

The 3rd call for proposals under the China-IFAD SSTC Facility

Frequently Asked Questions

1. Can an external organization submit a project proposal directly to the Facility Secretariat?

No. Project Proposals must be submitted by an IFAD staff member¹ at headquarters or at field level. At the field level, this would mean by an IFAD Country Office, Regional Hub or Regional SSTC and Knowledge Centre. The project proposal (including any annexes and budget) needs to be endorsed in writing by the relevant Regional or Division Director. In this case, the IFAD division is considered the sponsoring division, the IFAD staff member is the Project Leader.

This means that any external organization(s), prior to preparing a project proposal, must first establish contact with IFAD's Country Office or thematic area focal point for their agreement and support.

2. What types of organizations are eligible to be a recipient, and what are the specific criteria?

The following organizations and entities are eligible:

- a. Government organizations from a developing Member State of IFAD;
- b. Non-profit organizations registered in a developing Member State of IFAD, who are able to provide evidence of legal status and capacity to enter into a grant agreement;
- c. Business organizations registered in a developing Member State of IFAD, who are able to provide evidence of legal status and capacity to enter into a grant agreement, and who can provide co-financing in cash and/or in kind to the project;
- d. UN organizations, multilateral organizations and inter-government organizations operational at the country level of a developing Member State of IFAD. Such organizations must partner with at least one eligible organization listed above to implement the project, and show evidence that they will pool their financial and human resources into a consortium to reach the expected results of the project.

3. Are there any specific budget rules that must be observed in preparing the project proposals?

Yes, there are. Proposals that fail to observe any of these rules will not be considered for funding:

- a. Office equipment and operating costs, in total, should NOT exceed 10% of the grant amount.
- b. Salaries and allowances of personnel (i.e. personnel costs) of the recipient organization should NOT exceed 15% of the total grant amount.
- c. Indirect costs (i.e. overheads, management fees, etc.) should NOT exceed 8% of the direct costs.
- d. In any case, the sum of office equipment, operating costs and the indirect costs should NOT exceed 15% of the total grant amount.
- e. Consulting services should NOT be contracted to officers or employees of the recipient. Trainings for the officers or employees of the recipient should be excluded.

¹ Hyperlink to IFAD website for contacts: <https://www.ifad.org/en/web/operations/regions>.

4. How detailed and final should the project proposal be?

In order to simplify and streamline the preparation of a project, the project proposal is the only project document that needs to be developed. It should include all concrete and complete information on project activities, budget allocation, and implementation arrangements, etc.

To ensure country ownership and leadership, the project proposal (including the budget) should be developed through in-depth consultation with the recipient and the national government or local counterpart. Once it is approved by the Advisory Panel of the Facility and the Ministry of Finance of China, the proposal shall be considered as the final project document.

5. How will the project proposals be reviewed?

Each proposal will undergo a rigorous review and screening process per the Implementation Guidelines of the China-IFAD South-South and Triangular Cooperation Facility. Each proposal must meet the basic eligibility criteria required for applicants, recipients, financing amounts, project duration and mandatory documents. The in-depth review will focus on country ownership, effectiveness and impact, internal coherence and technical soundness, and built-in sustainability. Above all, the proposals will be assessed on their innovative features and the SSTC nature of the proposed interventions.

Once approved for funding by the Facility, each proposal will also go through an IFAD internal clearance process to ensure it is in line with IFAD's policies and procedures for grants. In the case of grants awarded to the private sector, a due diligence process and final approval by IFAD's Executive Board will be required.

6. How will country ownership and leadership be assessed when reviewing the project proposals?

Project proposals will be rated high in terms of country ownership and leadership, if there is clear evidence that:

- a. The project objective, outcomes and outputs are in alignment with the national package towards the COVID-19 response;
- b. The implementation arrangements involve national government and local counterparts;
- c. Co-financing of the proposal is provided from national or local counterparts;
- d. Confirmation email from national or local counterparts on the project proposal and the budget are included in the submission package.

7. Will I be informed if my proposal is approved or not?

Information on the approved proposals will be announced on the Facility webpage (www.ifad.org/en/sstcf) and the IFAD Intranet. Given the number of submissions, we are not able to communicate individually with applicants. It is therefore advised that you consult the IFAD website on a regular basis.

8. What are the roles and responsibilities of an IFAD division in sponsoring a grant under the Facility?

A sponsoring division must:

- a. Manage the full project design in alignment with the Facility's rules and IFAD's grant rules, and ensure that all documentation is correct and consistent, and submitted punctually;

- b. Ensure effective implementation of the grant, in line with grant related rules, regulations and procedures of both the Facility and IFAD. Staff time and resources must be dedicated towards adequate monitoring, supervision and reporting;
- c. Ensure all the required reports are provided in a timely manner with complete and precise information, and address any outstanding issues;
- d. Capture, produce and disseminate innovative practices, knowledge products and media coverage from/on the grant.

9. What are the roles and responsibilities of grant recipients?

Grant recipients must:

- a. Manage the grant resources allocated to them effectively and efficiently, and deliver the results set out in the approved project proposals;
- b. Undertake all steps necessary to address emerging risks or challenges;
- c. Provide all the required reports in a timely manner with complete and precise information;
- d. Actively contribute to the knowledge management agenda of the grant;
- e. Be fully accountable for respecting and observing all IFAD and Facility fiduciary, legal and standard requirements, and ensure that credit and visibility to the Facility are properly acknowledged.

10. What are the reference documents for the China-IFAD SSTC Facility?

- a. [The China-IFAD SSTC Facility: Implementation Guidelines](#)
- b. [The China-IFAD SSTC Facility: 2020-2021 Strategic Guidance Note](#)