

**HASARNET** malawi

**HIV/AIDS and the Agriculture Sector  
Action Research Network**



**Regional Network on AIDS, Rural  
Livelihoods and Food Security**

## **HIV/AIDS and the Food Crises in Southern Africa: Guidelines for Proposals**

### **1 Action Research Priorities**

Preliminary concept notes and the full proposals that are invited, based on them, should address the following priorities (these are identical to those described in the paper “Background to a Regional Call for Action Research Proposals” obtainable on request).

Priorities are of two sorts: those likely to yield benefits beginning in the short term (1-2) years and in the medium term (2-5 years). Within each group, the order reflects the priority that stakeholders and Think Tank participants accorded to each theme.

#### **1.1 Activities with Short Term Benefits (1-2 years)**

##### **1.1.1 Assessing existing policies and programs and testing modified versions**

*Development policies and programmes:* On-going and planned processes of mainstreaming i.e. review by staff of programs and policies with the aid of the “HIV/AIDS lens” will be supported through action-research. This will extend to policies and programs of all kinds, developed with or without HIV/AIDS in mind: nutrition, decentralised service delivery, technology generation and diffusion, natural resource management, marketing, trade and pricing. This review will likely reveal that some are having unintended effects, positive or negative, on prevention of HIV infection or mitigation of AIDS’ impacts. To verify whether these effects are actually experienced, a number of these programs and policies will be followed intensively in the field, involving those responsible for them. Pilot trials aimed at enhancing the positive benefits or reducing the negative effects will also be carried out and carefully monitored and evaluated. These will include efforts by AIDS-oriented organizations that wish to integrate a food security aspect in their prevention, care and mitigation programs.

*Food aid policies and programmes.* The HIV/AIDS lens will be applied to food aid. Are there useful roles for temporary food assistance to secure existing, or leverage new, sources of livelihood e.g. food-for-work, food-for-assets? Can food aid provide incentives for availing of prenatal care services (supplementary feeding of pregnant women), exploring new livelihoods (food-for-training), or for educating orphans and vulnerable children (food-for-education)? Other issues relate to appropriate targeting modalities, ration quantity, quality and reliability, linkages to health and care services, and entry and exit strategies<sup>1</sup>.

### **1.1.2 Identifying and supporting innovation in AIDS-affected rural households**

There are as yet only scattered accounts of the innovations that HIV/AIDS affected households and communities have made in technology and social organization. There is bound to be much more that has not yet come to wider attention, and much that could be of use to others similarly affected. A concerted effort might be made to identify such innovations, especially those by women and young farmers, assess them and promote the most promising. Media like rural radio might be drawn on and means such as contests might be used to increase the incentives for innovation.

## **1.2 Activities with Medium Term Benefits (2-5 years)**

### **1.2.1 Developing new options for and with HIV/AIDS-affected communities**

*Exploring new social forms, including cooperative arrangements.* What scope is there for new approaches to pooling labor and resources in communities where mortality has hit many households hard, but where young adults may also be underemployed? Can win-win approaches be found? Can communities find ways to protect the entitlements of affected households, enabling them to exchange on fair terms what they have (e.g. land they can no longer cultivate) for what they need (e.g. food)?

*Assessing the contribution of enhanced livelihood and food security to HIV prevention.* Can efforts aimed at enhancing food security and livelihood options of susceptible groups make a cost-effective and timely contribution to preventing the spread of HIV? Can we identify options that are economically and environmentally sustainable, that make use of local opportunities?

*Assessing the contribution of enhanced livelihood and food security options to mitigation of AIDS' impacts.* Can we identify options that allow the most vulnerable groups to make optimal use of their limited resources? This includes nutritional options using local food sources for people living with HIV/AIDS, whose protein, calorie and micronutrient needs are increased.

### **1.2.2 Feasibility of targeting actions at the system level**

*Identifying livelihood systems that make people particularly susceptible or resistant to HIV.* It is also likely, though it has not been well established, that people who depend on certain agricultural or other livelihood systems may be particularly susceptible or resistant to HIV.

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<sup>1</sup> Separate funding will be sought for action research on a related theme, *Impacts and responses in the workplace*.

More productive systems would buffer famine-related shortfalls better and may support a greater diversity of livelihood opportunities, reducing the pressures on young adults to move into situations of risk. On the other hand, proximity to major trade routes and markets may increase infection risks.

*Identifying livelihood systems that make people particularly vulnerable or resilient to AIDS.*

People who depend on certain agricultural or other livelihood systems may be particularly vulnerable or resilient to the indirect consequences of AIDS-linked mortality – for example, because of pre-existing labor scarcity or the presence of low labour-demanding crops in these systems. A key question is whether these systems can be reliably identified beforehand or whether contextual factors are so varied that they make prediction impractical.

In both cases, should identifying these systems prove feasible, research and development efforts can be targeted at the systems where the risks of infection or impoverishment are the greatest, thus making more efficient use of scarce resources. Research and development workers can also collaborate with communities on altering those features that are increasing their risks or enhancing features that promote resistance and resilience. Understanding better the links between resistance/susceptibility and resilience/vulnerability is critical.

### **1.2.3 Impacts at the household and community levels**

*Clarifying the effects of AIDS on labor availability and capital accumulation.* Massive liquidation of assets to care for the chronically ill and pay for funerals is a common phenomenon and adds to the loss of skilled adult labor. Better understanding of the capital and labor endowments of affected households and communities would support the development of new technical and social options (see 4.2.1 above).

*Clarifying the effects of AIDS on other livelihoods and vice versa.* Non-agricultural livelihoods are often crucial to rural households. The effects of AIDS on such livelihoods, and on the crucial links between off-farm and on-farm activities, have hardly been investigated. To what extent, for example, do non-farm livelihoods contribute to households' resilience to AIDS' consequences? The SADC study, for example, recommends research “to track HIV/AIDS infected and affected households of different types through time to see how resilient or vulnerable they are to livelihood shocks (such as the 2002 food shock) and longer-term trends – such as gradual land degradation and economic decline.” (SADC 2003)

### **1.2.4 HIV/AIDS and access to and management of land and other resources**

Little is known about the extent to which AIDS affected households may be excluded from resources critical to their survival such as common property grazing lands, forests or fisheries. This may be due to labour scarcity and/or stigma. Where upkeep of resources is seriously affected by the withdrawal of labour, the effects can add to the spiral of impoverishment. The impacts may be felt widely, for example when failure to properly maintain banana groves leads to the spread of insect pests and fungal diseases to neighbouring farms.

### **1.2.5 Long term and aggregate effects of AIDS on rural society and the agricultural economy**

AIDS has led to massive orphaning and household breakdown. Surprisingly little is known about the long-term social consequences, which may already be visible in the areas where the epidemic was earliest entrenched.

As well, there is still little known about the overall impact of AIDS on communities and districts, and on the food security of consumers and those dependent on downstream processing, commerce and trade.

#### **1.2.6 AIDS and knowledge among the young and other vulnerable groups**

Children and young adults in AIDS-affected households may be cut off from the usual apprenticeship in agriculture and other rural livelihoods, though they may be heading households. They may also be obliged to drop out of school. New approaches to education will have to take account of these realities, and of the needs of women and especially widows heading households who are often poorly served by conventional extension and local information networks.

## **2 Eligibility**

1. Proposals must address one of the priority themes. In some cases it may be possible to address more than one.
2. Proposals must involve substantial contribution by at least one Ugandan, Malawian, Zambian or South African institution, as the case may be, and should be submitted by such an institution.
3. Partnerships are encouraged in order to access necessary skills and experience and to enhance local and national capacity. Teams with multidisciplinary backgrounds will generally be required.
4. Local NGOs and CBOs are encouraged to apply.
5. Proposals of up to US\$40,000 (for South African papers) and of up to 2 years in duration can be supported. Larger initiatives can be considered but these should be presented in a phased fashion. Priority will be given to proposals with modest and realistic budgets. In general, RENEWAL seeks to add value to existing or recently concluded initiatives and co-funding of proposals is encouraged.

## **3 Concept Notes**

Initial concept notes should be 2-4 pages. They should list the partners in the work, outline the problem to be addressed, describe the methods that will be used, the outputs, the anticipated outcomes, the overall budget and the amount requested from RENEWAL. They will be assessed against the following criteria:

- Proposed work should adhere to accepted ethical norms;
- The methods proposed should be rigorous and appropriate to the context and the issues;
- A clear link should be described between the work proposed and the impacts expected;
- Proposals should show how progress towards those impacts would be monitored and evaluated.

Additional criteria applied to the full proposals will include the adequacy of the problem statement, objectives and hypotheses and budgetary rigor.

### **3 Proposal Format**

Invited proposals should follow the following format, and be no longer than 15 pages.

#### ***Cover Page***

The cover page should include the title, which should clearly describe the proposed study, and list the names and full contact information of all collaborators (including full address, phone, fax, and email, where available).

#### ***Abstract***

The abstract should be no longer than one half page, and should briefly and clearly summarize the following: the problem and knowledge gaps being addressed (with regard to the action research priorities list), the methods to be used, data needs, a statement on how the study will contribute to knowledge and/or practice, the policy/program implications of the research, and the expected outcome and impact.

#### ***Main Text***

The main text of the proposal should more thoroughly address the questions outlined above. It should include sections: stating the problem to be addressed, the purpose and objectives of the action research, the hypotheses and/or research questions it will pursue, the methodology to be used, the outputs to be produced, policy or program implications of the work and its expected outcome and impact.

#### **Problem statement and objectives**

The proposed action research must address critical knowledge gaps in order to be considered for support. The proposal should state clearly the HIV/AIDS-related problem, from the list of priorities, and indicate the significance of the information being generated i.e. the link with the intended impact. The proposal should demonstrate that the research team is familiar with previous research and literature on the topic and is aware of relevant socio-economic, political, cultural, institutional, and/or gender considerations. Authors should identify the research questions that will be addressed and/or the hypotheses that will be investigated.

#### **Outcomes and impact**

The expected outcome of the study should be specified i.e. changes in important parameters, such as people's knowledge, employment or production resulting from its outputs. These should be logically linked to the expected impact. Reduced susceptibility/increased resistance to HIV infection or reduced vulnerability/enhanced resilience to AIDS' consequences (see Background Paper for an explanation of these concepts) can in particular be expected in the study area from research focused on actions (especially those addressing themes 1.1.1, 1.1.2 and possibly 1.2.1). Obtaining evidence of such impact should be planned for (see below). Proposals on themes with impacts expected in the medium term should indicate how and by whom the project's outputs will be used so that the hoped for outcomes and impact can indeed occur.

## **Methodology**

The methodology section should demonstrate how collaborators plan to produce the information needed to test their hypotheses and/or answer research questions *and explain the reasons for the methods, procedures and indicators to be used*. As appropriate, the section should explain *and justify*:

- the overall research design;
- the selection of research site(s);
- the variables to be studied and how they will be measured;
- sampling (size, selection criteria, and procedures);
- the role of community members in identifying research questions and potential solutions;
- the data collection processes and tools (append draft questionnaires, interview guidelines, and other protocols, if possible);
- the data analysis scheme and computational/data analysis package to be used (when applicable); and
- the anticipated difficulties or constraints and plans to overcome them.

Proposals focusing on *actions* (especially those addressing theme 1.1.1) should make clear who is implementing the actions, their experience with them and the modifications that will be examined in the research.

## **Research outputs**

The following outputs are required for each proposed project:

- A comprehensive and detailed research paper including the objectives of the research, methodology used, literature reviewed, the key results of the research, the project's contribution to knowledge and/or practice, and emerging recommendations;
- Properly documented data sets or samples of material technology, depending on the case, retained by the project leader and made available to others in the region on request and
- Presentation of research results to collaborating communities and at national and/or regional seminars or workshops. Proponents are encouraged to employ other appropriate and effective means of communicating results or making material outputs available to relevant stakeholders.

## **Monitoring and evaluation**

The proposal should describe a plan for monitoring and evaluating its work. This should include tracking progress towards producing its outputs and achieving its expected outcomes and impact in terms of reduced HIV/AIDS risks. Clear indicators should be specified.

## **Ethical considerations**

Proposals should demonstrate adherence to accepted ethical standards:

- Key intellectual contributions to the proposal are recognized and acknowledged, as they will be in any resulting publication;
- Participants are fully informed about the nature and implications of the research, and voluntarily consent to participate and to disclose information in the form specified in the research protocol. Confidentiality will be respected;

- The research itself will “do no harm”, for example not taking participants’ time needlessly, and not exposing participants who are affected by or living with HIV/AIDS to further stigmatization. The effect on other social groups of any measure intended to prevent or mitigate the impact of HIV/AIDS will be carefully considered.
- The research will benefit participants:
  - Proposals will describe how priority needs in essential health, social, and agricultural support services uncovered in the research are to be met by appropriate institutions.
  - Research findings will be fed back to participants and their communities and they will have a chance to comment on and correct them. Technologies or material outputs from the work will be available on a priority basis to the communities involved in the research and to all their members.

### **Workplan**

The workplan should indicate the major activities to take place per specified phase, together with the proposed starting and completion dates. It should provide a brief description of the roles and responsibilities of the researchers and other individuals and institutions to be involved in the study. It would be useful to present this in a chart or well-formatted structure. In developing the workplan, please note that it is expected that research will be completed within 24 months.

### **Budget**

The Action Research Fund will support proposals up to a maximum of US\$40,000 (for South African papers). Larger initiatives can be considered but these should be presented in a phased fashion. However, priority will be given to proposals with modest and realistic budgets. In general, the Fund seeks to add value to existing or recently concluded initiatives and co-funding of proposals is encouraged.

The budget should indicate how much the intended research will cost and should include a section on budget justification, which explains how these figures were calculated. The budget must be:

- presented in local currency
- consistent with the proposal, in that it provides the resources needed to implement the workplan and contains items discussed in the proposal;
- realistic and reasonable (reliable estimates of real costs should be obtained);
- restricted to allowable items (as outlined below);
- correctly calculated; and
- fully justified.

Proposals should provide evidence of the institution’s capacity to manage the funds requested e.g. other grants that have been successfully completed.

If a proposal is being submitted in collaboration with an ISNAR or IFPRI staff member, the budget should indicate the amount of time expected from this staff member, but should not include the costs of that time. In addition, RENEWAL will cover the costs associated with the publication of the work and its dissemination. However, any project-related seminars, workshops, or meetings held during the research phase must be included in the budget.

#### *Allowable Items*

- Researchers who are on salary cannot charge their salary to the proposal budget. Where justified, honoraria that are reasonable and in line with existing practice can be charged.
- Subsistence allowances for researchers covering accommodation and meals (based on existing local rates);
- Project support personnel, such as research or field assistants, data analysts etc., who are specifically hired for the project;
- Local travel and associated costs for research activities (if possible, projects should make use of an institutional or personal vehicle);
- Material costs related to research activities
- Communication costs, including telephone, fax, email, internet, and postage.

The section on budget justification should include explanations of how figures were calculated (i.e. number x rate x duration = total line item) and why amounts were chosen (i.e. why that number of assistants, that rate, or that duration?).

A grant agreement will be concluded with the institution putting forward a successful proposal. This will specify a schedule for reporting and for payments.

#### **Curriculum Vitae (CV)**

The curriculum vitae (CVs) of the principal collaborators should be attached to the proposal.

## **4 Submission**

Concept notes (by August 15, 2003) and full proposals (invited) should be submitted to the appropriate office (from whom the Background Paper can also be obtained or downloaded from the RENEWAL website [www.isnar.cgiar.org/renewal](http://www.isnar.cgiar.org/renewal)).

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