



RESEARCH
PROGRAM ON
Agriculture for
Nutrition
and Health

Led by IFPRI

Nutrition-Relevant Policy and Action in Eastern Africa

Call for Research Concept Notes

The *Transform Nutrition* Research Consortium invites outline proposals for studies of up to 24 months duration which will add to the evidence base on nutrition-relevant policy and action in Eastern Africa.

The challenge

Nutrition is foundational to the achievement of major social and economic goals, including many international development goals. Undernutrition in early life is responsible for 45% of under-five child deaths, reduced cognitive attainment, increased likelihood of poverty and is associated with increased maternal morbidity and mortality.

Child stunting rates in eastern Africa are among the highest in the world. The four countries in this call (Kenya, Ethiopia, Uganda and Tanzania) are home to around 13 million stunted children, and among the highest burden countries in the world. Ensuring food and nutrition security in the region can only occur through a combination of targeted “nutrition-specific” interventions and wider “nutrition-sensitive” development interventions, backed up by enabling policy, political and institutional environments and processes. Political commitment to address undernutrition is growing in the region (all four countries, for example, have signed up to the SUN Movement) and nutrition policies and action plans are being drawn up or revised.

While progress is being made, much more can be done. Scoping work within both *Transform Nutrition* and A4NH have clearly revealed major operational and policy-related knowledge gaps that broadly relate to the thematic focus of this call. This call for concept notes is thus intended to help fill these knowledge gaps, through locally-relevant research undertaken by research organizations from the region.

What is *Transform Nutrition*? *Transform Nutrition* is a research programme consortium comprising five partner organizations, led by the International Food Policy Research Institute (IFPRI) and funded by the UK’s Department for International Development. *Transform Nutrition* seeks to transform thinking and action on nutrition among research, operational and policy communities in high-burden regions of South Asia and eastern Africa. *Transform’s* research portfolio is structured according to three research pillars which align with the three themes of this call (shown below). Further details can be found here: www.transformnutrition.org

What is A4NH? The CGIAR Research Program on Agriculture for Nutrition and Health, or A4NH, led by the International Food Policy Research Institute (IFPRI), helps realize the potential of agricultural development to deliver gender-equitable health and nutritional benefits to the poor. A4NH aims to help ensure that agricultural practices, interventions, and policies will maximize health and nutrition benefits, while reducing health risks. Further details can be found here: www.a4nh.cgiar.org

The call for concept notes

This call seeks to engender a wider sense of engagement in nutrition-relevant research among national and regional stakeholders in four countries of eastern Africa: Kenya, Ethiopia, Uganda and Tanzania. We seek *high quality research proposals* on at least one of the following research themes:

- Theme 1: How can nutrition-specific interventions be appropriately prioritized, implemented, scaled up and sustained in different settings?
- Theme 2: How can agriculture and the wider agri-food systems become more nutrition-sensitive and have a greater impact on nutrition outcomes?
- Theme 3: How can enabling (policy and institutional) environments for nutrition be cultivated and sustained?¹

Cross-cutting issues include: governance, inclusion (socio-economic and gender equity) and fragility. Gendered approaches are especially important for proposals under Theme 2.

Eligibility criteria and important considerations:

- Applicants are encouraged to familiarize themselves with work underway or completed by *Transform* and A4NH (accessible via websites above) to maximize “value added” and complementarity with ongoing work, and avoid duplication.
- Applicant organisations must be legally registered entities in one of the four focal countries, capable of receiving and managing funds.
- Joint applications by more than one organization are encouraged, but one local organization must be specified as the lead.
- An organisation may submit more than one application, and an individual may be involved in multiple proposals, but any individual may be the lead researcher on only one application.
- Partner organizations within *Transform Nutrition* or A4NH may collaborate in proposed studies, but they are exempt from leading the call, and funds for their participation will need to be separately sourced.
- Research studies may be of 6-24 months duration.
- Proposals to undertake literature reviews are ineligible.
- The requested budget for each study should lie in the range: \$50,000 - \$150,000. Studies that are more expensive may be considered so long as there is *guaranteed* co-funding to meet requirements beyond this range.
- Each of the three themes has its own budget ceiling of \$150,000.
- It is expected that 3-6 studies (in total) will be funded through this call, with at least one study from each theme.

Evaluation criteria

- quality of the concept note and proposed research
- relevance and “value added” with regard to *Transform* and A4NH’s work
- value for money
- internal capacity (for high quality research and efficient project management)
- clearly specified policy relevance and potential for impact

¹ All studies will be considered here but we have a particular gap in understanding sub-regional or district level governance/knowledge/capacity and resources.

Format of concept notes

Please submit a *concept note* of no more than **3 pages** (single-spaced) that clearly states:

- problem statement (including which theme(s) the project responds to),
- context (including what is known already),
- objectives and research questions,
- study design and methods to be used,
- expected outputs², outcomes and impact,
- lead researcher, core research team and partners (CVs not required at this stage)
- timeframe,
- indicative budget (with breakdowns of personnel, travel and other expenses³.)

No additional material will be considered.

Review and selection process

The following process will be adopted:

1. Applicant organizations are invited (through this call) to respond by 21 November 2014, and according to specified eligibility and evaluation criteria, and format, with a concept note.
2. Concept notes will be screened against these criteria and quality filters by a review team comprising members of TN and A4NH, to select a shortlist.
3. Shortlisted applicants will be invited to prepare detailed research proposals (by 15 January 2015)
4. These proposals will again be reviewed by the review panel, using a standard scoring system before 30 January 2015.
5. The winning research proposals will then be announced.
6. Contracts will be agreed with lead organizations in February 2015.
7. Studies will start no later than 1 March 2015.

Concept notes should be emailed to Sivan Yosef (IFPRI) at s.yosef@cgiar.org

All queries concerning this call should be addressed to Catherine Gee at c.gee@cgiar.org

Final deadline for concept notes is **21 November 2014, (23:59 GMT)**.

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² It is expected that each study will produce at least one article for submission to a recognized journal

³ Normal budgeting approaches should be applied. Overhead/indirects may be included, please specify rate.