Call for Proposals: Innovation Challenges for Agriculture and Food Security Risk Financing in Southern Africa

1. Context

The Sustainable Development Department of the Africa Region at the World Bank Group with the support of Draper University is launching an Innovation Challenge to support Southern African countries to develop innovative agriculture risk financing tools to help inform and support public sector policy and program decision making regarding allocation of public resources to reduce economic losses, poverty and food insecurity.

The increasing severity and frequency of extreme weather events and growing threats from plant and livestock pests/diseases threaten to undermine regional food security, poverty reduction efforts and the achievement of the SDGs.

WBG is strategically placed to lead an integrated agenda for managing agriculture risks and to promote climate change adaptation and resilience in the agriculture sector. Ongoing efforts include: Famine Risk Reduction Initiative, Global Crisis Risk Platform, African Disaster Risk Financing Initiative, and Global Index Insurance Facility, among others.

In order to prioritize investments in resilience and preparedness to reduce agriculture losses, poverty and food insecurity, and de-risk agriculture investments, decision makers need tools that capture accurately the economic and social impact of agricultural risks. To incentivize the development of these risk financing tools, the WB is launching three innovation challenges aiming at demonstrating alternative ways of collecting or monitoring critical datasets and indices that can be used to ultimately assess in a granular, scalable and dynamic way the various dimensions of impact induced by agricultural stressors.

1. Challenge 3: Bring Your Own Yield Data

Objective, transparent, accessible, and accurate data is essential to develop high quality, affordable risk financing instruments (such as insurance) or ag information systems. With expansion of novel data collection techniques, non-traditional methods of data collection can leap-frog traditional methods of yield collection and expand the scope and availability of risk financing instruments for farmers.

The Challenge: Present timeseries of yield data for crops relevant to the SADC region in an electronic format. The proposal must explain how the data was obtained and why it is relevant.

Cooperatives, input suppliers, agribusinesses, financial institutions, and local NGOs that have collected yield data in the SADC region can submit their dataset. Ineligible datasets include: official datasets by the government or international organizations (i.e. FAO, etc.).

1. What are the judging criteria for proposals?

*Submitted proposals will be ranked according to the following criteria:*

*General criteria:*

* The proposals must follow the provided template and all documents must include the name, institution and thematic area chosen in its heading
* Present a clear strategy for developing a model or monitoring tool in the thematic area chosen that follows the requirements defined in this document
* Affordability of the solution
* Geographical focus on Southern African countries (defined by those countries members of the Southern Africa Development Community – SADC)
* Establish a clear path towards application of the solution on-the-ground
* Demonstrate the capacity of the proposed solution to scaleup to more countries/regions
* Demonstrate the performance of the model proposed against the data sources/databases mentioned for each thematic challenge
* Demonstrate how the performance of the solution has been validated
* Meet World Bank eligibility requirements (see below)
  + Development and usage of open access data, products, tools and approaches
  + [Open source technological solutions](http://opensource.org/) that are simple and replicable are encouraged
  + Involvement of local research or other partners in developing countries on an equal basis.

*Specific criteria (by thematic areas)*

Challenge 3

* The datasets should be actual observations and not forecasts
* The crops in scope should be the ones most relevant for the SADC region
* Datasets should not be more than 10 years old
* Datasets should be continuous time series, with minimum data gaps
* High geographic coverage will receive extra points
* Quality of measurement method will be scored (i.e. crop cut versus self-reported)
* The most comprehensive dataset will win
* Spatial density of data points will be scored
* The methodology for data validation will be scored

1. What is the prize?

The winners of each challenge will be able to present their findings and ideas to a panel of experts from top international institutions in a Shark Tank format. You will be invited to present your proposal work in a report on agriculture innovations by the World Bank and partners. You will be featured in key media outlets as an innovator in the area. They will also be invited to an award ceremony in Washington, D.C., (all expenses paid) and will have the opportunity to interact with potential partners.

1. How do I apply?

**Step 1**: Go to our platform link here. Record and send in an explanatory 1 minute YouTube video, fill out the questionnaire and prepare a short application (2 pages max) defining your proposed submission to one of the thematic areas using the submission portal below. In addition, submit a csv file with a snapshot sample of your dataset. *Close of Call for Application*: **April 2, 2020**

**Step 2**: Proposals will be reviewed by a World Bank Expert Working Group. This will be based on the outlined criteria. Successful applicants will be notified by email by **April 9, 2020**.

For challenge #3 (BYOYD), shortlisted applicants will be asked for the full dataset as a condition for being considered for the Shark Tank session.

Note: If your proposal is selected, you may receive feedback from the Expert Working Group to maximize the impact of your proposal to be presented at the award ceremony. *\*For shortlisted applicants, a Request for a PowerPoint Presentation (RFPP) will be issued to get the material before the award ceremony on April 27-28, 2020.*

*Public Announcements of the Proposals Funded in this Round will be made in August 2019.*

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