CARE-ACSF Impact through Innovation Fund: Request for Letters of Intent to Apply

LOI Deadline: December 3, 2014

Cornell University’s David R. Atkinson Center for a Sustainable Future (ACSF) and CARE USA invite Letters of Intent from those who intend to apply for a project award through the Impact through Innovation Fund (IIF). This fund was created in 2011 to stimulate collaborative research efforts that will build and promote food and nutrition security in rural communities around the world. The IIF provides an opportunity for CARE development professionals and Cornell faculty to work together in designing, implementing, or evaluating new technologies and practices that will improve the well-being and resilience of poor rural individuals, households, and communities.

Projects funded through the IIF should add value to and enhance capacity within each organization to facilitate the development and deployment of cutting-edge science for best practice application. Successful IIF projects might develop and demonstrate a new concept, undertake rigorous evaluation of CARE interventions to derive generalizable lessons, pilot applications of new scientific discoveries in real world settings, or develop tools that can shape CARE’s programming to improve sustainable development impact. While we will entertain a broad range of potential projects, all proposals must clearly and convincingly demonstrate how they are advancing a shared CARE and Cornell vision of more productive, equitable, and resilient food systems with a particular emphasis on the role and participation of rural communities and small-scale producers. Preference will be given to projects focusing on one of the following countries: Mozambique, Peru, Tanzania, Ethiopia, Zambia, Niger, India, Malawi, Bangladesh, Benin, India, Ghana, or Mali.

We expect to award up to three IIF grants this cycle. The maximum total award (for CARE & Cornell costs combined) will be $100,000 to be spent over no more than two years.

Prospective applicants are strongly encouraged to discuss their ideas with the CARE and/or ACSF IIF co-directors in advance of submitting an LOI (contact Cornell Prof. Wendy Wolford at www43@cornell.edu or Tonya Rawe, Senior Advisor for Policy & Research, CARE Food & Nutrition Security Unit, at trawe@care.org). This discussion is intended to help strengthen proposals by identifying potential partnerships and refining innovative and impactful ideas.
IIF Project Requirements

- Have at least two Principal Investigators: one full-time Cornell faculty member and one full-time CARE staff member.
- Demonstrate high levels of commitment and prior planning between team members.
- Demonstrate a meaningful contribution to advancing knowledge and practice in the area of productive, equitable, and resilient food systems.
- Demonstrate a high likelihood to generate value and benefits for small-scale producers.
- Demonstrate the potential for—and commitment to—pursuing follow-up funding if the IIF investment is successful.
- Demonstrate substantial scholarly quality.
- Demonstrate a 50%-50% sharing of responsibilities between Cornell and CARE collaborators with research and logistics. CARE and Cornell must bear joint responsibility for determining the overall research objectives, questions, and goals. While different participants will have different primary roles in the project, the research design, data collection, data analysis, report writing, article writing, and logistics management should be shared. Both CARE and Cornell researchers and staff must be equally invested in the project and see high value in its completion.

LOI Guidelines

Your LOI should be no more than two pages and should include:

- Title and summary of project focus;
- Identification of CARE and Cornell leads with short statements from each as to how the research builds on and fits into their own or their organization’s priorities and work;
- Proposed deliverables, including a final research report; and
- Project timeline, including estimated project begin and end dates, with adequate time for joint research design, data collection, data analysis, final report writing, and journal article submission.

Please email your LOI to acsf-iif@cornell.edu as a single MS Word or PDF document.

Review and Selection of LOIs

ACSF and CARE leadership will evaluate all LOIs and assess the ability of proposed projects to complement the goals of the CARE-Cornell Collaboration.

Selected applicants will be notified by the review committee by Friday, January 9, 2015 and asked to submit a full application by Thursday, February 12. Awards will be made by Friday, March 27 for research to start in Summer 2015.

Please email acsf-iif@cornell.edu for a prompt response to your application questions. Thank you for your interest in the CARE-Cornell Impact through Innovations Fund.