and Rural Development

- Natural resource management;
- Climate change mitigation and adaptation in agricultural and rural development; and
- Resilience of agricultural systems to climate impacts.

Regional and Sub-regional Cooperation

- Sub-regional cooperation in trade and investments; and
- Regional market, trade and economic integration.

Institutions and Governance

- Government policies, institutions and governance mechanisms and reforms for ISARD

Features: The proposed project should be all of the following:

- Innovative and is accompanied by an appropriate plan for developing it into a potentially large-scale research/training program greatly relevant to the agricultural and rural development needs of the region;
- Has strong potential for generating significant long-term funding support;
- Can be completed within a period not exceeding one year;
- Details plans for generating future funding support; and

- Specifies a plan for dissemination of results, including policy recommendations, to various stakeholders in modes deemed appropriate

Output: The proposed project should be able to generate:

- A research report which can be published as a discussion paper
- At least one policy brief or research/learning/experience note
- When possible, presentation of research results in at least one scientific forum/conference

2. PROPONENT QUALIFICATION

The proponent should be a Southeast Asian national who is a graduate of at least a four-year degree course, with limited research/training start-up funds.

Priority in terms of number of slots will be given to the following:

- SEARCA Graduate Scholarship Alumni
- Faculty and Staff of members of the University Consortium (<http://searca.org/new/networks-and-linkages/university-consortium>)
- Faculty and staff of universities under SEARCA’s Institutional Development Assistance Program (<http://searca.org/new/institutional-development-assistance-program>)

Southeast Asian nationals outside of the above-mentioned SEARCA network who are regular employees of development organizations, academic institutions, and government agencies of any of the SEA countries may likewise be considered.

Re-Applying Grantees: Previous grantees may re-apply provided that their last SFRT grant has not been within the preceding two years.

3. FUNDS AVAILMENT

All required information should be contained in one electronic file, written in a letter size paper (8.5x11 inches) using Times New Roman and at 12-point font in Word Document format. All portions of the proposal should be typed single-spaced with one-inch margin on all sides. Name the file using the following: Country_Full Name of Major Proponent_Title (ex., Vietnam_Tien Thang Nguyen_Agricultural Sustainable Developing *Lua Te Meo* Intensive Farming Model Making for Productivity Increasing and Preserving the Special Upland Rice in Thuanchau-Sonla).

The proponent should submit the following information.

3.1. LETTER OF REQUEST

Application for research fund addressed to:

<p>The Program Head Research and Development Department SEARCA College, Los Baños, Laguna, Philippines, 4031 Tel. No.: (6349)-536-2287 local 137 Facsimile: (6349)-536-4105</p>

3.2. CONTENTS OF A RESEARCH PROPOSAL

Presented in a detailed format following the detailed outline below and prescribed number of pages:

OUTLINE		NUMBER OF PAGES
	COVER PAGE	one separate page
	TABLE OF CONTENTS	maximum of 2 pages (in a separate page)
	ABSTRACT	one separate page (350 words maximum)
1	INTRODUCTION	
	1.1 Rationale and Objectives	maximum of 2 pages
	1.2 Background of the Study/Related Literature	maximum of 2 pages
	1.3 Description of the Project Area(s)	one page
2	METHODS AND DESIGN	maximum of 2 pages
	2.1 Strategy/Research Design	
	2.2 Analytical Procedure/Statistical Methods (if needed)	
3	OPERATIONAL PLANNING	maximum of 3 pages
	3.1 Human Resource	
	3.2 Project Duration and Schedule of Activities	
	3.3 Budgetary Requirement	
4	APPENDICES	
	4.1 References/Bibliography	maximum of 2 pages
	4.2 Detailed Plans for Future Funding Support	one page
	4.3 Detailed Plans for Research Results Dissemination to Stakeholders	
	4.4 Endorsement Letter	one separate page
	4.5 Abbreviated Curricula Vitae of All Research Proponents	maximum of 3 pages for each proponent

3.2.1. COVER PAGE

One-page **summary of information** as presented below.

Project/Research Title	
Major Proponent	full name (surname, first name); and degree and field of specialization
Country	nationality of major proponent
Project Objectives	summary of project objectives
Methods and Design	summary of methodology
Project Area	project site in the country of research
Project Duration	one (1) year duration
Project Schedule	(i.e., November 2005 to October 2006)
Budgetary Requirement	state in US dollars (maximum of \$15,000)
Contact Information:	
Institutional Affiliation	name of unit
Institution Mailing Address	unit and home address with postal code
Contact Numbers	(i.e., office, facsimile, home, and mobile phone numbers)
Email Address	

3.2.2. TABLE OF CONTENTS

This is a **structured outline** with the headers and sub-headers arranged and numbered with corresponding page-numbers on the right-hand side of the margin.

3.2.3. ABSTRACT PAGE

This page clearly **summarizes** the research proposal in 350 words (one page) and includes the funds requirement of the research project. The abstract proper is single-spaced and written in Times New Roman using 12-point font.

3.2.4. INTRODUCTION

The **purpose of the introduction** is to explain the underlying assumption and the relevance of the research project.

The introduction should:

- state the general idea of the project or research,
- summarize the relevance of the topic,
- present previous studies and approaches in relation to the proposed project/research,
- describe the research site (if field research).

3.2.4.1. Rationale and Objectives

- Identify the relevance of the project to the selected country or project area.
- Include key issues the research proposal will address and why they are considered issues or problems.
- Summarize the nature and intent of the project to the selected area.

3.2.4.2. Background of the Study/Related Literature

- Clearly state the conceptual or theoretical framework for the research project.
- Enumerate previous studies and approaches that have been undertaken similar to the research topic.
- Define the research gap to lead the objectives and support the conceptual framework of the research proposal.

3.2.4.3. Description of the Project Area(s)

- Present descriptive data (e.g. socio-demographic, economic profile) of the project area to be studied.
- Explain why the project site was chosen.
- Identify the variables and their indicators to be examined.

3.2.5. METHODS AND DESIGN

The **purpose** of this section is to identify and justify the methodology for the project or research. The choice of methodology depends on the variables of the project.

3.2.5.1. Strategy/Research Design

- Identify the study design to carry out the research objectives.
- Describe the impact of the proposed activities/strategies.
- Identify long-term strategies for maintaining the project and its results.
- Identify the limits of the project, especially in exploratory or experimental work.

3.2.5.2. Analytical Procedure/Statistical Methods (if needed)

- Identify the population to be surveyed
- Define the criteria to be used in selecting the population to be surveyed, consequently distinguish the criteria from the descriptive data that will be collected to characterize the sample.
- Define the sample size and sampling methods to be used.
- Identify and justify the statistical methods to be taken based on the study design and sampling techniques.

3.2.6. OPERATIONAL PLANNING

This section **summarizes** the activities of the proposal into a working plan. The plan consists of the human resources, equipment, materials, and the total budgetary requirement needed to operationally complete the plan.

3.2.6.1. Human Resources Needed

- Identify the human resources needed to complete the planned activities, include position description and level of participation of each proponent and staff. Human resources may include the project proponent(s).
- The proposal should consider the:
 - payment to each person
 - work duration whether full-time or part-time
 - time of involvement (when they will be needed)
- As the proponent, explain briefly the assistance and level of participation you will provide.

3.2.6.2. Project Duration and Schedule of Activities

- The duration should not exceed one year.
- Summarize the schedule of activities in a Gantt chart on a monthly basis (see example below).

Table 1. Schedule of activities

Activities	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	July	Aug	Sept	Oct	Nov	Dec
Literature Review, Assessment of Secondary Data and Site Selection and Assessment												
Agricultural Household Model Specification/ Survey												
Downstream Beneficiary Modeling												
Simulation and Refinements												
Research Write-up												

3.2.6.3. Budgetary Requirement

- Identify all projected expenses to complete the research project.
- The budget is divided in two sections such as:
 - A. Personnel Services (honorarium, research assistants, etc.)
This should not exceed 30% of the total project budget.
 - B. Maintenance and Operating Expenses
 - research supplies and materials
 - travel expenses
 - communication cost
 - contracted support personnel (i.e. enumerators, training facilitators, resource persons, etc.)
- Clearly specify the cost of expensive or specialized items (e.g., rent/lease, computer set); other items can be listed in general categories (e.g., office supplies)
- Administrative cost and contingency fund should not be included since the contract is between SEARCA and the major proponent).
- Maximum budget support is US\$15,000.

3.2.7 APPENDICES

This section contains **supporting documentation** on any aspect of the proposal. The additional detail should compliment the proposal text. References or literature cited and curriculum vitae are should be included in this section. Use letters of the alphabet to name the appendices (i.e., Appendix A, Appendix B, etc.)

3.2.7.1. References/Bibliography

- Enumerate all literature cited and works of other authors to support the technical background and theoretical discussion of the proposal.
- Use the scientific formats for citation.

3.2.7.2. Detailed Plans for Future Funding Support

- Indicate the project's potential for future funding support.

3.2.7.3. Detailed Plans for Research Results Dissemination to Stakeholders

- Specify a plan for dissemination of results, including policy recommendations, to various stakeholders

3.2.7.4. Endorsement Letter

- Provide an endorsement letter from the head of the department or the institution where the major proponent is based and addressed it to the RDD Manager of SEARCA.

3.2.7.5. Curricula Vitae of All Research Proponents

- It should come at the end of the proposal.
- The curriculum vitae of each proponent is limited to three (3) pages and should have the following information:
 - full name (Surname, First name)
 - position title
 - contact information (telephone numbers; office, home, and mobile phone numbers; mailing address: office and home addresses; and email address)
 - academic degrees
 - higher education degrees
 - place and date of birth
 - working experiences
 - scientific publications
 - awards

4. PROCESS OF PAPER SUBMISSION

All proposals and related documents should be submitted online (<http://sfrt.searca.org>). All applicants will fill out the system's online submission form completely for their application to proceed and be submitted.

In the event that a problem is encountered in uploading the proposal, said proposal should be emailed to sfrt@agri.searca.org.

5. DEADLINE OF SUBMISSION

For 2014, all proposals and required documents should be received by SEARCA not later than 15 September. Starting 2015, all applications should be received by SEARCA not later than 1 August.

6. REVIEW PANEL AND SELECTION PROCESS

An **Evaluation Committee** using a pre-determined set of criteria shall evaluate the proposals. The Committee will submit a short list of reviewed proposals to the SEARCA Directorate for final selection. For 2014, the results of the panel review and selection process will be announced not later than 15 December and project implementation will commence a month after the announcement.

Starting 2015, the results of the panel review and selection process will be announced not later than 1 November and project implementation will commence a month after the announcement.

7. FUND RELEASE

Selected grantees shall sign a contract with the Center. The contract shall detail the grant conditions. The major proponent is required to submit a work plan with specific milestones and deliverables. Fund releases shall be based on a work plan approved by SEARCA.

8. MONITORING AND EVALUATION

The SEARCA **Research and Development Department** shall monitor and coordinate the implementation of the project. The grantee will be required to submit progress reports based on the agreed timetable. Site visits may be undertaken by SEARCA staff.

The grantee will be required to submit a research report which can be published as a discussion paper, at least one policy brief or research/learning/experience note, and present the results of his/her research in a public seminar or scientific forum/conference.