

UniBRAIN
Universities, Business
and Research in
Agricultural
INnovation



Notes on the calls for concept notes from prospective Agribusiness Innovation Incubator Consortia (AIIC)

The Initiative:

UniBRAIN is a facility for linking university education, research and business in sustainable agriculture which will support the following interventions:

1. **Development of agricultural business innovations** in a conducive institutional setting linking incubatees, universities, , research institutions and private sectors in an Agribusiness Innovation Incubator Consortia (AIIC) environment,
2. **Production of agribusiness entrepreneurs and innovators** by improving BSc and MSc agribusiness teaching and training
3. **Sharing and up-scaling innovation outputs, experiences and practices** The concept notes:

Concept notes are sought for the formation of Agribusiness Innovation Incubator Consortia (AIIC) comprised of universities, incubatees, research institutions and private sectors to be based in any of the following Danida priority countries: Benin, Burkina Faso, Ghana, Kenya, Mali, Mozambique Tanzania, Uganda, and Zambia.

The proposed Agribusiness Innovation Incubator Consortia (AIIC) will provide the institutional structures for achieving the UniBRAIN objectives stated above, including:

- i. **Development of agricultural business innovations in conducive institutional settings linking universities, research institutions and private sectors**

The mission of the incubators will be to facilitate the creation of competitive agri-business enterprises through technology development and commercialization. They will help new entrepreneurs / enterprises with handholding services starting from business conceptualization to implementation and scaling up. They will be particularly committed to supporting women and young entrepreneurs and employees.

The incubators will provide support for individuals and firms that require expertise of assets that they do not have in-house for commercializing their innovations, enabling business change, expansion or diversification. This might include collaborative business development involving appropriate combinations of private sector enterprises, research institutions and universities.

The services provided by the agribusiness innovation incubators (hereinafter called incubators) may include but will not be restricted to, facilitating business start-ups by graduates, supporting small and medium enterprises grow, helping established business with expertise and facilities they do not have in-house for resolving particular technical or organisational problems and in diversifying or expanding their businesses or entering new markets and business alliances.

- ii. **Development and implementation of improved and better contextualised BSc and MSc teaching and learning that takes advantage of various approaches and tools.**

The incubators will enable universities and research institutions to link-up with businesses in local communities, countries and regions. These will be two-way linkages with universities, research and business providing feedback to each other, e.g. with business participating in curriculum reviews, which monitor how graduates perform and set the

research agenda and university faculty, undergraduates and postgraduates contributing to developing agricultural innovations and also benefiting from the hands-on experience.

The improved products emanating from these collaborations would include e-learning, experiential and problem-based learning, practical training with internships, agribusiness studies and training in teamwork and other systems skills that are needed for effective interdisciplinary and multi-institutional innovation systems.

The greater involvement of universities in agricultural innovation including as partners in initiatives of the Comprehensive Africa Agriculture Development Programme (CAADP) will generate new thinking and opportunities for investment in improved facilities for teaching and research as integral components of agricultural development programmes.

iii Sharing and up-scaling innovation outputs, experiences and practices through improved networking and channels of communication

The wide networks of the UniBRAIN partners, i.e. the African Network for Agriculture, Agro forestry and Natural Resources Education (ANAFE), the African Technology Policy Studies network (ATPS) ATPS, the Forum for Agricultural Research in Africa (FARA) with the respective Sub Regional Organisations, i.e., the Association for Strengthening Agricultural Research in East and Central Africa (ASARECA), the West and Central African council for agricultural research and development CORAF/WECARD and Southern African Development Community-Food and Natural Resources Directorate (SADC-FANR) and the Pan African Agribusiness and Agro-industry Consortium (PanAAC) will be vital assets in facilitating sharing of knowledge and experiences to accelerate future agribusiness innovation. This will include activities aimed at increasing the impact through greater uptake of the agribusiness innovations developed by the incubators. Actions will include business advisory services, innovation market places; web-hosted interactive collaborative environments (ICE); strengthened linkages between universities, research and private sector enterprises.

Submission of concept notes

The concept notes will be submitted by the Lead Institutions of the prospective Agribusiness Innovation Incubator Consortia (AIIC) to the UniBRAIN Technical Coordinator as indicated on the concept note format. They will be collated and submitted for evaluation by the UniBRAIN Independent Grants Committee, which is comprised of five distinguished persons including four Africans and one selected by Danida.

Grant amount and duration:

Up to 12 concept notes will be shortlisted and supported to develop full competitive business plans with a grant of about USD 50,000. The most competitive business plans will then receive grants of up to US\$ 2 million for four years to support the establishment and operation of the AIIC. The above mentioned UniBRAIN partners will be available to provide technical support for the development of the business plans in ways that will be detailed in the grant offer.

Criteria for selecting concept notes

The criteria for selection of successful applications will include:

1. **Composition of the submitting consortia:** Each applying consortium is expected to be comprised of all the relevant stakeholders for sustainable agribusiness innovation incubation and up scaling including university, private sector, research institution, and incubatee representatives. Membership of the consortia are also expected to include policy makers, farmers and farmer organizations, civil society groups, extension agents and other stakeholders who can participate in establishing, managing and operating an agribusiness innovation incubator.

2. **Consortia governance and management:** The Agribusiness Innovation Incubator Consortia (AIIC) will be governed by a Board comprised of but not limited to representatives from universities, agribusinesses, agricultural research institutions, and the incubatees and managed on commercial principles. The Board will be chaired by a member elected by his/her peers.
3. **Leadership:** The leadership of the Agribusiness Innovation Incubator Consortia (AIIC) is open to any institutional member of the consortium- university, private sector, research institution or incubatee. The Lead Institution, which will host the incubator's secretariat, must be legally registered in one of the Danida Priority countries and be auditable.
4. **Membership:** Except for the Lead Institution, there is no restriction in the location of the other members, which may include non-African institutions. However, each member must have attributes that will add value to the whole in the value chains in which the incubator will likely focus and the numbers must be few enough to provide efficient decision making.
5. **Type of innovation:** The incubators will be established to support agribusinesses that are engaged in any aspect of agricultural value chains from production to retail but it is likely that they will specialise in particular value chains relevant to their locations and expertise.
6. **Sustainability:** The incubators will themselves be businesses and should regard the prospective UniBRAIN grant as start up capital. Details on how the incubators will become financially sustainable will be developed in their business plans and the UniBRAIN partners will assist them in this. However, indications of potential alternative sources of finance and income will be helpful in the concept notes.
7. **Additional assets:** The consortia are encouraged to add brief statements on the goodwill and assets such as existing involvement in innovation incubation and agribusiness, and any other information that may be helpful to the Independent Grants Committee.

General information

More information can be found in the attached UniBRAIN prospectus which amongst other information indicates that:

The Incubators will have:

- clear identities, expressed by the incubator's name, its logo or stated in its value proposition
- access to qualified research and development personnel in the areas of knowledge with which they identify
- ability to market high value products and services
- the capability to provide marketing expertise and managerial skills to firms, particularly small and medium sized enterprises, that do not have such resources in-house access to well qualified mentors
- competent assistance in conducting feasibility studies and developing business plans
- access to cost-effective problem solving expertise
- access to adequately equipped laboratories and field sites for multiplication and testing of technologies
- support by effective advocacy in raising capital for up-scaling successful innovations
- provide for client enterprises to return for help with unpredicted emerging problems

The incubators will be able to:

- select firms on their business plan's coherence with the incubator's identity
- identify innovations and business opportunities that will interest the different parties

- protect product and process secrets, via patents, and commercial confidentiality
- protect IP rights
- involve different university faculties
- respect the different roles of the partners

The incubators will provide:

- Coordination and integration of business and agricultural technical knowledge
- One stop advisory services for existing and new businesses
- Advice on new approaches to agribusiness development
- Training of entrepreneurs in collaboration with complementary centres
- Opportunities for further support and investment through alliances with other centres

Further information

Further information can be found by visiting <http://www.fara-africa.org/our-projects/unibrain/>, <http://www.atpsnet.org/programmes/RCB/UNIBRAIN/index.php> <http://www.anafeafrica.org/UniBRAIN> ; <http://www.panaac.org> or from the following sources:

- (i) **Development of agricultural business innovations is led by the African Technology Policy Studies Network (ATPS)**, Contact Persons: Dr. Kevin Urama, ATPS Executive Director, and Dr. Nicholas Ozor, ATPS Senior Research Officer, Contact Email: UniBRAIN@atpsnet.org
- (ii) **Development and implementation of improved and better contextualised BSc and MSc teaching and learning is led by the African Network for Agriculture, Agroforestry and Natural Resources Education (ANAFE)**, contact e-mail: Contact person: Dr Aissétou Dramé Yayé, ANAFE Executive Secretary, and Mr. James Aucha, Email: a.yaye@cgiar.org/
- (iii) **Sharing and up-scaling innovation outputs, experiences and practices is led by the Pan African Agribusiness and Agro Industry Consortium (PanAAC)**, Contact person: Ms. Lucy Muchoki, PanAAC Chief Executive Officer, and Ms. Lydia Kimani, Contact Email: unibrain@panaac.org
- (iv) **The engagement of agricultural research institutions is led by the Forum for Agricultural Research in Africa (FARA)** Contact person Dr. Irene Annor Frempong Email: ifrempong@fara-africa.org with the three sub-Saharan Sub-Regional Organisations (SROs); **the Association for Strengthening Agricultural Research in Eastern and Central Africa (ASARECA)** Contact person Dr. Joseph Methu Email: j.methu@asareca.org . **The West and Central African Council for Agricultural Research and Development (CORAF/WECARD)** Contact person Dr. Sidi Sanyang Dr Sidi Sanyang Email: sidi.sanyang@coraf.org, and: **Southern African Development Community-Food and Natural Resources Directorate (SADC-FANR)** Contact person Dr. Keoagile Molapong Email: kmolapong@sadc.int
- (v) **Program Coordination**, UniBRAIN Technical Coordinator, Ralph von Kaufmann. Email: r.vonkaufmann@fara-africa.org

Complete contact details are provided below.

NB: Where possible when asking questions about the concept note please indicate which objective you are referring to. All the answers will be posted on <http://www.fara-africa.org/our-projects/unibrain/>

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<p>African Network for Agriculture, Agroforestry and Natural Resources Education (ANAFAE)</p> <p>Contact person: Dr Aissétou Dramé Yayé Executive Secretary</p> <p>United Nations Avenue P.O. Box 30677-00100 Nairobi, Kenya Tel: 254-20-7224135 (Direct) 254-20-7224000 (Operator) Fax:254-20-7224001 Email: a.yaye@cgiar.org Website: www.anafeafrica.org</p>	<p>African Technology Policy Studies Network (ATPS)</p> <p>Contact person: Dr. Kevin Urama Executive Director</p> <p>3rd Floor, The Chancery, Valley Road P.O. Box 10081, Nairobi 00100, Kenya <u>Tel:+254 20 2714092</u> Direct Line:+254 20 2723875 Cell: +254 728 607703 Fax: +254 20 2714028 Email: executivedirector@atpsnet.org Website: http://www.atpsnet.org</p>
<p>Pan African Agribusiness and Agro Industry Consortium (PanAAC)</p> <p>Contact person: Ms. Lucy Muchoki, Chief Executive Officer,</p> <p>P.O. Box 2542-00200, Finance House,5th floor, Nairobi, Kenya</p> <p>Tel :+254 20 2371307,2213303,2213304 Direct: 254 20 2041136 Fax :+254 20 2246737 mobile:+254 722 510 210 <u>Email:ceo@panaac.org</u> Website :www.panaac.org</p>	<p>Association for strengthening Agricultural Research in Eastern and Central Africa (ASARECA)</p> <p>Contact Person: Dr. Joseph Methu</p> <p>Plot 15 John Babiha Rd. P.O.Box 765, Entebbe - Uganda</p> <p>Tel:+256 41 4320212 Fax:+256 41 4321126 Email: j.methu@asareca.org Website: www.asareca.org</p>

<p>West and Central African Council for Agricultural Research and Development (CORAF/WECARD)</p> <p>Contact person: Dr. Sidi Sanyang</p> <p>7 Avenue Bourguiba BP 48 Dakar RP, CP 18523 Dakar – Senegal</p> <p>Tel: +221 869 9618/ 869 9629 Fax: +221 869 9631 Email: sidi.sanyang@coraf.org Website: www.coraf.org</p>	<p>Southern African Development Community- Food and Natural Resources Directorate (SADC-FANR)</p> <p>Contact person: Dr. Keoagile Molapong</p> <p>SADC House Khama Crescent Private Bag 0095, Gaborone, Botswana</p> <p>Tel: +267 3181293 Email: kmolapong@sadc.int Website: www.sadc.int/fanr</p>
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Deadline for submissions:

Electronic submissions must be received by close of work on Friday 14th January 2011

A hard copy must be dispatched by an international courier by the same date.

Submissions should be addressed to:

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Email: : r.vonkaufmann@fara-africa.org;

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Note that copies should be sent to the persons listed below

¹ Copies should be sent to:

Dr. Monty Jones, Executive Director, FARA Email: mjones@fara-africa.org

Dr. Irene Annor-Frempong, Director for Capacity Strengthening FARA
ifrempong@fara-africa.org

Dr. Aissetou Yaye-Drame, Executive Secretary, ANAFE, Email: a.yaye@cgiar.org

Ms. Lucy Muchoki, Chief Executive Officer, PanAAC Email: lmuchoki@panaac.org

Dr. Kevin Urama, Executive Director, ATPS Email: kurama@atpsnet.org

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