January 7, 2016

Dear colleagues,

The Borlaug Higher Education for Agricultural Research and Development (BHEARD) program is pleased to share information with your universities on a new development in our activities. In addition to the degree training of masters and doctoral students from the 11 participating countries, we are also initiating the first of our Institutional Capacity Development (ICD) programs.

With funding provided by USAID/Uganda, we are now soliciting applications for an innovative Institutional Capacity Development (ICD) program with Makerere University's Department of Agricultural and Natural Resource Economics (DANRE). The attached Request for Application (RFA) provides details.

The principal activities required under this RFA are as follows:

- Development of relevant, state-of-the-art educational programs for MSc and PhD training in agricultural/applied economics and agribusiness
- Training of faculty and staff to deliver the enhanced educational programs
- Strengthen research capacity to compete for national/international grants
- Improve linkages with the government and private sector
- Internationalize DANRE via linkages with US or other universities

A major objective of this RFA is PhD training that produces well-qualified policy experts. One important part of this linkage will be the ability of the subcontractor to provide excellent PhD training in Agricultural Economic/agricultural policy to between one and three Ugandan students under the standard BHEARD program. The cost of this training will be provided directly through BHEARD, and is not included in the RFA. Additional graduate students who are enrolled for the PhD at Makerere U. may be enrolled as special students for course work or specialize research at the sub-contractor’s location and those costs should be covered under the RFA. This latter approach is of interest to Makerere U.

Another important part is the required cost-sharing by the U.S. university. This can take any form, but it is suggested that faculty salaries be included for this requirement, as the RFA does not allow for faculty salaries to be included in the budget.

Any questions regarding this RFA should be directed to me via email (annes@anr.msu.edu) before 29 January 2016. Answers to all questions will be provided on the BHEARD website on a rolling basis so that all applicants will have access to the same information. All applications should be sent by email to me, with a copy to BHEARD@anr.msu.edu, by 19 February 2016.

We look forward to receiving applications from a number of the outstanding universities in the BHEARD network!

Sincerely,

Anne Schneller
Co-director
Capacity Development for Agricultural Policy

Strengthening the Capacity of the Department of Agribusiness and Natural Resource Economics (DANRE) in the College of Agricultural and Environmental Sciences (CAES), Makerere University

### Request for Applications

The Borlaug Higher Education for Agricultural Research and Development (BHEARD) program seeks applications for an institutional strengthening Activity at Makerere University in the College of Agriculture and Environmental Sciences (CAES). The project will focus on the Department of Agribusiness and Natural Resource Economics (DANRE) under CAES. The goal is to enable DANRE to produce the next generation of researchers and policy analysts responsive to the evolving needs of Uganda’s agricultural sector. This Activity will be implemented under USAID/Uganda’s Feed the Future Value Chain Development Project. BHEARD will award a sub-contract to a U.S. university to work in collaboration with Makerere University and USAID/Uganda in the design and execution of an innovative and relevant program that meets the objectives described herein.

### Background

A limiting constraint to the agricultural sector’s development noted in Uganda’s National Development Plan is limited capacity (quality and quantity of human resources) for policymaking and planning as outlined in Program Area 4 of the Development Strategy and Investment Plan (DSIP).

A number of recent studies on the institutional structure and staffing of the Ministry of Agriculture, Animal Industry and Fisheries (MAAIF) has revealed that its capacity for policy analysis and planning work is inadequate and that is negatively impacting agricultural sector performance. Furthermore, despite Uganda’s decentralized method of governance and recognition of districts and sub-counties as legal entities, there has been little or no effort to develop capacity for policy analysis at these lower levels of government. The
capacity to facilitate co-ordination between government agencies and the expanding number of private sector actors is also limited. Specific examples of needed skills that are in short supply include analysis and appraisal of investments, data analysis, monitoring and evaluation, policy analysis and planning, agribusiness development, budgeting, financial management, and ICT. Addressing these gaps requires bringing the issue of capacity development for policy analysis to the forefront and increasing Makerere’s capacity to provide MSc and PhD training that aligns with policy formulation, particularly to support rural development.

Despite the critical importance of very highly trained, expert policy analysts and policy advisors, many analysts in Uganda’s food and agricultural policy environment hold only master’s degrees. The few analysts with PhDs reside in academic and research institutions and have limited interaction with policy development practitioners in government. Furthermore, opportunities for interaction between the policy analysts and policymakers remain limited by lack of appropriate platforms for candid dialogue and information exchange, which further constrains policy development.

Makerere University, the oldest public university in Uganda and the region, is the only institution currently offering MSc and PhD training in agricultural policy-related areas. Within Makerere, DANRE is charged with providing this training. Currently, the department has an inadequate organizational structure and staffing profile to effectively support policy analysis training in addition to all its other responsibilities. Key undergraduate and graduate programs (BSc and MSc) in the department have not had their curriculum updated since they were developed, while others have been downgraded by eliminating critical course components. In addition, the PhD program in agricultural economics, which includes a component on agricultural policy, has no taught courses. The department is constrained by outdated teaching methodologies and limited access to instructional and reference materials. These factors render the department incapable of fully addressing the changing needs of students and researchers. A USAID–funded scoping activity (2013) identified unresponsiveness of degree programs to policy and agribusiness priorities and inadequate course delivery/quality teaching approaches as some of crucial challenges facing DANRE in addressing policy training issues. URL: http://www.oired.vt.edu/innovate/resources/publications/country-studies/

Program Objectives

The overall goal of this activity is to strengthen the human and institutional capacity of DANRE so that it will regularly produce professionals with the relevant skills to address the policy needs of Uganda’s evolving agricultural sector, as well as those of the sub-region at large.

- Development of relevant, state-of-the-art educational programs for MSc and PhD training in agricultural/applied economics and agribusiness
- Training of faculty and staff to deliver the enhanced educational programs
- Strengthen research capacity to compete for national/international grants
- Improve linkages with the government and private sector
- Internationalize DANRE via linkages with US and other universities
Expected Deliverables

The Activity will begin with a planning exercise to update DANRE’s strategic plan and a needs assessment tailored to helping the department achieve its performance goals and deliver on its mandate to produce excellent policy analysts. The four major underlined sub-headings form the core of the Activity. The specific examples should be considered illustrative. The sub-contractor is encouraged to be creative in responding to this Request for Applications.

1. Conduct a strategic planning exercise and a needs assessment with DANRE.

2. Improve educational programs and teaching capacity.
   - Update the curriculum for the MSc Agricultural Economics, Masters of Agribusiness Management, and develop a new curriculum for the PhD Agricultural Economics (currently the PhD is research-only, no taught courses)
   - Strengthen key foundation courses relevant to agricultural policy formulation and analysis
   - Provide professional development for staff in modern pedagogy
   - Establish an eLearning center (if possible, pending increased bandwidth to be provided by Makerere); alternatively a mobile phone platform for accessing resources and information can be considered
   - Additional activities that enhance teaching capacity

3. Strengthen research capacity and provide professional development for procuring grants.
   - Strengthen the financial and grants management capabilities at CAES and the Research Directorate
   - Institute a post-doctoral fellowship program for DANRE with a small grant for each fellow
   - Equip faculty and post-graduate students with grant writing, budgeting, and grants management skills
   - Establish a small grants program that helps foster better interactions with government and the private sector
   - Additional activities that enhance research capacity

4. Increase international engagement for Makerere University with a US university.
   - Establish faculty exchange programs in both directions, including sabbaticals
   - Establish graduate student exchange programs in both directions
   - Individual or cohort models are acceptable
   - Additional activities that promote international engagement

In addition to the above, 3 PhD degree candidates will be selected and placed at U.S. universities using the standard BHEARD mechanism. It is hoped that the first two candidates (minimum of 1 is required) can be placed at the sub-contractor’s university for training in order to solidify linkages to DANRE and provide advice and assistance during the implementation of the Activity. It may be possible for all 3 BHEARD PhDs to be placed at the sub-contractors location. Additional, short-
term training may be provided under #4 for staff and DANRE post-graduate students, as appropriate.

The sub-contractor will be required to place a full-time co-ordinator at Makerere University to facilitate program activities, e.g., catalyze interactions between DANRE, government, and private sector, provide mentoring and conduct workshops, identify opportunities and co-ordinate with other donors, as well as serve as a resource to DANRE as needed. Emphasis should be placed on developing internal processes, e.g., peer mentoring/coaching that will sustain the training provided and promote a culture of continuous learning and performance improvement. **This individual will be hired in consultation with DANRE after the needs assessment has been conducted in order to determine which functions are most important and should not be specifically named among the key personnel in the proposal.** The ideal co-ordinator is a senior person, possibly at or near retirement, who understands what is needed to create a culture of excellence at DANRE for policy formulation and is committed to that process. A Ugandan who currently resides in Kampala or seeks to re-locate there would be a good choice, but other types of candidates are also acceptable.

**Eligibility**

1. Sub-contractor must be a U.S. university that offers PhD and MS degrees in agricultural economics.

2. Sub-contractor must be willing to accept qualified candidates for PhD degree training in agricultural economics [minimum of 1] who will be placed and funded via the standard BHEARD mechanism, as well as special students who will only do course work. [Degree candidates must meet the usual admission requirements required by the department.] It is hoped that this Activity will result in longer-term interactions, beyond the duration of the sub-contract and this feature is deemed critical to building the relationship.

3. Sub-contractor must be willing to engage its office of sponsored programs to develop grants management capacity.

4. Sub-contractor must provide cost-sharing. It is suggested that US faculty and staff salaries be cost-shared, as they are not allowed under this sub-contract.

**Duration of Activity**

The proposed program is authorized to run for four years.

**Monitoring and Evaluation**

Monitoring and evaluation will be conducted in accordance with ADS 203 and the USAID’s Evaluation Policy. The sub-contractor shall develop a monitoring and evaluation plan, which shall include outcome and impact indicators in addition to appropriate standard USAID indicators to measure and report on Activity performance. The sub-contractor is encouraged to take a
developmental approach to M&E, using it as a learning tool for assessing progress and adapting management throughout the implementation of the Activity. Performance will be evaluated based on progress towards meeting set targets in the annual work plans as well as end of Activity targets. All goals and targets will be developed in collaboration with DANRE, BHEARD and USAID/Uganda. USAID will conduct periodic performance reviews to monitor progress and achievement of results described in the work plan. USAID will work closely with BHEARD and the sub-contractor to develop monitoring and evaluation tools suitable for the Activity. It is suggested that bidders look closely at the new capacity development and system-level indicators developed by the Local Solutions working group in Washington, DC: http://usaidlearninglab.org/library/systems-and-capacity-two-measurement-challenges-search-progress-event-materials.

Collaboration, Learning and Adaptation (CLA)

This Activity will contribute to USAID/Uganda’s Country Development Cooperation Strategy’s commitment to a multi-faceted Collaboration, Learning and Adaptation (CLA) approach to development. See web site: https://www.usaid.gov/uganda/cdcs. Learning begins with a clear set of hypotheses and/or theory of change. Therefore, the sub-contractor shall develop a theory of change that incorporates interventions, sequences, resources etc. necessary to produce desired results. Through CLA, the sub-contractor shall continuously re-evaluate actions and assumptions to minimize risk, eliminating what does not work, testing and expanding promising/innovative approaches to improve DANRE’s teaching and research capacity. Collaboration is critical to the success of this Activity, because it forms the foundation of USAID Uganda’s Value Chain Development Project. Where appropriate, the sub-contractor shall collaborate and coordinate with other USAID partners, non-USAID projects, Government of Uganda agencies, private sector and other subject matter specialists in order to achieve optimal outcomes. The DANRE strategic plan and needs assessment will guide serve as a road map for performance improvement activities. Flexibility and adaptive management are necessary and encouraged for successful execution.

Implementation Guidance

It is important to remember that improving policy formulation, analysis and planning work is the central focus of the Activity. Inadequate capacity in this domain is hampering Uganda’s agricultural sector. Therefore, specific interventions under this Activity will be tailored to the identified priorities that meet the policy needs of Uganda’s agricultural sector. This Activity will be implemented in the Department of Agribusiness and Natural Resource Economics (DANRE) in Makerere’s College of Agriculture and Environmental Sciences, Makerere University. Aspects of the capacity development may involve other units within the University, in particular the Research Directorate and the CAES Grants Office, but the focus must be on DANRE.

Sustainability

The Uganda Feed the Future Value Chain project aims to ensure lasting development outcomes for the population and the effective and efficient use of USG resources. Specifically, for this Activity, the sub-contractor shall build the human and institutional capacity of DANRE to teach
and conduct research more effectively and efficiently. This sub-award is designed to take the department to the next level, enabling it to leverage larger, national and international grants. DANRE should be capable of funding its research activities without the need for continued USAID support after the close of the Activity.

**Local Capacity Development**

The USAID Local Solutions agenda emphasizes developing the capacity of local organizations. The sub-contractor shall work with DANRE to bringing the issue of capacity strengthening for policy analysis to the forefront. Furthermore, the sub-contractor and DANRE will create opportunities for interaction between policy analysts and policymakers and create appropriate platforms for candid dialogue and information exchange. As this Activity is about capacity strengthening, it is hoped that it will provide leverage for the sub-contractor and MU to compete for joint funding from national and international sources. One role for the co-ordinator would be to identify such opportunities for the participants in the Activity.

**Gender**

Promoting gender equality and advancing the status of women and girls is vital to achieving USAID’s development objectives. Recent studies of the Ministry of Agriculture, Animal Industry and Fisheries’ (MAAIF) institutional structure and staffing have revealed that many of the analysts in Uganda’s food and agricultural policy environment have master’s degrees, and a few have doctoral training and of these very few are women. This Activity will make a deliberate effort to promote women’s involvement in human resource capacity in agricultural economics training and strengthen policy analysis and development as per the demands of the Ugandan agricultural sector. Also in accordance with USAID’s recognition of the importance of gender issues in development and in line with the strengthening of public sector capacity, gender-related implications or opportunities will be addressed.

**Youth**

USAID/Uganda is committed to ensuring youth integration into its activities. Specifically for this Activity, the sub-contractor will create opportunities and appropriate platforms to increase youth participation in dialogue and information exchange that promote policy analysis and rural development.

**Preparation and Submission of Applications**

Complete instructions and background information can be found at the BHEARD web site (www.BHEARD.anr.msu.edu). Applications must be submitted by 19 February 2015 at 1700 hr. Late applications will not be accepted. Proposals must not exceed 20 pages, inclusive of references, CVs, budget and appendices (if any). Proposals that exceed a total of 20 pages will be returned to the submitter for editing. It is expected that the proposal text will be about 10 pages. Budgets must be prepared using the template provided. The template contains sections for the required
components, as well as the co-ordinator position and any U.S. administrative costs. Please use margins no smaller than 0.5 inches and fonts no smaller than 11 point.

Proposals must address the following:

A. Your team’s unique qualifications to implement this capacity building project include any prior experience in similar projects, as well as prior experience in Uganda. Provide short-form CVs for key personnel (2-page maximum per CV).

B. How you will conduct the strategic planning exercise and needs assessment for DANRE and provide a rationale for your approach.

C. How you will improve educational programs and teaching capacity and provide a rationale for your approach. Please read the Uganda AET Assessment (2013) as a guide to understand the context.  Click here to download the scoping report.  URL: http://www.oired.vt.edu/innovate/resources/publications/country-studies/. Due to the length of time required to approve new curricula, this aspect should be initiated as soon as possible after the award is made.

D. How you will strengthen research capacity and provide professional development for procuring and managing grants and provide a rationale for your approach.

E. How you will increase international engagement with U.S. universities and provide a rationale for your approach.

F. How does your proposal represent a holistic approach to achieving the overarching goal of supporting policy formulation in Uganda in accordance with the CLA process?

G. Include a general description of your M&E process and how it will be used for learning and adaptive management of the Activity.

H. Please use the budget template provided. The budget narrative should not exceed one page. Include a description of your cost-sharing contribution.

In your cover letter to the submission, please indicate that you accept and are in compliance with the eligibility criteria.

All applications, attachments and budgets should be emailed to Anne Schneller (annes@anr.msu.edu) and copied to BHEARD@anr.msu.edu.

Questions Regarding the RFA

Any questions regarding this RFA should be directed to Anne Schneller via email (annes@anr.msu.edu) before 29 January 2016. Answers to all questions will be provided on a
continuing basis at the BHEARD web site so that all applicants will have access to the same information. Please check the web site before submitting your question to see if it has already been answered. BHEARD may also post additional guidance, as the need arises. The BHEARD web site is at www.BHEARD.anr.msu.edu.

**Budget and Financial Information**

The total budget (direct costs) for the sub-contract (exclusive of the three BHEARD PhDs which will be funded by MSU/BHEARD directly) is $1.67 million.

Indirect costs. Allowed indirect costs are 26% of allowable direct costs. As this is a sub-contract, costs are reimbursable upon submission of invoices. You are allowed to sub-contract to other universities, but any overhead required by that entity must be paid from your own direct costs.

Cost-sharing is expected, although there is no minimum amount. As faculty and staff salaries for U.S. university implementers and Makerere faculty members are not allowed under this sub-contract, they should be included in the cost-share. One exception to this is that up to 25% of one FTE to provide administrative support to the Activity at the U.S. institution is allowed.

Makerere will provide cost-share in the form of housing for U.S. visitors who come as part of the exchange programs at MU and need not be requested as part of the budget. This does not include visits of less than three weeks duration. MU will also cost-share any physical renovations required for an eLearning Center or computer cluster, as well as provide furniture for the center. MU will also provide an office and some administrative support for the co-ordinator.

The total compensation package for the co-ordinator should be roughly equivalent to a full professor or dean in Uganda, ~$50,000 + on-campus housing. If the co-ordinator is already a regular employee of the sub-contractor, the equivalent of this compensation may be billed to the grant. No dependent allowances will be provided.

The post-doc program was specifically introduced to solve the problem of “brain drain” among returning PhDs who do not immediately become employed in Uganda. It is intended as a transition period from completion of the PhD to full employment in Uganda or the sub-region. Makerere’s hiring processes can be lengthy, thus the post-doc period can be used to employ people while waiting for one’s permanent employment paperwork to be processed. As such, applications for a post-doc position should be accepted at any time with a relatively fast hiring process. Post-doc salaries at MU are capped at $6,000/year, with a small research grant associated with each position.

Vehicle purchases are not allowed. Per diems are not allowed. MU visitors to the US for the exchange programs may receive stipends to cover living expenses in the local area of the sub-contractor.

**Nota Bene:** The detailed work plan for the sub-contract will be developed after the strategic planning and needs assessment exercise, thus there may be a need to modify some proposed activities. This is completely acceptable under the CLA process. As such, we expect that budget
information for Deliverable 1 should be more detailed than for the other deliverables, as that will begin first after the award of the sub-contract.

**Review Criteria and Timeline**

Proposals will be judged on three main criteria, capacity to implement (item A above, 40 points), technical quality (items B-G above, 40 points), and cost structure (item H above, 20 points). Innovative solutions to achieving the objectives outlined under Background are very strongly encouraged. BHEARD will conduct an initial review of all proposals for eligibility and quality. A short list of at least five universities will be designated for final selection. A panel from Makerere University, USAID, and BHEARD will review the short list and make a final decision. Bidders may be contacted for additional information and discussions after the short list has been prepared.

Since Michigan State University is the implementing partner for BHEARD, no applications will be allowed from MSU. If no acceptable applications are received, this RFA will be re-structured and re-released at a future date.