

## Feed the Future Innovation Lab for Current and Emerging Threats to Crops

### *Request for Applications*

- The Feed the Future Innovation Lab for [Current and Emerging Threats to Crops](#) is a consortium of researchers around the globe that operates in support of the Feed the Future initiative to focus **on tackling biotic and abiotic threats to crops in a climate-changed world.**

We believe that despite the enormous challenge of tackling biotic stressors (pests, diseases, and weeds) against the backdrop of the existential threat of climate change, with the compounding effects of conflict (Russia's war against Ukraine), the integration of cutting-edge technology with strong, youth-led, gender-focused local communities means we can have [FITTER FARMS](#) in five years.

If you wish to apply for funding under this solicitation, you **must** submit a 3-10 page proposal to [cetcil@psu.edu](mailto:cetcil@psu.edu) by December 14th, 2022. A shorter proposal (3 pages) is encouraged if you can fit your concept and details in that space, but we offer the opportunity of 10 pages if you want to use the space to describe your relevant previous or ongoing research. We really want to hear the technical details of your proposed research and why you think it will be successful.

Five research areas are anticipated to be funded under this solicitation.

- 1) Roots Tubers and Bananas
- 2) Cereals
- 3) Gender and Youth
- 4) Climate change
- 5) Soil pathogens

But you are welcome to suggest other projects outside of this.

### **Important dates**

<b>Deadline for submission of written questions</b>	<b>November 21st 2022</b>
<b>Deadline for submission of proposals</b>	<b>December 14th 2022 Due by 5:00 PM, U.S. Eastern Time</b>
<b>Notification to shortlist proposals</b>	<b>January 4th 2023</b>
<b>Interview with shortlist proposals</b>	<b>January 9th to 13th 2023</b>
<b>Notification to selected proposals</b>	<b>February 1st 2023</b>

**For transparency of the competitive process, the Management Entity of the Feed the Future Innovation Lab for Current and Emerging Threats to Crops will provide only written answers to written questions about the present RFA submitted through [cetcil@psu.edu](mailto:cetcil@psu.edu) by the deadline**

indicated above. The answers will be posted on our web page <https://plantvillage.psu.edu/cetcil>.

## ***INTRODUCTION***

The Feed the Future Innovation Lab for Current and Emerging Threats to Crops , invites researchers from around the world to submit proposals for research projects that support its mission to control current and emerging threats to food security crops that Feed the Future focus countries depend on. Proposals may request up to \$750,000, and the proposed research must be completed no later than June 2026. You can request smaller amounts for a shorter period of time, for example, \$100,000 for one year.

Projects must include meaningful collaborations with researchers in the country where the research takes place. During the review process we may very well reach out to you to introduce you to other groups to find synergies among projects. This may include ongoing efforts such as the CGIAR [Plant Health Initiative](#), CABI's [Global Burden of Crop Loss](#) or national efforts such as NORAD's [Digital Tool for Plant Health in Malawi](#). The Current and Emerging Threats to Crops Innovation Lab benefits from [PlantVillage](#), which is the largest global platform on crop health operating with the UN FAO in more than 60 countries and co-developed with [CGIAR](#), [FAO](#) and in-country partners. Platforms offer considerable synergy and cost savings to tackle rapidly evolving threats. A previous example was the response to the [Desert Locust crisis](#).

We anticipate that we will select five proposals for funding by February 1st 2023 with project work commencing sometime after April 1st 2023 in the following areas:

- 1) Roots Tubers and Bananas**
- 2) Cereals**
- 3) Gender and Youth**
- 4) Climate Change**
- 5) Soil pathogens**

Proposals should put forward a research plan that promises to add to our knowledge by addressing critical issues relevant to the research priorities listed below. A strong case should be made for how the work ties into one or more of these priorities and provide a compelling explanation of how these research results will achieve development impact through future improved policy and program design.

### ***The dogmas of the quiet past are inadequate to the stormy present.***

The Current and Emerging Threats to Crops Innovation Lab is built on the great achievements of US land-grant universities and partner institutions and the fact that digital technology can allow us to “think anew.” We can have a land-grant university in every phone in all Feed The Future Countries (and beyond). The quote above comes from the architect of the land-grant system of universities, President Lincoln in his Second Address to Congress, Washington, D.C. December

1, 1862.

*“The dogmas of the quiet past are inadequate to the stormy present. The occasion is piled high with difficulty, and we must rise -- with the occasion. As our case is new, so we must think anew, and act anew. We must disenthrall ourselves.”*

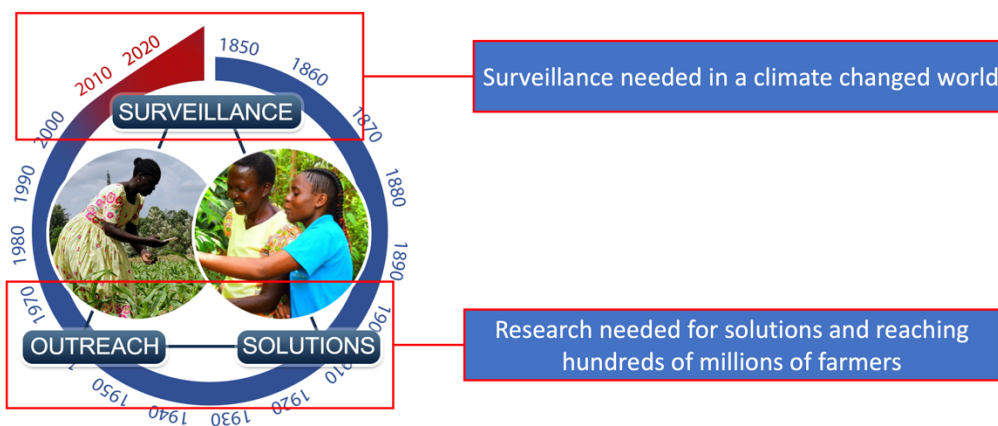
Due to the challenging times in which we find ourselves (the three c's: climate change, conflict and COVID), we are experiencing more and more threats to crops resulting in more food insecurity. At the current trajectory, by 2030, we will have the same number of food insecure people as we did in 2015 when the UN Sustainable Development Goals were announced.

We want you to **"think anew"** and propose research for development projects that allow us to turn the tide of increasing food insecurity. That means the research can come from agronomists and experts in crop health, and also from engineers, computer scientists, system design specialists, architects and other disciplines not yet imagined. The Current and Emerging Threats to Crops Innovation Lab will finish in September 2026, and how we will grow food in 2026 under the enormous challenges of climate change is something yet unknown. Our mission is [FITTER FARMS](#) in five years, and this must happen at scale as millions of farms are either experiencing failure or face failure due to interrelated and massive threats.

### S.O.S.

Given the very significant threats that are occurring, and will continue to occur, the Current and Emerging Threats to Crops Innovation Lab has put forward an S.O.S. model.

### S.O.S.



*Figure 1: The S.O.S. model of the Current and Emerging Threats to Crops Innovation Lab*  
From its inception through the Foreign Assistance Act of 1961, Congress recognized research for development must “take account of the special needs of small farmers in the determination of research priorities” (Section 103 of the Foreign Assistance Act of 1961, as amended). Increased globalization with more pests/weeds/diseases coupled with climate change-induced shocks means we need to rapidly understand the special needs of farmers and the biotic stressors they face. The Current and Emerging Threats to Crops Innovation Lab has an operational S.O.S.

model for crop threats to do just that: Surveillance, Outreach and Solutions = S.O.S. This is centered on farmers and youth (Fig. 1). Operationally, phones in the hands of farmers and youth-led backstopping systems in communities reduces the time from diagnosing a pest (Surveillance) to alerting other farmers, National Agricultural Research Organizations (NAROs), FAO, the CGIAR and USAID Missions of the threat (Outreach) to deploying existing IPM tools or soliciting research for market-driven solutions (Solutions).

## **Research areas**

We are looking for innovative proposals to carry out research for development in five areas. As emphasized above we want you to "think anew," given the gravity of the current time we are in and the guaranteed threats we face in the next four years.

For each of the five focus areas, we have provided some context below, including details about our Year 1 activities and/or ideas for future work. But please do not be bounded by this. Suggest the research for development that you think will take account of the special needs of smallholder farmers in the determination of research priorities.

### **1) Roots, Tubers and Bananas**

In Year 1, the Current and Emerging Threats to Crops Innovation Lab worked with the Potato Research Institute (CIP) of the CGIAR on multiple ongoing research projects:

- Tracking the evolution and management of [Late Blight Resistance](#) using SNPs in collaboration with researchers at CIP, EuroBlight, Moi University, National Potato Council of Kenya, Zamorano University and the University of Kentucky. This involved testing [decision support systems](#) developed by CIP.
- Increasing access to AI diagnostics tools for late and early blight in [Honduras](#). This leverages the [long-term work of PlantVillage](#) with the former Roots, Tubers and Bananas initiative of the CGIAR, which was developed for cassava and has since expanded to Irish and sweet potato.
- Research into [IPM of nematodes](#) of Irish Potato, which was a collaborative effort between [Dream Team Agro Consultancy](#), [Michigan State University \(MSU\)](#), [the Institute of International Tropical Agriculture \(IITA\)](#) and [the International Centre of Insect Physiology and Ecology \(icipe\)](#).

Areas that we think are important

- 1) Research into the evolution of virulence in pests, diseases and weeds of tubers and bananas
- 2) IPM approaches for the effective control of pests, diseases and weeds of tubers and bananas
- 3) Research into the effect of climate change on pests, diseases and weeds of tubers and bananas

### **2) Cereals**

In Year 1, we worked on two distinct cereal projects—one focused on wheat and one on maize.

Wheat: Current and Emerging Threats Crops Innovation Lab partners CIMMYT and the John Innes Center conducted research into rapid diagnostics of highly pathogenic fungal diseases of wheat, such as stem rust and yellow rust, which represent major threats to global food security. The pathogens' abilities to travel long distances on the wind and evolve to overcome resistant wheat varieties necessitate research into rapid diagnostics. Rapid genomic surveillance using nanopore sequencing had been enabled through the creation of [MARPLE](#) country hubs prior to the start of the Current and Emerging Threats to Crops Innovation Lab. MARPLE (Mobile And Real-time PLant disEase diagnostics) is already functional for wheat stripe rust in Ethiopia with four existing hubs. New, functional MARPLE hubs have been created in Nepal and Kenya. Nepal is a priority country for MARPLE, as it lies within an important center of diversity for yellow rust (*Puccinia striiformis* f. sp. *tritici*). Barberry (*Mahonia* sp), an alternative host for the pathogen, is common in the region, prompting the pathogen to evolve into important new races that can have major implications both within and outside of the region (e.g., East Africa, Western Europe). Effective monitoring capacity in Nepal is a very high priority. Highly successful MARPLE training has taken place in both [Nepal](#) and [Kenya](#) resulting in national partner capacity to fully implement MARPLE independently in both countries. Similar training has also been conducted in Ethiopia.

The stem rust MARPLE platform is now in the final stages of development, and testing of the system will be conducted over the coming months. To date, comparative genomic analyses of 86 wheat stem rust (*Puccinia graminis* f. sp. *tritici*; *Pgt*) isolates collected in 21 countries have been conducted to identify a subset of highly variable genes that could be used to develop the *Pgt* MARPLE diagnostics pipeline. A total of 392 genes that are highly variable between *Pgt* strains and suitable for use in the new MARPLE diagnostics platform were identified. A subset of ~320 single copy genes were then selected for primer design.

Maize: In Year 1, the Current and Emerging Threats to Crops Innovation Lab worked with Dream Team Agro Consultancy, a private company in Kenya that relies upon a youth model and unique access to farms, to test efficacy and uptake of five inputs:

- 1) [Hyperlocal advice on climate change](#) and application of biochar that holds water near the root zone
- 2) Control of *Striga* weeds using a commercial bioherbicide that emerged from research at Montana State University and is now deployed by a [private company](#).
- 3) Use of [parasitoid wasps](#) to control fall armyworm, which was collaborative with *icipe*, and research on the economic benefit of [IPM and farmer feedback](#).
- 4) Intercropping of maize and bean to increase soil health via nitrogen formation
- 5) Use of maize lethal necrosis-resistant seeds

There are multiple research strands to this project

- 1) Effectiveness of a youth model (the Dream Team) to perform research at scale across 2,000 fields and 10 counties (in Kenya). What is the bias and noise in the data and how can both be reduced through software assisting the data collection?
- 2) Economic effectiveness of some or all parts of the IPM packages and willingness of farmers to buy them

- 3) Role of gender and how gender roles affect access to inputs, decision making, labor and profit on the farm.
- 4) The effect of agroecological zones on yield gain under different treatments

### **3) Gender and Youth**

Gender and youth are cross-cutting themes for the Current and Emerging Threats to Crops Innovation Lab. We are currently going through the process to obtain IRB approval for a gender-focused study on inputs (discussed above). We have huge amounts of data on our focus countries and youth engagement that could form the basis of interesting research.

### **4) Climate Change**

The biggest threat agriculture faces is climate change. Indeed, US Special Envoy on Global Food Security, Dr. Cary Fowler, [recently](#) stated during his [address](#) at the 2022 World Food Prize convening, “I cannot personally shake the belief that on the ... list of the top 10 most important challenges that we face in regards to food security, that climate is one through five.”

We want your biggest and best ideas to tackle this problem. Research could focus on how we can reach large numbers of farmers with satellite-derived insights into weather, soil moisture and crop performance. How can we leverage smartphones in the hands of farmers and extension services to determine which crops do well where? Additionally, how can we leverage approaches like biochar, groundwater and irrigation to reduce losses? These and many other ideas are welcome.

### **5) Soil Pathogens**

It is quite clear that pests like nematodes are a major limiting factor on production in tropical agriculture, and the research into both their abundance and control is severely underfunded. Besides nematodes, we are concerned with yield losses caused by bacterial and fungal pathogens. We do not have a baseline against which we might understand increases (or decreases) in soil pathogens due to climate change. We lack good point-of-care diagnostics and effective IPM. We would welcome proposals from teams who would like to establish lowcost surveillance at scale and combine this with efforts on outreach and solutions.

A nice model of this [collaborative research](#) occurred in Year 1 between Dream Team Agro Consultancy in Kenya, Dr. Marisol Quintanilla at MSU, researchers at IITA and icipe on new [IPM approaches](#).

Again, the idea is for innovative research, so we are also interested in topics ranging from, but not limited to, the control of soil pathogens with biochar to how beneficial microbes in the rhizosphere, such as arbuscular mycorrhizal fungi, may be [negatively impacted](#) by synthetic chemicals.

## *Geographical focus*

We currently work in Honduras, Burkina Faso, Kenya and Nepal, but you can propose research that would take place in any [Feed the Future focus country](#). We would like to see proposals where local groups would be the primary funding recipients with sub-awards to US Institutions.

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## *Areas of inquiry*

The information below is on the Feed the Future Innovation Lab for Current and Emerging Threats to Crops six areas of inquiry. We include it here for greater context.

**1) IPM at scale through technology, youth, and women's groups:** Promote the ambitious deployment of IPM packages at scale and encourage research into ecologically sound methods of pest/disease/weed control through AI-enhanced tools in the hands of young people serving farmer groups of women and men at the community level.

We aim to encourage research into ecologically sound methods of pest/disease/weed control and conduct research on the promotion of IPM packages at scale. We are especially interested in enhanced technological tools that can be put into the hands of youth-serving groups of women and men farmers at the village level. You can see an [example of this](#) by our private sector partner, [Dream Team Agro Consultancy](#), which was a “quick win” partner in Year 1. They were supported by experts at Penn State University, MSU, *icipe*, IITA and Moi University (Kenya) but conducted all the research themselves.

### **2) Capacity: Build capacity for crop threat surveillance and forecasting.**

The Current and Emerging Threats to Crops Innovation Lab strives to build capacity and enhance preparedness for new crop threats through surveillance, forecasting, and applied research for development. We aim to promote a portfolio of combined research and local capacity building that increases preparedness in target countries, such as through

- In-field, offline, AI-assisted diagnosis at scale via visible symptoms.
- Low-cost point-of-care diagnostics of crop biotic stressors (species/strains).
- Cloud-based forecasting of current threats based on existing mechanistic models and machine learning.
- Agricultural Science Machine Learning (AgSciML) for emerging threats

We are very interested in ideas that can better identify emerging threats (biotic and abiotic). How can we avoid the next fall armyworm, Maize Lethal Necrosis or other pest?

### **3) Gender and Youth: Increase the engagement of women and youth in all aspects of the Innovation Lab activities.**

An important component of the Current and Emerging Threats to Crops Innovation Lab is engaging women and young people in all aspects of the research. The Innovation Lab works with youth and women groups in Kenya, Burkina Faso, Nepal and Honduras. More broadly, via

PlantVillage, we are working in Ethiopia, Uganda, Tanzania, Mozambique and, Malawi. We are engaging USAID Missions in Niger, Nigeria and Somalia. In the next 2-3 years we expect to have 16,000 youth working in 40 countries front-facing with farmers. This will offer an unparalleled data source for groups studying the engagement of women and youth in Innovation Lab activities. We are looking for proposals that propose research on the engagement of women and youth in understanding or mitigating current and emerging threats to crops.

**4) Climate Change effects on current and emerging threats:** Promote research into the effects of climate change on current and emerging crop pests, weeds and diseases.

The Current and Emerging Threats to Crops Innovation Lab is focused on mitigating the effects of biotic stressors on smallholder farmers in Feed the Future countries. Climate change is expected to have a major impact on biotic stressors. It might compound their negative effects, increase the ranges of negative stressors, and/or affect the efficacy of current IPM approaches, such as by having an effect on the biocontrol agent. Given the seriousness of climate change, we want to promote research into the effects of climate change on current and emerging crop pests, weeds and diseases.

We also see climate change as a direct threat as it causes increased drought, flooding or heat shock. We currently work very closely with the Climate Hazard Center (CHC) and the Famine Early Warning Systems Network (FEWS NET) to scale advisories to 14 million people/week on the amount of rain expected in a cropping cycle and evapotranspiration rate at a hyperlocal level. We also work with NASA, NOAA and UN FAO and the European Space Agency on crop-relevant metrics from satellite tools. We have integrated data streams on soil health and are exploring heat stress. We treat heat and water stress as major threats both currently and emerging. This is both on wilting but also the effect of elevated heat on gene expression that reduces yield or increases toxins like Aflatoxin. This is an issue not just for Feed the Future countries but also in the United States and elsewhere..

Besides the public sector we have deep engagements with the private sector, including scaling(CHC) advisories to 13 million people/week in Kenya and Burkina Faso with private sector extension systems. We are working with Google and others on flood forecasting and multi-modal alerts based on meteorology and pest models.

We are also interested in engineering on the farm level in ways that reduce evapotranspiration. This can be biochar as micro irrigation in the rhizosphere, microbial inoculation to increase water transport to roots, shading via trees or panels to create micro weather patterns.

**5) Economic impact:** Promote research that determines cost savings due to adaptive management and the economic benefits of enhanced preparedness.

There are many approaches to biotic stressors that individual farmers, regional organizations or national/multinational organizations can take. The costs/benefits of these interventions will vary, and we would like to promote research that determines cost savings due to adaptive management and the economic benefits of enhanced preparedness. For example, research in this space might look at farm-level income of an intervention, given locally available markets for selling the product, versus incentives across a region where the local or national authority wishes to limit

the build-up of a pest. Another example of research might examine differences in yield under two different approaches: conventional pesticides vs. IPM and the costs of these interventions. Relevant to this approach is the compound value of different methods if they are to be adopted over long periods of time.

**6) Regional Cooperation:** Strengthen transboundary cooperation to ensure collective action at the regional scale on data sharing, quarantining and policy actions.

An important function of the Current and Emerging Threats to Crops Innovation Lab is to strengthen transboundary cooperation. The Innovation Lab works with FAO and expects to expand the range of efforts on transboundary cooperation around pests, disease and weeds. We are interested in research efforts that would focus on ways to strengthen transboundary cooperation and reduce friction for effective cooperation.

In addition to supporting high-quality research, the Current and Emerging Threats to Crops Innovation Lab sponsors outreach activities that bridge the gap that often exists between evidence and last-mile solutions, which not only reach farmers but change individual and community livelihoods in a positive way. Researchers will be expected to work with Innovation Lab staff to distill themes and findings of research projects into a coherent, evidence-based voice for the integration of results into last-mile solutions, policy approaches and program designs at country and regional levels. Current and Emerging Threats to Crops Innovation Lab researchers will be required to contribute their time and participate in these activities.

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## **Requirement**

As a collaborative research support program, at least one PI must come from a US institution, and one PI must come from a focus-country or regional organization, if the lead applicant is US based. We accept proposals directly from focus country institutions.

We currently work in Honduras, Burkina Faso, Kenya and Nepal, but you can propose research in any Feed the Future country. Note that USAID Mission concurrence is required for all Innovation Lab activities, which could delay the start of projects outside of our four focus countries.

We would like to see proposals where local groups would be the primary funding recipient, with sub-awards to US Institutions.

Please describe the history of collaboration among partners, specific strategies for the involvement of PIs, clear distribution of labor, and primary avenues of interaction between researchers. In addition, proposals should identify the ways in which the work will contribute to building the capacity of developing country partners, including both training and institutional capacity.

## ***SUBMISSION GUIDELINES***

Full proposal packages with completed application materials should be submitted via email to [cetcil@psu.edu](mailto:cetcil@psu.edu) by December 14th 2022.

**Format:**

Paper Size:	Standard (8.5 x 11")
Line Spacing:	Single spaced
Margins:	1 inch on all sides
Font:	Arial or Times New Roman
Minimum Font Size:	12 point for text; 10 point for figures, tables and captions
File type:	MS Word or Adobe pdf

Proposals must contain the following elements:

Requirement	Description
<b>Title Page</b>	List Principal Investigators (include name, title, institutional address, phone, fax, and email), total project budget, and funds requested.
<b>Abstract</b>	Not to exceed 200 words.
<b>Narrative Description</b>	Not to exceed 10 pages. In addition to detailing the intellectual context and proposed research methodology, the narrative description should describe the relevance of the research to the mission of the Current and Emerging Threats to Crops Innovation Lab and how the project will contribute to host-country research capacity in mitigating pests, diseases, and weeds. It should also indicate how the project contributes to the Feed the Future objectives and initiatives discussed above.
<b>Anticipated Outputs</b>	Include dissemination activities targeted at farmers and NAROs within focal countries.
<b>Anticipated Impacts</b>	Include measurable indicators of the potential development impact of the research.
<b>Timeline</b>	Provide a schedule or timeline of activities over the life of the project. For the purpose of the timeline, you may anticipate work beginning April 1st, 2023.
<b>Budget</b>	Include a budget for the life of the project with details for each institution, as well as an overall budget summary.
<b>List of Qualifications</b>	One paragraph summary of PI qualifications.

## ***BUDGET GUIDELINES***

The budget must be broken out by yearly expenditures. Please include line items for communications/press releases/publications in local media outlets and peer-reviewed journals, and wire transfer fees (if foreign entities will be recipients of funds).

### ***Subawards***

Each proposal must include a budget for each institution participating in the activity, providing accurate institutional costs and negotiated administrative rates. Individual institutional budgets are necessary to monitor US-based and host-country institution expenses. If you plan to make subawards as part of the implementation of your research project, and you already know the institutions you will be providing funding for under this award, please note the institution's name and DUNS number/UEI number in the budget. If you have not yet determined the collaborating institution, you may use "Institution 1" or a similar placeholder for the institution name.

### ***Travel to Annual Meetings***

All project PIs will meet once per year to provide peer feedback on research and to lay the foundation for synthetic activities that draw together important outputs from the different Current and Emerging Threats to Crops Innovation Lab projects. All research budgets need to provide for annual travel expenses for both US and host-country PIs. In practice, the meetings will be held in either the US or another country, depending on the location of PIs, visas, costs and other considerations.

### ***Open Data Requirements***

[ADS 579 USAID Development Data](#) outlines requirements, roles and responsibilities regarding the submission of datasets in machine readable format to USAID's Development Data Library. Recipients will be required to develop and maintain a process to ensure that data identified for release under this mandate are vetted for legality of release, removal of personally identifiable information and other security considerations.

## ***TECHNICAL EVALUATION CRITERIA***

The technical evaluation criteria in the table below will be used to evaluate each proposal. These criteria have been tailored to the requirements of this RFA. Applicants should note that these criteria identify the significant matters that applicants should address in their application and set the standard against which all applications will be evaluated.

Technical Evaluation Criteria	Possible Score
Technical Merit of Proposal	25 Points
Broader Applicability and Synthesis	5 Points
Collaboration and Capacity Building	20 Points

Relevance to Smallholder Farmers	20 Points
Contribution to Feed the Future Objectives and Initiatives	15 Points
Potential for Mitigating Biotic and Abiotic Stressors	15 Points

### ***PROJECT IMPLEMENTATION***

The activities of the Current and Emerging Threats to Crops Innovation Lab will focus on mitigating biotic stressors for low-income farmers in Feed the Future countries. Proposals must demonstrate this capacity and provide a tentative plan on how their research can contribute to mitigating biotic stressors and the stressors associated with climate change. Additional expectations are listed below:

- Selected grantees will be asked to organize their projects in the [OKR format](#) and deliver a quarterly report. The internal team of selected grantees will partake in weekly, 30-minute virtual Zoom meetings to report on the efforts of the OKRs. A member of the Feed the Future Innovation Lab for Current and Emerging Threats to Crops will be present at these meetings. Extensive training materials will be provided to partners to help them understand how to use OKRs.
- At the start of each project, the lead PI will be responsible for coordinating with the Current and Emerging Threats to Crops Innovation Lab Strategic Communications Manager to prepare a short brief that summarizes the project for a lay audience. As results emerge, PIs will be expected to collaborate on additional briefs.
- When possible, researchers will participate in dissemination events hosted by the Feed the Future Innovation Lab for Current and Emerging Threats to Crops (1-2 over the life of the project). The Feed the Future Innovation Lab for Current and Emerging Threats to Crops will be responsible for event-associated costs, so they do not need to be included in the proposal budget. Examples of such events include webinars and workshops.
- Researchers will attend annual Technical Committee meetings. Include expenses related to these meetings in your proposal budget. In practice, the meetings will be held in either the US or another country, depending on the location of PIs, visas, costs and other considerations.
- Researchers will comply with USAID's Open Data Policies and include expenses related to compliance in their proposal budget.
- Selected grantees will submit a semi-annual report and annual report to [cetcil@psu.edu](mailto:cetcil@psu.edu) detailing technical progress.

After a selection decision has been made, proposals will be subject to a brief review by USAID and our External Advisory Board to confirm the appropriate budget and that the proposal's scope is within the overall mandate of the Feed the Future Innovation Lab for Current and Emerging Threats to Crops. In addition, all selected proposals will be submitted to the relevant USAID Mission offices for their review, feedback and concurrence. Activities will not be allowed to start until we have received USAID approval and the fully signed and executed agreement between the selected grantee and The Pennsylvania State University (the Management Entity for the Feed the Future Innovation Lab for Current and Emerging Threats to Crops).

**If you have any questions, or would like clarification/guidance on the applicability of different USAID provisions, please contact the CETC IL office at [cetcil@psu.edu](mailto:cetcil@psu.edu)**