

## CALL FOR PROPOSALS FOR COMMISSIONED PAPERS

FOR THE ASTI–FARA CONFERENCE

# AGRICULTURAL R&D: INVESTING IN AFRICA’S FUTURE

## Analyzing Trends, Challenges, and Opportunities

5–7 December 2011

Accra, Ghana

Policymakers continue to recognize the value of greater investment in agricultural research and development as an essential element in increasing agricultural productivity in Africa. The Comprehensive Africa Agriculture Development Programme (CAADP) has set a target of 6 percent agricultural GDP growth per year as the requisite benchmark for countries where agriculture plays a dominant economic role. One of CAADP’s four pillars focuses on increasing investments in agricultural research, extension, education, and training as a means of realizing increased agricultural productivity growth. Agricultural R&D investments are also required to address emerging challenges such as adaptation to climate change, increasing weather variability, water scarcity, and the volatility of prices in global markets.

Recent evidence collected through the Agricultural Science and Technology Indicators (ASTI) initiative shows that, although public agricultural R&D investments in Sub-Saharan Africa (SSA) have increased overall, investments have declined sharply in some countries, and several countries still have extremely fragile funding systems. Average agricultural researcher numbers have also increased in SSA, but staff qualifications have simultaneously deteriorated in some countries. Staff departures and an aging pool of well-qualified agricultural researchers remain major areas of concern. Further in-depth analysis of the data compiled by ASTI is needed in order to extract in-depth insights into these and other underlying trends and issues related to agricultural R&D investments and human resource capacity.

**DEADLINE FOR PROPOSALS/SUMMARIES**  
15 January 2011

ASTI/IFPRI and the Forum for Agricultural Research in Africa (FARA) are currently requesting proposals for 15 to 20 invited/commissioned papers on the topic of agricultural R&D developments in Sub-Saharan Africa. Proposals *must* address one or more of the following themes (examples of possible topics are provided in parentheses after each theme):

**1. Levels and Stability of Agricultural R&D Investments**

(for example, broader agricultural investment strategies, investment and productivity growth, the implications of funding volatility, alternative funding mechanisms)

**2. Human Resource Development**

(for example, human capital and R&D system performance, incentivizing scientists in public R&D systems, staff retention and capacity strengthening)

**3. Aligning and Rationalizing Institutional Structures**

(for example, expanded roles for national, regional, and international R&D organizations and related non-R&D institutions; addressing the “small country” problem; S&T policies to strengthen private R&D and technology transfer; private sector roles in innovation; public–private partnerships)

**4. Measuring and Improving the Effectiveness of R&D Systems**

(for example, setting priorities in public R&D systems, metrics for monitoring performance, the implications of shifting the focus of R&D)

## Process and Timeframe

- Authors are requested to submit a 500–1,000 word executive summary detailing the proposed paper’s rationale, focus, and content. Summaries should be submitted online at [www.asti.cgiar.org/ASTI-FARA-conference](http://www.asti.cgiar.org/ASTI-FARA-conference). Final papers must be 8,000 to 10,000 words in length in English.
- Papers should draw from and build on the wealth of information collected by ASTI (see [www.asti.cgiar.org](http://www.asti.cgiar.org)) but can also draw from additional sources.
- The deadline for proposals/summaries is **15 January 2011**. Selections will be chosen by **15 February**, drafts will be required by **31 August**, and reviews will be returned by **30 September**. Final papers must be submitted by **31 October 2011**.
- Submissions should include a cover page detailing the author’s name, address, affiliation, telephone number, and email address; in the event of multiple authors, a lead/communicating author should be identified.
- Submitted summaries will be reviewed by the ASTI Advisory Committee, representatives of IFPRI and FARA, and an external intellectual facilitator.
- Total payment for selected papers will be **US\$10,000**, disbursed in installments.
- It is intended that a synthesis of the papers will be produced in 2012 for publication in book form.

## Contacts

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