



SUSTAINABLE LAND MANAGEMENT IN THE HIGH PAMIR AND PAMIR-ALAI MOUNTAINS

CALL FOR RESEARCH PROJECT PROPOSALS

Background

The project Sustainable Land Management (SLM) in the High Pamir and Pamir-Alai Mountains (SLM-PALM) -an Integrated and Trans-boundary Initiative in Central Asia aims to address the interlinked problems of land degradation and poverty within one of Central Asia's critical mountain 'water towers' and biodiversity hotspots. This will be achieved through a trans-boundary approach that will seek to improve the technological, institutional, policy and legislative environment that is required for enabling mountain communities to take primary responsibility for the productive and sustainable management of their local ecosystem resources.

To stimulate and ensure the effective and efficient local action on development SLM, participatory community-based resource assessment, land use planning and micro-project implementation will be undertaken at selected hot spots – currently eight communities in the project region (map enclosed) -in the context of the trans-boundary framework. Demonstrations of the community-based SLM activities are expected to help mobilizing the additional resources for up-scaling the initiative in the Pamir Alai region and in other trans-boundary mountain environments in Central Asia. In addition to direct global environmental benefits that will be accrued in the Pamir-Alai mountains, the development of replicable generic guidelines that can be used to address the problems of land degradation in similar mountain environments will be an added benefit of the project.

Under this project, the International Center for Agricultural Research in the Dry Areas (ICARDA) Program for Sustainable Agriculture in Central Asia and the Caucasus (CAC) is launching a call for adaptive research projects in Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan. Research institutes and NGOs from these two countries are herewith invited to submit project proposals for consideration for targeted research grants. The proposals should address the necessary research and capacity building activities, on research topics which include the following areas:

- Identification and introduction of crop varieties suited to the high-altitude environments of PALM;
- Improved livestock production and range management practices;
- In-situ and ex-situ conservation of plant biodiversity of the PALM region;
- Conservation agriculture practices and resource conserving soil and water; management technologies for mountain ecosystems;
- Market value-chain analyses for mountain crop, tree and livestock products;
- Assessment of the livelihoods of mountain communities;
- Renewable energy sources for mountain communities.

Proposals from other areas of SLM can eventually also be considered if no sufficient proposals are submitted on these topics.

Application

Applications are restricted to national institutions from the two partner countries Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan. International co-financing and other agencies will be encouraged to couple with national partners and cover any additional expenses beyond those that can be covered by the GEF funds. The project funds can only be used for research purposes within Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan.

The applications should be submitted to the ICARDA CAC Program under PALM-ICARDA-CAC@cgiar.org, where they will be collected and submitted to the International Steering Committee of PALM (PALM-ISC) via e-mail for final approval. The deadline for submitting proposals is 15 April, 2009. Proposals can be submitted in English or Russian.

Only applications submitted by e-mail will be accepted. The length of the project concept notes should not exceed 6 pages in total. The proposal should consist of one document only, in PDF format, not exceeding 1 MB in size.

Proposals should be accompanied by a scanned cover letter of the Director of the applicant's institution on the institution's letter head, signed and stamped, stating that he supports the proposal.

It is expected that research grants will be awarded mid-May of 2009, so that investigations can still start this year.

The research projects should be completed in a period of 12-24 months. The proposals should consist of the following chapters: introduction, objective and justification, material and methods, expected results, financial and other resources needed to conclude the project (personnel, travel costs, consumables, small equipment of up to 3.000 USD) and include information about eventual co-funding from the applying institution. The proposal should also explain how the research projects will be validated within this period on at least two sites, so that they can be integrated in the final assessments of the project and used as a basis for developing recommendations for replication. The proposals should clearly state the project goal, rationale, objectives, outputs and impacts along with research methods and sources of information to be used. Applicants should provide one progress report every 6 months that also details the use of financial resources, and a final report two months after the end of the project. Should the progress reports not be satisfactory, as rated by the PALM-ISC, ICARDA-CAC reserves the right to annul the contract.

The maximum available fund for the each project proposal is 30.000 USD. Applicant institutes can submit more than one project proposal. Applications can be submitted by one organization alone, or in coherence with proposals submitted in parallel by other organizations.