



GAFSP Seventh Call for Proposals to Accelerate Food Systems Resilience

Guidelines for Producer Organizations Submissions

Important dates	
Call launch	January 19, 2023 (Thursday)
Part 1- Submission deadline for Expressions of Interest	February 24, 2023 (Friday)
Part 2 - Submission deadline for Grant Proposals (Final Proposal)	May 9, 2023 (Tuesday)



GAFSP Seventh Call for Proposals: Guidelines for Producer Organization-led Submissions

1. Introduction

According to the State of Food Security and Nutrition in the World 2022 report, as many as 828 million people go to bed hungry every night, and the number of those facing acute food insecurity has soared – from 135 million to 345 million – since 2019. In addition, 49 million people in 49 countries are teetering on the edge of famine.¹ The drivers of acute hunger are rooted in multi-layer crises, including climate change, natural disasters, conflict, the COVID-19 pandemic, and food and fertilizer supply chain impacts resulting from the Russian-Ukrainian conflict. The Global Agriculture and Food Security Program (GAFSP) aims to improve food and nutrition security and build the sustainability and resilience of agriculture and food systems in the medium- to long-term by providing financial and technical resources – grants, concessional loans, blended finance, technical assistance, and advisory services – to projects along the entire agriculture value chain.² Since 2010, GAFSP has pooled \$2 billion in donor funds and supported over 190 public and private sector projects worldwide. Governments, the private sector, and Producer Organizations (POs) choose and tailor interventions best suited to their local contexts. They design, lead and implement these projects in partnership with the world’s leading development agencies that have knowledge and presence on the ground.

GAFSP recognizes POs as key actors linking producers to input, capital, and product markets. By doing so, they help increase the income and productivity levels of agricultural producers, particularly smallholder farmers, while improving the availability of and access to food for consumers. Therefore, the GAFSP’s PO-led financing track provides small grants to POs to contribute to enhancing their internal capacity and improving their investment readiness. These grants also serve to strengthen POs’ sustainability and can be used to scale up activities that address the impact and challenges of the current food security crisis.

The Seventh GAFSP Call for Proposals is part of the global response to the current global food security crisis. It is in full alignment with the Global Alliance for Food Security (GAFS) and contributes to the mobilization of funding to overcome the current crisis and enable the long-term transformation of global agri-food systems towards more resilience and sustainability. The current Call consists of two parts: the first part is dedicated to Country-led proposals (CO-Call), launched in September 2022, and the second, addressed in this document, is dedicated to Producer Organization-led proposals (PO-Call).

2. Background

The objective of the PO-led financing track is to provide funding to entities traditionally unable to access finance for catalytic investments in agriculture and food security. This financing track was created with the recognition that POs are key economic players in the value chain and a vehicle for increasing livelihood opportunities for POs’ members through capacity building and enabling greater access to finance, markets, and technology. The key principles of GAFSP funding for PO-led projects are as follows:

- i. PO-led projects are demand-driven and owned by the PO.
- ii. PO-led projects address the needs of smallholder farmers expressed through their POs and for which solutions are designed through a bottom-up approach.

¹ For further information, please visit: <https://www.wfp.org/global-hunger-crisis>

² For further information on the GAFSP program, please visit <https://www.gafspfund.org/>.



- iii. PO-led projects are implemented directly by the PO, in partnership with a Supervising Entity (SE) selected by the PO itself.
- iv. PO-led projects' funds are channeled through the selected SE. As such, the selected SE has fiduciary responsibility and manages the grant according to its policies and procedures. The SE should try to adapt implementation and procurement procedures to the specific capacity of the PO in question whenever possible.

3. Objective and Scope

The objective of the 2023 PO-Call. The PO-Call under the seventh GAFSP Call for Proposals seeks to finance technically and financially sound proposals³ that preserve the objectives and key principles of the GAFSP PO-led financing track. In the attempt to build on existing efforts, this PO-Call will only⁴ grant funding to proposals that meet all of the following:

- i. Include at least one activity that is a scale-up of an existing PO activity.⁵ The activity (-ies) must be aligned with the country's agriculture and food security strategy/plan and aimed at creating income opportunities for PO's members and/or enhancing the PO's ability to cope with the impact of current and future crises.
- ii. Include activities aimed at strengthening the PO's ability to improve the livelihoods and resilience of its membership of smallholder farmers by improving its governance, administrative, technical, managerial, and operational capacities.
- iii. And are led by a PO with sufficient governance, administrative, fiduciary, and operational capacities to manage grant resources and achieve project objectives.

Under this PO-Call, GAFSP will not finance activities for which the PO has no implementation experience, such as new pilot activities.⁶ Ongoing (or under preparation) GAFSP PO-led projects may apply for additional funding by applying to this PO-Call in the form of a new grant.

4. Available funding

GAFSP expects approximately US\$ 25 million to be allocated in grant resources for eligible POs. Additional donor commitments may become available by the date of grant award allocation (expected in July 2023), which could increase the total allocation amount. GAFSP plans to allocate funds to several projects with allocations of up to US\$ 3 million per project.

³ In addition to being economically and financially viable, PO-led project proposals must, at a minimum, seek to "do no harm" i.e., not cause harm to the environment, and society.

⁴ Note that these requirements are specific to this PO-Call and will not necessarily be repeated in future PO-Calls.

⁵ "Existing activity(-ies)" includes those that are currently being implemented by the PO or have recently been terminated, within the last twelve months, i.e., after January 2022.

⁶ Innovative activities will be supported if these activities have already been implemented or are currently being implemented.

5. Eligible Producer Organizations

For GAFSP, the definition of a PO includes national and sub-national POs structured as either a producers' association, union, federation, cooperative, or apex organization (including umbrella organizations or federations of POs)⁷ with the following characteristics:⁸

- a) It is a local organization formed by a group of smallholder producers to undertake agriculture-, food- and nutrition-related activities, including storage, processing, and marketing.
- b) Its members include farmers, pastoralists, artisanal fishers, forest-dwelling groups, landless people, and/or indigenous people.
- c) It is owned by its members: PO members participate in the governance of the PO.
- d) Its profits and other benefits are shared among its members; and
- e) It is a registered legal entity.

6. Eligible countries

This Call will be open to POs that meet the PO definition described above, and that are based and operating in one of the GAFSP-eligible countries who are members of the International Development Association (IDA) and are classified as active IDA-only countries.⁹ This includes the 57 countries listed in Table 1 below. The Call is not open to multi-country proposals.

Table 1: List of eligible countries

Africa			East Asia and the Pacific	Europe & Central Asia	Latin America	Middle East	South Asia
Benin	Gambia, The	Rwanda	Cambodia	Kosovo	Guyana	Yemen	Afghanistan
Burkina Faso	Ghana	Sao Tome & Principe	Kiribati	Kyrgyz Republic	Haiti		Bangladesh
Burundi	Guinea	Senegal	Lao PDR	Tajikistan	Honduras		Bhutan
CAR	Guinea-Bissau	Sierra Leone	Marshall Islands		Nicaragua		Maldives
Chad	Lesotho	Somalia	Micronesia, FS				Nepal
Comoros	Liberia	South Sudan	Myanmar				Sri Lanka
Congo, Democratic Republic of	Madagascar	Sudan	Samoa				
Côte d'Ivoire	Malawi	Tanzania	Solomon Islands				
Djibouti	Mali	Togo	Tonga				
Ethiopia	Mauritania	Uganda	Tuvalu				
	Mozambique	Zambia	Vanuatu				
	Niger						

⁷ While apex organizations are eligible, ad hoc or newly established apex organizations are not eligible to apply for this PO-Call, as a track record of the organization will be required to assess its managerial, fiduciary, technical, and operational capacity.

⁸ This definition was set out in the guidelines for the Missing Middle Initiative (MMI) approved by the SC in 2016 at the launch of the MMI pilot. The definition was revised and ratified with the launch of the Sixth Call for Proposals. Under this definition, companies (private companies, limited liability companies, joint stock companies) and national Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs) are, in principle, not eligible. However, it is recognized that in some countries, entities that are de facto POs must register as private companies or as NGOs to constitute themselves as legal entity. In these specific cases, the eligibility of national and subnational NGOs and private companies will be verified on a case-by-case basis by assessing whether the entity in question reflects the key characteristics outlined by GAFSP in the PO definition.

⁹ IDA-only countries refer to those countries that are eligible to receive financing from IDA and not from the International Bank for Reconstruction and Development (IBRD).



7. Considerations for Activities to be promoted by the PO-Call

The Call will finance medium- to long-term interventions that are context-specific and aim to increase the income of the PO's members, enhance their resilience and ability to cope with the impact of current and future crises, and strengthen the PO's administrative and management capabilities. Activities to be scaled up by the project should fall under one or more of these pillars:

- Support sustainable agricultural practices and production systems for food and nutrition security
- Support the sustainable use of land and water resources and reduce dependence on fossil-based fertilizers to optimize productivity and improve soil fertility and health
- Support diversification in food production systems to enhance resiliency and household incomes
- Facilitate increased access to the market and better post-harvest and handling management
- Improve nutrition and food security outcomes

Furthermore, projects should include at least one activity that helps to strengthen the PO's governance, administrative, technical, managerial, and operational capabilities,¹⁰ to better support their members' livelihoods and resilience. In addition, investments in activities that help ensure POs' financial sustainability, such as diversification of financial partners, member contributions, paid services, and income-generating activities are encouraged.

Each project proposal should revolve around at least one of the GAFSP's cross-cutting priority themes – climate adaptation, food and nutrition security, inclusion and the empowerment of women and girls, and smallholder livelihoods strengthening. Each proposal would also need to integrate the new approach to climate approved by the SC in April 2022.¹¹ All interventions must seek to close gender gaps, consider the specific situation of women in human endowments, create more and better jobs, improve ownership and control of assets, and strengthen women's voice and agency.

¹⁰ The SE or other partners can deliver technical assistance (TA) within the project, which could include TA for PO capacity development activities or other TA to support project activities. In the case that the SE conducts TA, this could be paid for through the grant, in addition to the supervision budget anyway received by the SE. However, TA (not implemented by the PO) should not account for the majority of grant expenses. TA could include but is not limited to training farmers and the PO, studies, and strategic development activities.

¹¹ For more information on the GAFSP strategy on climate change, please visit <https://www.gafspfund.org/news/fact-sheet-raising-gafsp-ambition-climate-change>.



8. Application Process

The application process envisages two parts.

Part 1 - Expression of Interest (EOI): Involves the submission of the PO EOI Template (see Template: Part 1. PO-Call Expression of Interest Template) and the supporting documents specified in Annex 1. **The EOI must be submitted by February 24, 2023.** A maximum of 3 days' delay from this deadline will be accepted, provided that the SE sends an extension notice to CU at least two days before the closing date.

The CU will review submissions to verify that the package is complete. The CU will **not** assess the quality or merits of the submitted documents, which will be done subsequently by a Technical Advisory Committee (TAC) after Part 2 is complete. Within two weeks from the reception of the EOI, the CU will notify applicants about the completeness of the submission and will eventually notify the PO of its ineligibility if it is evident that one or more of the criteria listed in Section 5 are not met. Ineligible POs and incomplete submissions will be excluded from further consideration.

Part 2 – Final Proposal: PO-led proposals that have successfully fulfilled the Part 1 requirements are going to be invited to submit the Final Proposal template (see Template: Part 2. PO Call Full Proposal Template) and the supporting documents specified in Annex 2. Applicants should not resubmit documents already submitted under the EOI. **The final proposal must be submitted by May 9, 2023.** A maximum delay of 5 days from this deadline can be accepted, provided that the SE sends an extension notice to CU at least two days before the deadline.

The preparation of the grant application (both parts 1 and 2) is the responsibility of the PO in consultation with the SE. The SE oversees submitting both part 1 and part 2 of the application on behalf of the PO by the respective deadline. It would be advisable to submit the required documentation before the deadline so any omissions noted by the GAFSP Coordination Unit (CU) could be provided before the deadline.

9. Selection Process

For each of the GAFSP Call for Proposals, the GAFSP Steering Committee constitutes a Technical Advisory Committee (TAC), an independent technical body. At the close of the Call, all complete applications (including parts 1 and 2) will be transferred by the CU to the TAC in charge of reviewing the PO-led project proposals (henceforth referred to as TAC-PO). The TAC-PO will prepare a recommendation report for the GAFSP Steering Committee. The TAC-PO is comprised of members with high-level experience and technical expertise in agriculture and food security issues and other critical areas, including climate resilience and environmental sustainability, nutrition, gender, and producer organizations. The composition of the TAC-PO will be disclosed after awards are allocated. A list of past TAC members can be found at <https://www.gafspfund.org/tac-members>.

GAFSP Steering Committee award allocation. Based on the recommendations from the TAC-PO, the GAFSP Steering Committee will make the final grant award allocations (expected in July 2023). For each submission, the GAFSP Steering Committee will decide whether to: (i) approve funding (which could be less than the amount requested), (ii) conditionally approve proposals pending the availability of additional funding received by GAFSP¹², or (iii) not approve funding. Each applicant will be promptly notified of the GAFSP Steering Committee's decision by email from the GAFSP CU.

¹² This is for projects which the SC considers viable but are lower ranked and thus beyond the available funding envelope. The SC will decide on a date by which if funds become available then projects could receive funding. For example, the SC may decide that a particular project should receive funding if additional funds become available by a future date such as December 31, 2023 (the exact date will be indicated in the notification letter to the concerned PO and SE).

The GAFSP CU will not make any grant available for proposal preparation for this PO-Call. The PO or SE will cover proposal preparation costs or both as mutually agreed upon. These costs will not be reimbursed if the project is not approved.

The Proposal Template is organized into three sections. Proposals will be scored based on all three sections and their respective weightings.

Table 2: Selection Criteria and Weighting

	Weight	Source
Project Description	40%	<p>The proposed project:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • clearly describes and is likely to achieve satisfactory development outcomes in terms of effectiveness and sustainability; • is context-specific and addresses the needs of smallholder farmers expressed through their PO; • clearly presents how it will upscale activity(-ies) implemented or recently closed by the PO and provides relevant track records of the PO’s implementation of the proposed activity to be scaled up; • Includes activities that support capacity building and strengthening governance, administrative, fiduciary, technical, and/or operational capacities of POs; • delineates an effective and cost-efficient set of activities; • proposes activities that show measurable outcomes responding to identified needs and address medium- to long-term crisis response and recovery that is relevant in the local context; • provides evidence that the proposed project would be instrumental in the achievement of food security for the project beneficiaries.
Thematic Areas	20%	<p>The proposed project:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • revolves around one of the three GAFSP thematic areas; • identifies and addresses climate risks (adaptation and/or mitigation) to build long-term resilience; • identifies the need for, and addresses gender equality and women’s empowerment, including plans for formal gender analysis and monitoring.
Operational readiness to implement (Including PO readiness - assessed through information shared in the PO-EOI part 1)	40%	<p>The proposed project:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • includes a track record of the PO’s experience in managing and implementing the activity(-ies) that will be scaled up with the proposed project projects in a timely and effective manner; • includes a clear description of the implementation arrangements between the PO and the SE for project implementation, including fund flow and procurement;

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • provides a clear and detailed description of the proposed project budget; • clearly describes the proposed governance, administrative and fiduciary, technical, and operational capacity of the PO; • clearly shows that it will be implemented directly by the PO, in partnership with the SE, under the SE's procurement procedure.
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10. Other Considerations

Each PO, through its partner SE, can submit only one proposal; and each SE is allowed to submit one proposal per country.¹³ If an SE receives more than one request from POs in a country to become a project partner, it will have to select the PO and project proposal with the greatest potential to succeed and make a meaningful impact. This would enable multiple PO-led project submissions from a given country if they each have different SE partners while ensuring adequate quality control of the SE over a reasonable number of proposals.

Engagement with SEs: POs must choose one SE from the following eligible SEs for the PO-Call and start working with the SE early in the process:

- The African Development Bank (AfDB)
- The Asian Development Bank (ADB)
- The Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO)
- The Inter-American Development Bank (IDB)
- The International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD)
- The World Food Programme (WFP)
- The World Bank (WB)

The selected SE has the responsibility to submit the Proposal to the GAFSP CU on behalf of the POs. Proposal preparation remains the responsibility of PO applicants, but the SE partner must review, conduct a quality check, and co-sign the Part 1 and Part 2 documentation. If a proposal is selected for GAFSP financing, the recipient PO will work with its selected SE to design and appraise the proposed project in line with the SE's policies and procedures. This will include fiduciary matters such as the flow of funds from the SE to the PO as well as clarifying procurement methods that will be applicable for PO-procured works, goods, and services. The POs should be aware that different SEs have different policies and practices as they pertain to these matters and consider these issues carefully when selecting a partner SE.

Engagement with Project Participants and Partners: In addition to engaging with the SE, applicant PO are expected to engage and consult, in a gender-inclusive manner, with their PO members, as well as agro-processors, marketers, women's groups, civil society, and/or other relevant stakeholders in the preparation of the proposal. This will be verified in the Part 2 Proposal.

Country government. Official clearance from the government is not required to submit a PO-led project proposal. However, SEs are required to inform the relevant ministry (agriculture or finance) that the PO will submit a project proposal to apply for funding from GAFSP under the supervision of the SE.

¹³An SE will be allowed to be a partner in two projects in the same country only where one of the two proposals comes from one of the active PO-led projects in the GAFSP portfolio.



Disclosure: Successful proposal documentation will be publicly disclosed. If the proposal documentation includes confidential information that the PO does not wish to be disclosed publicly, it should be highlighted clearly in the submission to permit redaction.

11. Submission

Submission: Documents should be submitted by email from an SE staff member's email account to: gafsp-info@gafspfund.org. Submission documents must be in Microsoft Word, Excel, or PDF format. GAFSP proposals and any submitted supporting documents are required to be in English or French. Please contact the GAFSP CU at gafsp-info@gafspfund.org before submitting supporting documents in other major languages, which may be permitted on an exceptional basis.

- Part 1 - EOI (required documents listed in Annex 1) must be received by **11:59 pm on February 24, 2023 (Washington, D.C. time, GMT -5)**. A maximum of 3 days' delay can be accepted, provided that the SE sends an extension notice to CU at least two days before the deadline.
- For those POs/SEs that have been invited to submit a Final Proposal, the Part 2 - Final Submission Package (required documents listed in Annex 2) must be received by **11:59 pm on May 9, 2023 (Washington, D.C. time, GMT -5)**. A maximum of 3 days' delay can be accepted, provided that the SE sends an extension notice to CU at least two days before the deadline.

No exceptions will be made to the document formats. SEs are encouraged to submit on behalf of their PO partners a few days earlier than the deadline in case there are technical problems in the submission process. Applicants will receive an acknowledgment email and a confirmation of receipt.



Annex 1 – Part 1 Expression of Interest: Required Documents to be Submitted

Documents to submit	Details
(1) Part 1- PO Expression of Interest (EOI) Template	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> All submissions are required to submit a template where the details of the applying PO will be specified along with their intent to deliver a proposal through their selected SE partner (a separate document).
(2) A joint PO and SE Cover Letter stating the intent to work as partners in the project under agreed modalities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Use of the cover letter format available in the Form for the PO EOI in Annex 1. The cover letter must be signed by a representative of the PO, the head of the SE’s country office, and the SE representative to the GAFSP SC.
(3) Supporting documents of the PO	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> PO’s by-laws or any other document that governs the PO must be submitted (mandatory). Other relevant official documents describing members, membership structure, governance, and financial structure should be submitted (if available).



Annex 2 – Part 2 Final Submission Package: required documents to be submitted

Document	Details
(1) Statement of readiness from the preferred SE, signed by the SE’s GAFSP SC representative and country office	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use the letter of readiness format available in the final submission template (Available in Annex 6). • The letter of readiness must be signed by the SE’s head of the country office and the SE’s representative to the GAFSP SC.
(2) Letter(s) of intent from co-financing partners to co-finance the proposed project	<p>Letters of intent to co-finance needs to indicate the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • They have discussed the proposal with the PO. • They are willing and ready to collaborate on the project in specified ways. • Indicative co-financing amount and co-financing modality (e.g., international NGOs, bilateral government aid organizations, channeled through the proposed SE, or others).
(3) GAFSP Final Proposal Template	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All submissions are required to use the proposal template for their proposal submission.