



RCUK-CIAT Newton-Caldas Fund Sustainable Tropical Agricultural Systems Programme

CALL FOR EXPRESSIONS OF INTEREST IN PROJECT SCOPING WORKSHOP PARTICIPATION

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Call status: Open

Date of Project Scoping Workshop: 30th October – 2nd November 2017

Location: CIAT, Colombia

Closing date for Applications: 4pm on 6th September 2017

Submission Address: newton.colombia@bbsrc.ac.uk

Background

The Biotechnology and Biological Sciences Research Council (BBSRC), Economic and Social Sciences Research Council (ESRC), Natural Environment Research Council (NERC) and the International Center for Tropical Agriculture (CIAT) are pleased to announce a new UK-Colombia programme in sustainable tropical agricultural systems supported by the Newton-Caldas Fund.

Proposals for the pump-priming phase of this call will be developed at a Project Scoping Workshop to be held at CIAT Headquarters in Cali, Colombia, on the 30th Oct – 2nd Nov. Applications for academic participation in this workshop are now open.

Aims

The specific aims of the UK-CIAT Sustainable Tropical Agricultural Systems Programme are to:

1. Fund high quality development-relevant research focussed on the resilience and sustainability of tropical agricultural systems containing pulses and/or tropical forages, which will contribute to the sustainable economic development and welfare of Colombia and wider.
2. Forge mutually-beneficial partnerships between researchers in the UK and CIAT on pulse and/or forage-based tropical agricultural systems that contribute to food security through international collaboration in agricultural research for development.
3. Support truly interdisciplinary projects combining at least two of the biological, environmental, and economic and social sciences.

Funding

The UK funders have up to £2.9M available for this call and have allocated up to £900k for the first stage to support eligible UK participation. CIAT will provide matched support from their current portfolio.

The call will be managed as a two-stage process with the first stage being awards for pump-priming proposals. These will be short-term projects of no more than 12 months, awarded up to a maximum of £150K (at 80% FEC) in the UK (with matched support from CIAT). The Funders are looking to support around 5 - 6 pump-priming projects.

Applications to the pump-priming stage will be developed and assessed at the Project Scoping Workshop.

Purpose of the pump-priming awards

The purpose of the pump-priming awards is to enable UK and CIAT researchers to work together on the initial stages of interdisciplinary, collaborative research proposals. The awards should allow a modest amount of research to generate preliminary data and to develop and prepare for the extension proposal.

Examples of eligible activities and costs for the pump-priming awards could include:

- staff time and consumables
- travel and subsistence costs to enable consortia to participate in workshops
- exchange visits (short and longer term and in both countries)
- access to facilities
- Estates and Indirects (UK Institutions only)

In the second stage of this programme, pump-priming award holders will be invited in Autumn 2018 to submit proposals for two years of extension funding. Extended collaborative research projects will start in April 2019 and will last up to two years. The funders will look to support around 3 - 4 extension projects, dependent upon the achievements of projects at the pump-priming stage.

Participation at this workshop is required for the submission of a pump-priming proposal.

Scope of the programme

The funders aim to support innovative underpinning, strategic or applied interdisciplinary research that will promote economic development, improve social welfare and enhance livelihoods in Colombia to maximise food security¹. This will be achieved through improving human and farmed animal nutrition and increasing the resilience and sustainability of tropical agricultural systems in Colombia containing pulses and/or tropical forages. Projects will align with, and build on, CIAT's current research portfolio and outputs of the projects may also have benefits outside of Colombia. This call will support high quality research focused on the following key crops:

- **Tropical Forages**

Tropical forages encompass a variety of herbaceous and woody plants selected mostly from undomesticated grass and legume species. Improved forages, grown as perennial pastures or in diverse combinations with crops, provide high-quality feed for livestock while at the same time improving soil quality, reducing carbon and water footprints and reducing greenhouse gas emissions. Tropical forages have the potential to combat hunger and poverty and also to deliver major environmental benefits.

¹ "Food security exists when all people, at all times, have physical and economic access to sufficient, safe and nutritious food to meet their dietary needs and food preferences for an active and healthy life." Future generations are implicitly included in "all people at all times" and this requires food systems to be sustainable. (Global Food Security Strategic Plan, 2017)

- **Pulses**

Pulses are legume grain seeds used for human and farmed animal consumption. Dried peas, lentils, chickpeas and edible beans are the most commonly known and consumed types of pulses. They are important for food security¹ and the broader agri-ecosystem because they are rich in fibre and protein and have high levels of minerals; they have nitrogen fixing capabilities; their broad genetic diversity enables the selection of climate resilient varieties; they are water-efficient and can be stored for extended periods of time without losing nutritional value.

In addition, research supported in this call must also fall within one or more of the following research areas:

- **Resilience to climate change and climate variability**

Enabling the full range of environmental, biological and socio-economic research relating to growing resilient crops in a changing climate. The effect of increased resilience on performance, quality and other aspects of the agri-ecosystem should also be considered. It includes, but is not limited to, abiotic and biotic stresses, understanding and predicting how climate change and variability will impact the agri-ecosystem, soil health, and socio-economic issues affecting producer behaviours and choices.

- **Understanding, assessing and managing the interactions between different elements of the agricultural ecosystem and how they affect production and other essential ecosystem services**

Enhancing management of the multiple demands on agricultural ecosystems requires a greater understanding of the links between production, natural capital stocks and the delivery of other essential ecosystem services (including non-production services). This understanding may be advanced by the development and exploitation of new models and decision-making tools to understand the multiple interactions and associated trade-offs. Taking into account the biophysical constraints on the system together with needs and values of the communities involved will be important, as will methods to better understand the values and relationships which influence decisions, practices, and policies.

- **Production of safe, nutritious food for humans and animals to develop sustainable food systems**

Increasing the nutritional quality of food and feed for long-term benefits to overall health (of humans and animals) will require crop science, soil science, nutrition science, and a better understanding of food system dynamics. This could include consideration of relevant factors such as diet trends; affordability; consumer beliefs; practices and

decision-making; improvement and integration of crop varieties; and grazing land intensification.

Requirements of projects funded by the programme:

Projects funded under the Sustainable Tropical Agricultural Systems Programme must:

- Fit the remit of the call, and address at least one of the research areas outlined above. Proposals which address more than one of these research areas will be particularly encouraged;
- Focus on, or be applicable to, tropical agricultural systems containing pulses and/or forages that are relevant to, and part of, the livelihood of communities in Colombia.
- Contribute to improving food security through delivering greater resilience and sustainability for crops grown in Colombia;
- Involve a bilateral UK-CIAT team and demonstrate a true collaboration and partnership between eligible researchers at UK based research organisation(s) and CIAT;
- Be genuinely interdisciplinary in nature, combining at least two of the biological, environmental and, and economic social sciences.

Project scoping workshop

The project scoping workshop will be an intensive workshop which will bring together up to 40 academics (in total), equally split between UK research organisations and CIAT. The workshop will facilitate the development of (up to) 12 month pump-priming interdisciplinary research projects which will begin to address challenges underpinning the development of resilient and sustainable tropical agriculture and agri-ecosystems for food security, development and poverty reduction in Colombia. Projects will need to align with, and build on, CIAT's current portfolio.

The project scoping workshop will be held at CIAT in Colombia and will run over 3.5 days, starting early on day one and finishing at midday on day four. At the outset, the participants will work collaboratively to identify and define the scope of the challenges. As the workshop progresses, participants will collectively consider how the identified challenges may be addressed through research projects and will develop their ideas into research proposals.

Part way through the duration of the pump-priming awards (mid-2018), there will be the opportunity for the awarded projects to bid for an additional 2 years of funding to extend and develop their research.

How will the project scoping workshop work?

A project scoping workshop is an interactive workshop, designed to produce collaborative, interdisciplinary research proposals.

The nature of the project scoping workshop requires a high degree of trust and respect between participants to allow the free and frank exchange of scientific ideas, some being in the early stages of development. The goal is to bring individuals from different disciplines together to interact and engage in free thinking on first principles, to learn from one another and to create an integrated vision for future research projects. While the sharing of these ideas is strongly encouraged within the workshop, participants are asked to respect confidentiality outside of the workshop.

The workshop will be led by a Facilitator, whose role will be to guide discussions at the event. The Facilitator will be joined by a small number of Mentors. The Mentors will have been selected by the funders, based on their intellectual standing, their impartiality and objectivity, and their broad understanding of, and enthusiasm for, the subject area and interdisciplinary working. The Mentors' role will be to encourage the development of new ideas and to provide objective advice to participants. They will also act as impartial peer reviewers in the process. Mentors will not be eligible to receive research funding under this collaborative activity.

Who should apply to participate?

Having the right mix of participants influences the success of such an event. Contributions to the identified challenges could be made by researchers working in a variety of disciplines or research areas. This could include biologists, chemists, social scientists, environmental scientists, bioinformaticians, nutritionists, engineers and economists. However, we are not defining the disciplines that should be represented at the project scoping workshop; rather we are asking potential participants to indicate how their expertise could address the challenge of developing resilient and sustainable tropical agriculture and agri-ecosystems for food security and poverty reduction in Colombia and developing countries more broadly.

It would be beneficial for applicants to have some prior knowledge of the challenges associated with sustainable agricultural systems in developing countries and the work being undertaken by CIAT (<http://ciat.cgiar.org/ciat-projects/>). Applicants will also need to demonstrate an enthusiasm for interdisciplinary research, as the future of this research area will require input from many disciplines.

The ability to develop and pursue new/interdisciplinary approaches will be crucial. Expertise is required from a broad range of disciplines, and applicants should not feel limited by conventional perceptions: the project scoping workshop approach is about bringing people together who might not normally interact. We encourage people to apply who are experts in their own research area but have not yet applied it to this challenge.

This is an opportunity to share ideas and develop future collaborations. Participants are welcome at any stage of their research career, including early career researchers, providing they are eligible to apply for funding as Principal Investigator from the participating Research Councils (BBSRC, ESRC and NERC).

Eligibility

Applications are invited from individual researchers who can contribute to the project scoping workshop and the resulting research projects. Up to 40 participants in total (around 20 from the UK and 20 from CIAT) will be identified to take part. Participants will be chosen to allow equal representation from the UK and CIAT.

Expressions of interest are invited from UK academics eligible to receive funding as Principal Investigator from BBSRC, ESRC or NERC (see: <http://www.rcuk.ac.uk/funding/eligibilityforrcs/>).

Only academics invited to participate at the Project Scoping Workshop will be eligible to submit pump-priming proposals to this call.

Proposals will be permitted to include academics not present at the project scoping workshop as Co-Investigators, providing there is scientific rationale to justify their inclusion.

Location and date

This project scoping workshop will be held at CIAT, Colombia from 30th October to 2nd November 2017.

Submission of an expression of interest will be taken to mean that the applicant is available to attend on the specified dates and will make a commitment to attend if selected. Additional details of the location, venue, visa, travel and the accommodation arrangements will be provided to those invited to participate. All travel (economy class) to the project scoping workshop, overseas accommodation, refreshments, breakfast, lunch and dinner costs, and any necessary visa and vaccination costs will be met by the funders. However, any incidental costs incurred whilst at the event must be met by the participant.

How to apply

Applicants should complete an Expression of Interest Proforma (see Downloads section), alongside an up-to-date CV. Completed applications should be sent to newton.colombia@bbsrc.ac.uk stating your name, institution and 'STAS EoI' in the subject line.

The deadline for applications is **4pm on 6th September 2017**.

In order to participate, applicants must be available to attend for the 3.5 day duration of the project scoping workshop from 30th October – 2nd November 2017 (excluding travel time) and be able to travel to Colombia.

The application must be completed in at least Arial 11pt and the margins must be at least 2.5cm wide. Further details on how to complete the Expressions of Interest proforma are provided below.

Please note: Expressions of Interest received after the deadline for applications will not be considered. Applicants will be notified of the outcome of their application by mid-September 2017. If successful, information provided in the background and expertise section of the Expression of Interest proforma will be made available to everyone invited to attend the project scoping workshop to facilitate networking and collaboration at the event. The information provided on the Expression of Interest proforma will be used to assess your application and demonstrate that you have the suitable skills and attitude to participate in the Sustainable Tropical Agricultural Systems project scoping workshop. It is strongly advised that applicants do not merely list their achievements (e.g., publications, research experience, capability), but, rather, use these to demonstrate how they may approach the challenge using innovative and collaborative interdisciplinary approaches.

Expression of interest

Please spend some time considering your answers to the following questions. Your responses will be used to distinguish your application from others and convince us that you have the attitude and personal skills necessary to participate in the Sustainable Tropical Agricultural Systems project scoping workshop.

Background and Expertise

1. Provide a brief summary of your professional background (up to 300 words).
2. How could your interests and expertise contribute to the aims of this workshop? (Up to 300 words).

Sustainable Tropical Agricultural Systems project scoping workshop

3. The workshop will be suited to individuals who are willing to step outside their immediate area of interest or expertise, who are positivity driven, who enjoy creative activity, who can think innovatively and who can settle in easily in the company of strangers. Please describe an experience you have had in a comparable environment and how you communicated effectively. (Up to 300 words).
4. What is your approach to team working? (Up to 150 words).
5. What do you hope to gain from participating in the workshop? (Up to 150 words).

6. Describe any previous experience of working with Colombia and/or developing countries (Up to 150 words).

Please submit an up-to-date CV without publications listed (maximum two sides of A4)

Assessment criteria: Expression of interest

Expressions of Interest to attend the project scoping workshop will be considered by the funders and non-participating experts. The final decision regarding UK participation at the workshop will be made by the relevant Research Councils.

Overall, the funders will seek to ensure a balance of expertise and UK Institutions are present at the project scoping workshop. Their assessment will be based on the specific criteria outlined below:

- Relevant expertise and experience
- The ability to develop creative research ideas in a collaborative environment
- The potential to contribute to interdisciplinary research relevant to the call scope
- The ability to work in a team across academia
- The ability to communicate and engage with a diverse range of stakeholders

Please ensure you fully complete all sections of the Expression of Interest proforma, as this is the only information on which potential project scoping workshop attendees will be selected. It is therefore important that you provide evidence of the expertise that you will bring. Please note that the funders will not be able to give individual feedback to unsuccessful applicants.

Submission of pump-priming proposals

Only attendees present at the Sustainable Tropical Agricultural Systems project scoping workshop will be eligible to submit pump-priming proposals to this call.

Proposals developed over the course of the workshop will be submitted on afternoon of the third day and subsequently defended in front of an assessment panel made up of UK and CIAT experts who will have observed the workshop. Upon return to the UK, successful teams will be asked to submit a JeS form to facilitate payment for the UK component. The JeS submissions will be checked for consistency with the workshop submission but will not be reassessed. Proposals will be permitted to include academics not present at the project scoping workshop as Co-Investigators providing there is a scientific rationale for their inclusion. Further guidance will be provided at the Project Scoping Workshop.

All applications will be expected to include at least one partner from a Research Council eligible UK institution and at least one partner from CIAT.

Newton Fund and ODA compliance

This programme is supported by the Newton Fund and all proposals will be assessed for fit to Official Development Assistance (ODA) requirements. The Newton Fund is an initiative intended to strengthen research and innovation partnerships between the UK and emerging knowledge economies. The Newton Fund forms part of the UK's ODA commitment which is monitored by the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD). ODA-funded activity focuses on outcomes that promote the long-term sustainable growth of countries on the OECD Development Assistance Committee list. Newton Fund countries represent a sub-set of this list.

More information about the Newton Fund can be found [here](#).

RCUK guidance on ODA compliance can be found [here](#).

Timetable

Stage	Date
Deadline for submission of expression of interest form	4pm on 6 th September 2017
Notify applicants of outcome of expression of interest stage	Mid-September 2017
Dates of Sustainable Tropical Agricultural Systems project scoping workshop	30 th October – 2 nd November 2017 at CIAT, Colombia
Pump-Priming projects to start	April 2018
Submission of extension proposals	Autumn 2018
Extension project to start	April 2019

Contact

For any enquiries regarding eligibility, scientific remit, the project scoping workshop event or the application process, please contact:

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