REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS

Using Evidence-Based Learning to Drive Policy Measures and Government Strategies for Effectively Managing Input Price Hikes

AFAP, on behalf of Sustain Africa, is seeking a reputable research organization to undertake a vital research project in support of Sustain Africa’s learning agenda. This initiative is funded by the Alliance for a Green Revolution in Africa (AGRA) through a generous grant from the UK Foreign, Commonwealth & Development Office (FCDO).

OVERVIEW:

The project’s core goal is to support an improved response by national governments and the private sector in Sub-Saharan Africa to food and fertilizer price hikes through implementation of evidence-based policy and investment decisions to support farmer resilience. The project will provide governments in countries in Sub-Saharan Africa with models, best practice and policy and investment recommendations for responding effectively to food and fertilizer price hikes and contribute towards building long-term farmer resilience.

To achieve this goal, the project seeks to provide broader learnings and models on the relationship between input price movements and food security crises. Uptake of fertilizer may depend on factors other than just retail price – such as farmgate prices, availability of subsidies and commercial credit as well as understanding of how to apply fertilizer. Meanwhile, retail fertilizer prices reflect political and macroeconomic conditions such as government debt, the existence and sustainability of subsidies, FOREX reserves to support fertilizer purchase and currency valuations. A combination of these factors affects fertilizer uptake and, in turn impacts, crop yields, overall production and, ultimately, food insecurity. Availability and price of inputs are also influenced by market structures and supply chains. However, the exact causal and correlational relationship between all of these factors is not clear, making it difficult for governments to determine an effective response to input price hikes. The project looks to fill this knowledge gap in order to provide evidence-based recommendations to government and the broader input eco-system.
ROLE OF THE RESEARCH ORGANISATION:

The research organisation will:

• Conduct a thorough literature review of existing literature on correlations and causality between: Fertilizer prices at wholesale levels; farmgate (producer) prices; national wholesale food prices; smallholder farmer contracting arrangements (farmgate, secured off-take etc.); the impact of a combination of fertilizer and extension services on yields; input market structure (level of private-sector activity, government tender structure and process); policy measures such as subsidies; availability of commercial credit; extent of import dependency; transport (ease of) and; macroeconomic and public finance conditions. The literature review will concentrate on Sub-Saharan Africa but will also span other agricultural economies such as North Africa, Brazil, China and Vietnam for comparison of approaches.

• Collect and analyze data on the above indicators (fertilizer prices, food and producer prices, import volumes, public finance etc.) from public sources.

• Analyze data from Sustain Africa’s M&E programmes in West, East and Southern Africa which includes farmer and agro-dealer responses on fertilizer availability and affordability during the fertilizer price spike.

• Conduct / commission primary research at farmer level in up to 3 additional countries in Sub-Saharan Africa (the decision whether to conduct additional primary research, as well as focus countries, to be determined following a review of existing primary and secondary data)

• Develop models (including econometric models where relevant) to explore the correlational and causal relationships between the above indicators.

• Develop conclusions and policy recommendations based on research findings and refine further in discussion with project partners (Sustain Africa and board member organisations) and the project’s advisory board.

Produce:

- Interim report for discussion with the Advisory Board
- Final report for review and approval by the Advisory Board
- Individual country reports for 6 countries which will be used as the basis for government consultations.

Ensure the availability of the project lead for presentations on findings at up to 3 major events including the AU Fertilizer and Soil Health Summit.
DATA COLLECTION AND IP:

- Primary research data (anonymised at individual farmer level) will be provided by Sustain Africa for the following countries:
  - West Africa: Burkina Faso, Ghana, Liberia
  - East and Southern Africa: Burundi, Kenya, Madagascar, Malawi, Mozambique, Tanzania, Uganda and Zambia
- The research organisation agrees to make outputs of the research (reports, economic and analytical models) developed during the course of the project available in the public domain.

REQUIRED COMPETENCIES:

- Proven competence in agricultural economic research in Sub-Saharan Africa with published examples
- Proven existing understanding of agricultural supply chains (understanding of fertilizer supply chains and market structures helpful)
- Proven project management skills (team project manager)
- Proven experience in managing third party primary research
- Proven track record in delivering to deadline and budget
- Team must include one of more experienced agricultural economist. It is envisaged that econometric modelling will be part of the project, in which case an experienced econometrician will be part of the team. This will be decided with the learning organisation in the initial detailed scoping discussion following contract appointment.
**TIMEFRAME:**

Indicative: Exact workplan will be developed and approved within Activity 1: Detailed project scope and methodology established, updated workplan agreed

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<tr>
<th>#</th>
<th>Activity</th>
<th>Activity duration and (completion date from project start – <em>note some activities are expected to overlap</em>)</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.</td>
<td>Detailed project scope and methodology established, updated workplan agreed</td>
<td>2 weeks (2 weeks)</td>
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<td>2.</td>
<td>Literature review complete, main findings and hypotheses presented</td>
<td>4 weeks (6 weeks)</td>
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<td>3.</td>
<td>Secondary data collected</td>
<td>4 weeks (6 weeks)</td>
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<td>4.</td>
<td>Primary data (from Sustain Africa) collected and aggregated</td>
<td>4 weeks (10 weeks)</td>
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<td>Additional primary data collection if deemed necessary</td>
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<td>5.</td>
<td>Model(s) developed and tested</td>
<td>4 weeks (12 weeks)</td>
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<td>6.</td>
<td>Models run against all data</td>
<td>2 weeks (14 weeks)</td>
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<td>7.</td>
<td>Interim report presented for discussion</td>
<td>2 weeks (17 weeks)</td>
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<td>8.</td>
<td>Additional research / modelling if required from Activity 7.</td>
<td>2 weeks (19 weeks)</td>
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<td>9.</td>
<td>Full report presented to advisory board</td>
<td>2 weeks (21 weeks)</td>
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<td>10.</td>
<td>Adjustments to full report if required from Activity 9.</td>
<td>1 week (22 weeks)</td>
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<td>11.</td>
<td>Final report available</td>
<td>0 weeks (23 weeks)</td>
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<td>12.</td>
<td>Country reports presented for review</td>
<td>2 weeks (24 weeks)</td>
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<td>13.</td>
<td>Final country reports available</td>
<td>1 weeks (25 weeks)</td>
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ABOUT SUSTAIN AFRICA

Sustain Africa is a crisis response and resilience initiative to improve availability, affordability and effective and sustainable use of fertilizers while avoiding market distortion. Fertilizer supply, and prices, have been severely disrupted by COVID 19 and the Russia / Ukraine war, contributing to an acceleration of food insecurity in Sub-Saharan Africa. Sustain Africa was founded by AFAP, Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, International Fertilizer Association and Rabobank, with the support of AGRA.

Sustain Africa works as a coordination mechanism to enable private-sector input companies to provide rebated or donated fertilizer, that is blended and distributed by Sustain Africa partners, to farmers with relevant extension services – focused on agronomically-specific farming practices – market linkages for farmers and credit guarantees for working capital to agro-dealers and suppliers. Fertilizer, seeds and services are provided through appropriate government or private-sector distribution channels and are monitored and evaluated as part of the programme. A key remit in Sustain Africa’s country selection and models of working with private-sector input suppliers is to alleviate potential market distortion.

In 2022, Sustain Africa coordinated the provision of affordable fertilizer to approximately 1.5 million farmers in Uganda, Ghana, Mozambique, Malawi and Madagascar. In 2023, Sustain Africa plans to reach upwards of 5 million farmers in these countries plus Burkina Faso, Mali, Kenya, Nigeria, Tanzania, Burundi, Zambia, Zimbabwe and Liberia. Other countries may be added if food security and other conditions deteriorate. Sustain Africa aims to improve food security for 50 million people – in 11-15 countries in Sub-Saharan Africa by the end of 2023.

Sustain Africa focuses specifically on sustaining and improving the productivity of food crops (the most prevalent in the country, primarily maize, rice, soy, together with fruit & vegetables for diversification / farmer resilience) needed to ensure food security. The initiative does not focus on cash crops for income generation.

A key component of Sustain Africa’s remit is a learning agenda. The focus is on identifying effective (and ineffective) measures to mitigate impact of input price hikes on food security and farmer profitability.

https://sustainafrica-initiative.org
ABOUT AFAP

The African Fertilizer and Agribusiness Partnership (AFAP) is an independent non-profit organization founded in 2012 by a partnership of African development organizations. It was built on the work of the Comprehensive African Agriculture Development Program (CAADP), a framework for achieving ambitious agriculture development goals set in place by African nations and leaders.

AFAP has since evolved into a social enterprise and service provider to the public and private sectors on sustainable development projects and policies focused on market-driven business solutions in the agriculture inputs and agribusiness value chain. AFAP combines technical expertise with entrepreneurial innovation.

AFAP adds value to the agriculture inputs and agribusiness value chain by building the capacity and linking African Hub-Agrodealers and smallholder farmers to global inputs and output market companies, promoting the use of high quality and affordable balanced crop nutrition products, partnering with technology and equipment providers, and facilitating trade finance for fixed assets and inventory via the Agribusiness Partnership Contract (APC) mechanism.

Since 2012, AFAP has implemented projects/programs and advised public, private sector clients, NGOs, and donors in: Ghana, Tanzania, Mozambique, Malawi, South Africa, Cote d’Ivoire, Nigeria, Senegal, Rwanda, Kenya, Ethiopia, Democratic Republic of Congo, and Uganda. AFAP is committed to furthering social inclusion and gender equality throughout all its intervention with strategic partners across Africa.
PROPOSAL REQUIREMENTS, DEADLINE AND CONTACT

Proposals must include:

- List of and links to credentials for specified required competencies
- Names and brief bios of team, indicating which are permanent employees of the organisation and which would be contracted. Note that AFAP retains the right to approve any contracted staff whose bios are not available at time of submission. For contractors, please specify previous engagements with this contractor.
- Outline of proposed approach and list of open questions that will need to be resolved to develop final Scope of Work
- Quotation giving costs and time to be spent by each relevant team member for each of the following activities.
  - Detailed project scoping
  - Ongoing project management
  - Literature review
  - Secondary data source review and compiling
  - Aggregation of primary data
  - Collection of additional farmer data in three countries (provide a range given this and countries and therefore statistically viable samples will be determined after existing data collection and review
  - Development and testing of models
  - Interim report
  - Final report
  - Country reports (x 6)
  - Presentations at up to 3 major events
- Payment and quoted prices in US$
- Please direct enquiries regarding this RFP to Frances Bell at sustain@afap-partnership.org.

APPLICATION INFORMATION

If your organization is well-equipped to take on this challenge, we kindly request you to submit your Proposal to sustain@afap-partnership.org. The deadline for application submission is Monday, 7th August 2023.

Please be advised that only shortlisted candidates will be contacted. Nevertheless, we sincerely appreciate the interest and enthusiasm of all applicants who wish to collaborate with AFAP and Sustain Africa.