



## REQUEST FOR EXPRESSIONS OF INTEREST

### OPPORTUNITIES FOR SUPPORT TO NETWORKING ACTIVITIES IN AGRICULTURAL RESEARCH AND TRAINING IN THE SADC REGION

#### 1. Introduction

The Southern African Development Community (SADC) is a member institution of fifteen countries namely: Angola, Botswana, Democratic Republic of Congo, Lesotho, Malawi, Mauritius, Mozambique, Madagascar, Namibia, Seychelles, South Africa, Swaziland, Tanzania, Zambia and Zimbabwe. Implementation and Coordination of Agricultural Research and Training (ICART) project is one of the lead projects within SADC Food, Agriculture and Natural Resources Directorate (FANR) which aims at enabling the National Agricultural Research Systems (NARS) in the SADC member states to enhance their capacity in agricultural research and training through regional initiatives. By the end of the ICART project period:

- SADC will have strengthened regional capacity to coordinate Agricultural Research and Training.
- Research Networks will have been strengthened in accordance with research priorities of the SADC region.
- Competitive grant funded research projects will have provided results and information for rural small holder farmers and communities.
- Regional Information and Communication System will have been developed and operational.
- Regional Training Programme (RTP) scholarship fund will have strengthened the regional training capacity.

Currently there is a lot of agricultural information and results generated by research and training institutions and farmers that have not been put to use because they have not been shared. There are also many on-going agricultural research and training activities about which little is known across the region. One way of sharing this information among common interest groups is through networking.

Networking is a mechanism of linking interest groups working together and sharing information in an area of common interest. In the context of this request, networking activities may include review, packaging and sharing of information through appropriate platforms; and capacity building.

In this context, the SADC secretariat through ICART project invites expressions of interest in the implementation of networking activities on information sharing in agricultural research and training.

#### 2. Focus Areas

Support for networking activities will be provided in accordance with the recommendations of the Situation Analysis of agricultural research and training in the SADC, which has been endorsed by regional stakeholders. According to this analysis, the four priority focus areas for support are:

(i) Gaps between farmers and technology developers; (ii) Soil and Water Management; (iii) Range Management; (iv) Economic use of Indigenous plants.

In addressing the gaps between farmers and technology development, emphasis may be put on the following areas:

- Empowering farmers (e.g. demonstrations, training, meetings and exchange visits) to access and utilize information that enables them to make informed investment decisions at farm level.
- Exploit synergies and comparative advantages within institutions to address technology development and dissemination. (exchange visits/programmes, workshops, symposium)
- Create conducive policy environment for technology development.
- Create dialogue between farmers and technology development agents to capture farmers' needs in their research agenda.

In addressing the soil and water management, range management and the economic use of indigenous plants applicants may consider the following networking areas:

- The research and training content that can be packaged and disseminated through appropriate information sharing platforms e.g. printing of manuals and offering related training (capacity building) on how to use the manual: or even translating and preparing more friendly extension materials.
- Groups working together on an area of common interest to enhance understanding leading to priority setting and to achieve impact (ripple effect)

### **3. Budget**

- Funding will be provided only to networking activities and not research activities
- Disbursement of funds arrangement will be from SADC – ICART coordinating unit directly towards the activity and not to the networking partners /institution
- Budget Ceiling: Funding available is Euro 300,000 up to September 2009 and Euro 500,000 up to December 2010. Ceilings for Requests: Minimum = Euro 20,000 and Maximum = Euro 50,000. Only under exceptional circumstances will one proposal be funded up to Euro 90,000.

### **4. Additional Information**

- Applicant must be eligible in the context of European Development Fund(EDF) Applicant must be a member of the NARS (NARIs, civil society, private & public sector, formal and informal networks) in the SADC.
- Activity to be supported should indicate commitment in organizing and implementing by institutions from at least 3 SADC member states.
- Non NARS institutions are eligible to participate as collaborators.
- The activity must show (impact) measurable outcomes, potential for sustainability and scaling out
- Application must clearly demonstrate innovativeness and gender mainstreaming/responsiveness

### **Deadline for submission**

First week to mid of February 2009 for consideration for funding up to September 2009. Late proposals will be considered for the period October 2009 – Dec 2010.

(Both electronic and manual submissions of expressions of interest are acceptable)

### **Please submit all proposals for the attention of:**

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