

Document: EB 2016/LOT/G.12  
Date: 3 November 2016  
Distribution: Public  
Original: English

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Investing in rural people

President's report on a proposed grant under the global/regional grant window to Bioversity International (a CGIAR institution) for the Linking Research to Impact: Increasing the Effectiveness of Agriculture and Food Systems in Improving Nutrition Project

Note to Executive Board representatives

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For: Approval

## Recommendation for approval

The Executive Board is invited to approve the recommendation for the proposed grant, as contained in paragraph 17.

### President's report on a proposed grant under the global/regional grant window to Bioversity International (a CGIAR institution) for the Linking Research to Impact: Increasing the Effectiveness of Agriculture and Food Systems in Improving Nutrition Project

#### I. Background and compliance with IFAD Policy for Grant Financing

1. Over the past decade, the global community has increasingly recognized the important role of good nutrition in economic growth and social development. At the Second International Conference on Nutrition, in 2014, over 170 governments endorsed a Framework for Action on Nutrition. The Scaling Up Nutrition movement now has commitments from 57 countries to tackle malnutrition.
2. Nutrition and the push to develop nutrition-sensitive agricultural investments are high on national and international agendas. However, evidence of the impact of agricultural interventions on nutrition remains limited. Moreover, even where evidence exists, development organizations often face challenges in incorporating the latest research into their activities.
3. This project addresses both these weaknesses by seeking answers to the following questions:
  - (i) What is the impact of agricultural projects on nutrition?
  - (ii) What are the most effective options for designing and implementing nutrition-sensitive agricultural projects?
  - (iii) How can research results best be communicated to organizations to achieve the greatest impact?
4. The project will seek to provide an understanding of the reasons for the gap between research and action. It will examine how international development agencies such as IFAD access and use information in their work. Findings will suggest how to communicate research more effectively.
5. The project will also undertake a needs-mapping exercise to identify the knowledge required to improve the design and implementation of nutrition-sensitive agricultural projects. Rigorous process and impact evaluations will be undertaken to address knowledge gaps. The project will undertake activities to communicate findings from the research more effectively and thereby better link research to action and improve impact.
6. The project has a robust global public good dimension as it addresses two critical issues in development: generating an evidence base for nutrition and agricultural projects, and developing guidance for linking research to action.
7. The proposed programme is in line with the goal and objectives of the IFAD Policy on Grant Financing (2015).<sup>1</sup> In addition, the grant-funded activities support IFAD's

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<sup>1</sup> See EB 2015/114/R.2/Rev.1.

priorities regarding nutrition as identified in the Strategic Framework 2016-2025, helping to increase the productive capacities, enhance the resilience and raise the lifetime earnings of poor rural people.

8. The grant is proposed under IFAD's fourth priority area for Grants: Agricultural Research for Development. Grants under this window should generate knowledge that will improve the delivery of projects to smallholders. This grant will enhance the impact of nutrition-sensitive projects to the benefit of IFAD's beneficiaries.

## II. The proposed project

9. The overall goal of the project is to optimize the contribution of agriculture to healthier diets and improved nutrition. Its objectives are:
  - (i) Improved design and more effective implementation of nutrition-sensitive agricultural investments, including through policy engagement;
  - (ii) More effective links between researchers and those making decisions about programme investments, including policymakers, project design and implementation; and
  - (iii) A stronger global evidence base for the impact of agriculture on nutrition, particularly in terms of design and implementation of investments.
10. The target group will comprise three main groups:
  - (i) An indirect target group of policymakers, development practitioners and researchers around the world who work to shape interventions in agriculture and food systems to improve nutrition;
  - (ii) A direct target group of individuals working for and with leading international agencies for nutrition in agriculture (the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations [FAO], IFAD and the World Food Programme [WFP]), including national counterparts, and using evidence to design, manage and advise nutrition-sensitive agricultural projects; and
  - (iii) The direct beneficiaries of the nutrition-sensitive projects designed, managed and advised based on the evidence generated and disseminated under this project, particularly women and children.
11. The project will be implemented over four and a half years through the following components:
  - (i) Define a theory of change, determine evidence gaps and map to supply;
  - (ii) Undertake new thematic research, evaluations and operational studies;
  - (iii) Shape and communicate evidence, and strengthen capacities for its uptake and use (communications and knowledge management); and
  - (iv) Monitor and evaluate the results of project activities.

## III. Expected outcomes/outputs

12. The project is expected to have the following outcomes:
  - (i) Development practitioners, including international knowledge, technical assistance and implementing organizations, such as FAO and WFP, and international financial institutions, such as IFAD, as well as national governments and other national organizations, are aware of the findings generated under this grant; use this knowledge in project design, implementation, operations and evaluation; and are aware of how to create an enabling environment for access to and use of research findings.

- (ii) National policymakers and development investors are aware of findings and use them to inform agricultural policies and country strategies, and are aware of how to strengthen an enabling environment for nutrition and agriculture.
- (iii) Researchers across the Consultative Group on International Agricultural Research (CGIAR), especially in the partner centres of the CGIAR Research Program on Agriculture for Nutrition and Health (A4NH), undertake research that addresses the critical evidence gaps identified through this grant, and increase the effectiveness of their communications with policymakers, development practitioners and investors.

#### IV. Implementation arrangements

13. The implementation arrangements will be as follows:

- (i) Bioversity International will be the grant recipient and administrator, on behalf of A4NH. Pursuant to paragraph 15 (iii) of the IFAD Policy for Grant Financing, Bioversity International is considered eligible for direct attribution in the light of IFAD's relationship with the CGIAR and A4NH's global competence in issues related to agriculture and nutrition.
- (ii) A4NH operates as a virtual consortium linking the key CGIAR centres and their partners working in nutrition and agriculture. A4NH has five CGIAR managing partners (Bioversity International, International Center for Tropical Agriculture, International Food Policy Research Institute, International Institute of Tropical Agriculture and the International Livestock Research Institute ) and two non-CGIAR partners (Wageningen University and the London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine).
- (iii) To simplify administration while maintaining access to the resources of the A4NH partner centres, Bioversity International, a managing partner of A4NH, will be responsible for project management and implementation.
- (iv) Bioversity International will carry out research and distribute grant funds among A4NH partner centres depending on their capacities and identified knowledge needs.
- (v) Bioversity International will select centres to carry out research but will inform (and request the approval of, in the case of large sub-grants) the programme management committee of the A4NH Food Systems for Healthy Diets flagship research programme, to which the grant-funded work is linked.
- (vi) These implementation arrangements will ensure transparency, participation, communication and coordination among the partner centres, while Bioversity International manages the funds. This makes funds management more efficient, as the grant can access the resources and expertise across the partner centres.

14. There are no deviations from the standard procedures for financial reporting and audits.

#### V. Indicative project costs and financing

15. The total cost of the project is US\$3,395,000, of which IFAD will contribute US\$2,520,000. A4NH and Bioversity International have made in-kind contributions of US\$500,000 and US\$375,000, respectively (totaling US\$875,000). Project expenses will be concentrated on research (component 2), framed by a theory of change (component 1) and communications of research output (component 3). Component 4 will monitor and evaluate the effectiveness of the communications and knowledge management plan in terms of uptake and use by direct target groups.

16. While staff time will be needed to select, analyse, synthesize and shape research outputs, much of the communication work can be achieved using or building on existing CGIAR or Rome-based agency platforms, channels and activities. The majority of these activities will come under component 3, although institutions conducting research under the subgrant (component 2) will also carry out some dissemination, training and related knowledge management activities.

Table 1  
**Costs by component and financier**  
(Thousands of United States dollars)

| <i>Components</i>                  | <i>IFAD</i>  | <i>Bioversity<br/>International</i> | <i>A4NH</i> | <i>Total</i> |
|------------------------------------|--------------|-------------------------------------|-------------|--------------|
| 1. Define a theory of change       | 145          | 21                                  | 28          | 194          |
| 2. Undertake new thematic research | 1 551        | 232                                 | 308         | 2 091        |
| 3. Shape and communicate evidence  | 552          | 82                                  | 110         | 744          |
| 4. Monitor and evaluate results    | 272          | 40                                  | 54          | 366          |
| <b>Total</b>                       | <b>2 520</b> | <b>375</b>                          | <b>500</b>  | <b>3 395</b> |

Table 2  
**Costs by expenditure category and financier**  
(Thousands of United States dollars)

| <i>Expenditure category</i>   | <i>IFAD</i>  | <i>Bioversity<br/>International</i> | <i>A4NH</i> | <i>Total</i> |
|-------------------------------|--------------|-------------------------------------|-------------|--------------|
| 1. Personnel                  | 715          | -                                   | 348         | 1 063        |
| 2. Consultants                | 317          | -                                   | -           | 317          |
| 3. Travel                     | 123          | -                                   | -           | 123          |
| 4. Workshops                  | 52           | -                                   | -           | 52           |
| 5. Goods, services and inputs | 93           | 172                                 | 85          | 350          |
| 6. Training                   | 30           | -                                   | -           | 30           |
| 7. Subgrants                  | 960          | -                                   | -           | 960          |
| 8. Overheads                  | 180          | 203                                 | 67          | 450          |
| 9. Cost-sharing percentage    | 50           | -                                   | -           | 50           |
| <b>Total</b>                  | <b>2 520</b> | <b>375</b>                          | <b>500</b>  | <b>3 395</b> |

## VI. Recommendation

17. I recommend that the Executive Board approve the proposed grant in terms of the following resolution:

RESOLVED: that the Fund, in order to finance, in part, the Linking Research to Impact: Increasing the Effectiveness of Agriculture and Food Systems in Improving Nutrition Project, shall provide a grant of two million five hundred twenty thousand United States dollars (US\$2,520,000) to Bioversity International for a four-and-a-half-year period and upon such terms and conditions as shall be substantially in accordance with the terms and conditions presented to the Executive Board herein.

Kanayo F. Nwanze  
President

## Results-based logical framework

|                              | Objectives-hierarchy                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                            | Objectively verifiable indicators                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                 | Means of verification                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                  | Assumptions                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                       |
|------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>Goal</b>                  | Optimize the contribution of agriculture to healthier diets and improved nutrition.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                             | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Beneficiaries' diet quality (Note: Specific indicator to be identified as part of IFAD10 commitment to member states to pilot such an indicator)</li> <li>Anthropometric indicators of nutritional status (stunting, wasting)</li> </ul>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>RIMS</li> <li>IFAD project M&amp;E (baselines, endlines)</li> <li>Evaluations from grant project evaluation and other studies</li> </ul>                                                                                                                                                        |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                   |
| <b>Objectives</b>            | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Improved design and implementation of nutrition-sensitive agricultural projects.</li> <li>More effective links between researchers and people who make decisions about program investments, including policymakers, and project design and implementation.</li> <li>Stronger global evidence base for the impact of agriculture on nutrition.</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Comparison of project design at QA stage before / after grant activities shows increased use of knowledge (i.e., of evidence, tools, and approaches generated under this project).</li> <li>Individuals in the direct target group (i.e., RBA staff and consultants, national policymakers and project staff and related development practitioners and investors) place an increased value on using research-based knowledge in design and implementation of projects and policymaking; are more aware of how to access and use relevant research results; and know how and to whom to suggest ideas for future research.</li> <li>Researchers involved in this project place an increased value on consultation and interaction with the users of research findings (members of the direct target group); and know ways to engage with those users in order to do so, especially in development of research questions and outputs and communication of findings.</li> <li>Research outputs map to evidence needs as identified in Component 1.</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Joint IFAD-A4NH review of PDRs at QA stage</li> <li>Surveys of development practitioners, policymakers, development investors, and researchers who are directly engaged with this project</li> <li>Mapping exercise to see that project outputs match with identified evidence needs</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Institutional environment prioritizes nutrition and use of evidence.</li> <li>Individuals in direct target group are willing to engage with project around grant objectives and in project activities.</li> <li>Researchers are interested in adapting research to meet operational needs.</li> <li>IFAD-funded project timelines and related in-country capacities permit research to be done.</li> </ul> |
| <b>Outcomes/<br/>Outputs</b> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Development practitioners, including international knowledge, technical assistance, and implementing organizations (such as FAO and WFP) and international financial institutions (such as IFAD), as well as national governments, NGOs, and other national organizations and institutions are</li> </ul>                                                | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Development practitioners, policymakers, and development investors (individuals in the direct target group) are aware of specific research findings and lessons produced under this grant; use this knowledge in project-related activities and policymaking; and work to improve the enabling environment for access and use,</li> </ul>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Knowledge and Practice surveys of individuals in direct target group.</li> <li>Review of A4NH project proposals and surveys of A4NH researchers.</li> </ul>                                                                                                                                     | See assumptions for Objectives.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                   |

|                       |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                               |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                        |                                                     |                                                                |
|-----------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------|
|                       | <p>aware of findings and lessons generated under this grant; use this knowledge in project design, implementation, operation, and evaluation; and are aware of how to create an enabling environment for access to and use of this knowledge, especially in countries with IFAD-funded projects.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• National policymakers and development investors, particularly in countries with IFAD-funded projects, are aware of and use findings and lessons from this grant to inform agricultural policies and country strategies; and are aware of how to strengthen the enabling environment for nutrition and agriculture, especially in relation to nutrition-sensitive agricultural projects.</li> <li>• Researchers in the CGIAR, especially the partner centres of A4NH, design and undertake research that addresses the critical evidence gaps identified through this grant on how to make agriculture work more effectively for nutrition; and increase the effectiveness of their communications with policymakers, development practitioners, and investors, especially in countries with IFAD-funded investments.</li> </ul> | <p>especially in countries with IFAD-funded projects.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Evidence gaps and interactions with users are considered in planning A4NH projects, with specific reference to gaps and actions to address researcher-side usage constraints identified under the grant.</li> </ul>                                                                                                 |                                                     |                                                                |
| <b>Key Activities</b> | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Define a theory of change, determine evidenced gaps, map to supply</li> <li>2. Undertake new thematic research</li> <li>3. Shape and communicate evidence, strengthen capacities for uptake and use</li> <li>4. Monitor and evaluate results</li> </ol>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                             | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1) Report on theory of change; Needs and gaps analysis</li> <li>2) Research reports from evaluations and other studies</li> <li>3) Knowledge management strategy developed and implemented; Knowledge management products developed and disseminated; events held</li> <li>4) Evaluation reports on project effectiveness for: direct target groups and researchers.</li> </ol> | Grant project progress reports and physical outputs | Grant funds are approved, released and activities are underway |