



FEED THE FUTURE

The U.S. Government's Global Hunger & Food Security Initiative

Feed the Future Liberia Food Security, Nutrition, and Resilience activity

Annual Program Statement (APS)

Call for Concept Papers to support activities to improve production, post-harvest processing, storage, and construction of small irrigation infrastructure in Liberia.

Feed the Future Liberia Food Security, Nutrition, and Resilience activity is a 5-year project with the overall goal to increase agriculture-led economic growth through improved productivity to enhance food security and nutrition. The activity was awarded to RTI International in partnership with BRAC, Dimagi, and GiveDirectly. FSNR is designed to increase rural economic development and food security in Liberia through: (1) strengthening agricultural practices and on-farm processing capacity of targeted beneficiary groups; (2) diversifying livelihoods and increasing incomes, savings, and access to financial services, land, and agricultural equipment; and (3) improving market access and year-round availability, accessibility, and utilization of nutritious food by households in targeted communities.

The overall purpose of the activity's Resilience Investment Fund (RIF) is to support eligible cooperatives in improving production and post-harvest processing and storage, along with construction funds to support small-scale irrigation infrastructure in Liberia. Through the RIF, the cooperatives will progressively take on responsibility to procure and manage services to provide benefits to their members.

Final funding levels will depend on quality of applications received, number of fundable applications received, availability of funding, suitability of the application in line with FSNR activity's scope of work and competing priorities. Grants will be awarded competitively in amounts commensurate with their impact but shall not exceed the maximum amount of USD 50,000 and with an implementation period of 12 -24 months from date of award.



Title	Resilient Investment Fund– Annual Program Statement (APS)
APS No	APS-FSNR-2024-001 <i>[This is a call for a Concept Note. Only those selected from this initial stage will be required to submit the full application]</i>
To download the Concept Note Application form	Concept Note Template is posted at: www.rti.org/rfp The Concept Note can also be requested at grants@liberia-fsnr.org
Any questions please email	grants@liberia-fsnr.org
Submit Concept Note to	grants@liberia-fsnr.org The concept note should not exceed five pages (including a summary budget) [The concept note marks the initial stage in this process. Following the initial evaluation, those who are successful will be guided to complete the full application package]
Date of Issue	October 26, 2023
Deadline to Submit Questions	Round 1: November 10, 2023 Round 2: April 15, 2024
Response to Questions published	Responses to questions will be published at www.rti.org/rfp on the dates indicated below. Round 1: November 17, 2023 Round 2: April 22, 2024
Closing Date for Applications	Liberia FSNR will accept APS Applications as follows. Round 1: November 27, 2023 Round 2: May 1, 2024.
Eligible Activities	Under this APS, Liberia FSNR seeks to support enterprises growth and increase employment opportunities, especially for women, and youth. Proposed concepts should align with one or more of the sub-objectives indicated in Section A. Support may be tailored to include grants for technical assistance, machinery, construction, and training for enterprises who have identified a market opportunity that can be met through increased access to the productive resources.
Eligible Applicants	This call is limited to established cooperatives and Small and Medium Enterprise (SMEs). All applicants should: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Be legally and formally registered at the time of grant application. ● Be compliant to government of Liberia regulations (submit tax compliance certificate, registration certificate). ● The activities under the grants must primarily take place in Liberia. ● Individuals are not eligible to apply for this APS. Concept notes from organizations that do not meet the above eligibility criteria will neither be reviewed nor evaluated.

Application Process	<p>To apply, complete the attached application package.</p> <p>Below is an overview of the application and selection process.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Step 1: Interested applicants shall review APS and associated requirements. ● Step 2: Interested applicants can submit questions regarding this APS, the process or activity before the stated deadline. ● Step 3: Eligible applicants shall submit concept notes using the APS application package. The concept note shall not exceed five A4 size normal pages. ● Step 4: Liberia FSNR review committee evaluates concept note applications for each round based on standard criteria. ● Step 5: Successful applicants will be invited to submit a full application package in response to a request for applications (RFA) as part of a co-creation process with developed and refined concepts, program descriptions and budgets. The accompaniment to develop the full proposal with a budget and MEL plan may take up to three months, from the selection of the concept note. ● Step 6: The resilience capacity assessment shall be conducted to identify areas that require capacity strengthening. ● Step 7: Concept Notes are reviewed, evaluated including Risk Assessment and Environment Impact Assessment and scored. ● Step 8: Awards are made to successful applicants.
Selection Criteria	<p>Factors to be evaluated when reviewing concepts are detailed in Section III: APS Review.</p>
Co-Investment	<p>Co-Investment is required under this APS. See Section II: Co-Investment.</p>
Questions & Answers	<p>Q&A stage will be conducted to gather more information from the shortlisted applicants. We will respond to the questions collectively, addressing them in a consolidated manner rather than individual responses to each applicant.</p>

APS Application Package [for Concept note]

The Application Package includes:

- Section I. Illustrative Partnership Activities
- Section II. Co-Investment
- Section III. APS Selection Criteria / Technical Evaluation
- Section IV. Application and Submission Information
- Section V. Types of Awards
- Section VI. Unique Entity Identifier (UEI)
- Annex A. APS Application Form
- Annex B. Liberia FSNR priority counties

This is an open application process with selection made in two rounds. The first round of evaluations will be conducted for concept notes, received by **November 17, 2023**, and the second round of evaluation will be for concept notes received by **May 1, 2024**. Please take note that applications will be reviewed on an ongoing

basis, and only shortlisted concepts will receive notifications. All questions and APS Application Forms must be submitted to grants@liberia-fsnr.org

Section I. Illustrative Partnership Activities

The Feed the Future Liberia FNSR activity will consider activities that directly contribute to the achievement of the activity's goal to increase agriculture-led economic growth through improved productivity to enhance food security and nutrition.

FSNR seeks concept notes for grant funds to provide nascent cooperatives, and Small and Medium Enterprise (SMEs), specifically processors, with incentives to procure farming equipment, storage facilities or irrigation equipment and supplies from identified suppliers to sustainably scale up their operations.

Through the Resilience Investment Fund (RIF), the FSNR activity seeks to not only support groups with access to inputs, equipment, and technologies to make improvements in productivity and processing in nutritious value chains that will enhance incomes, but also reinforces the Sustainable Farmer Group Approach by empowering farmer groups, women's groups, youth groups, and cooperatives to gradually take on greater responsibility for procuring goods and services to support their members.

Like all capacity-building initiatives, the grant awards will be contingent upon the recipient's existing capacity. Moreover, the possibility of receiving additional awards hinges on the successful execution of previous grant allocations.

Applications can include more than one of the above-mentioned activities.

RTI and its partners will play a facilitative and coordination role in implementing the activity through private sector firms, cooperatives, and village savings, and microfinance institutions. In playing the facilitative and coordination roles, RTI may collaborate with other agencies depending on feasibility of anticipated level of synergies with implementing agencies to provide support to the eligible cooperatives and SMEs.

Please note that Liberia FSNR grant funds will not be used to support any of the following:

- i. Construction costs **except for construction for small-scale irrigation purposes** and limited to the rehabilitation of existing irrigation facilities or the construction of new irrigation facilities, cost of new low-cost and appropriate technology used for irrigation. Irrigation facilities may also be solar-powered or include a small battery-operated pump, infrastructure, renovation, or rehabilitation projects activities of any kind.
- ii. Vehicles including cars, motorbikes, trucks, tractors.
- iii. Salary for the cooperative members or business owners
- iv. Purchase of chemical fertilizer, pesticides and or any environmentally harmful products.
- v. Purchase of secondhand goods or used machinery. New agricultural machinery and equipment are eligible for funding.

Section II. Co-investment

Co-investment is required under this APS at a minimum of 1:1 match in private funding. Priority will be given to applicants that can provide a co-investment to their requested budget. Applicant's contributions can be in the form of cash (such as private capital or loans), infrastructure, property, equipment, new and existing staff working on the grant activities, and others directly used for the proposed activity. Standard operational costs will not be considered as part of the contribution.

The Resilient Investment Fund (RIF) intends to leverage group co-investment in all the proposed activities, with 50% co-investment requirement for support towards the rehabilitation of irrigation facilities and/or construction of new low-cost appropriate technology irrigation, including solar irrigation pumps.

The applicant can propose mobilization of additional financial resources, such as equity or debt that will come from other sources including, formal financial institutions such as commercial banks, individuals, other companies, funds, and foundations, and bilateral or multilateral organizations.

These co-investments are uniquely secured and cannot be sourced from the funding of other donors. They represent a dedicated commitment to our specific initiatives and objectives, ensuring that the resources and support required for our projects are distinct and independent, further reinforcing our determination to achieve our goals.

A detailed budget is not required for the concept note stage of this APS. However, applicants are required to provide a summary of the total activity budget showing the amount of co-investment contribution from the applicant and the amount of grant funding requested from RTI. Successfully evaluated concept notes, if invited to respond to the Request for Applications (RFA), will be required to submit a detailed budget and narrative.

Section III. APS Selection Criteria

The Selection Committee (SC) will review the concept notes submitted by the applicant using the selection criteria below:

	Criteria	Points
I.	<p>TECHNICAL UNDERSTANDING AND APPROACH: Application demonstrates how partnership with FSNR will result in improvement in production (including through expansion on irrigation), storage and processing, market access for the members and/ or inclusive jobs and/or entrepreneurial opportunities.</p> <p>A. Problem identification and statement - Applicant ably identifies the existing gaps / problem in the agricultural value chain. (5 pts)</p> <p>B. Proposed activities are aligned with the priorities of the APS. (5 Points)</p> <p>C. To what extent does the concept address the challenge of food security and nutrition or marketing or processing of agricultural produce? (10 pts)</p> <p>D. The extent to which the concept adopts Climate-Smart Approaches (CSA) with a focus on improving productivity with limited inputs and enhancing resilience to climate-related shocks through climate change adaptation. (10 pts)</p> <p>E. Demonstrates how proposed activities are linked to existing agriculture value chains, enhances business partnerships, demonstrates enhanced collaboration with tangible and achievable results. (10 pts)</p> <p>Below are the value chain of preference to the FSNR</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Cereals, (Rice & Maize for trials) 2. Vegetables (Okra, Cabbage) 3. Legumes (Cowpea and Groundnut) 4. Tuber Crops (Cassava & Orange Fleshed Sweet Potatoes), 5. Tree crop (Moringa, Papaya, Avocado, Cocoa, Oil palm, Rubber) 6. Livestock (poultry). 7. 	40
2.	<p>Creativity, Innovation and Technology driven: The extent to which the concepts are innovative, smart, and technologically driven.</p> <p>A. Concepts demonstrate use of creative ideas and innovation with highest likelihood of impact on socio economic dimension of a household. (5 pts)</p>	25

	B. The extent to which the business can be replicated and scaled. (5 pts) C. Concepts incorporate proven innovative technology approaches. (5 pts) D. Concept clearly shows progressive change and a growth trajectory. (10pts)	
3.	Environmental impact: The extent to which applicants clearly identify any potential environmental impacts due to proposed activities and includes proposed mitigation measures. (10 pts)	10
4.	Inclusivity: The extent to which the proposed concept considers the impact and opportunities for women and youth, and particularly ensures effective integration of women and youth. (10 pts)	10
6.	Co-Investment: Minimum of 1:1 match contribution from applicant's own funds, commercial loans and new assets. The reasonableness of proposed co-investment (considering the type of interventions being proposed. Concept details clearly stating the source of the co-investment. (10 pts)	10
7.	Past performance: Applicant has a proven track record demonstrated by previous work and experience, both technically and geographically. (5 pts)	5
	Total Possible Points	100

Only Shortlisted applicants will be contacted to continue to the next step of the application process.

Section IV. Application and Submission Information

All concept notes must be submitted in English and may not be more than 5 pages. The 5 pages limit excludes Section I: Overview of the concept note Applicants must adhere to the guidance provided in Annex A, below. The application and any supporting documentation should be submitted in electronic form to: grants@liberia-fsnr.org
[Hard copy submissions can be delivered to any of the physical addresses shown in annex B below.](#)

Subject Line: APS-FSNR-2024-001

Submission should include:

APS Application Form (See Annex A, below) with the following sections completed.

- 1) Section 1: Basic Information
- 2) Section 2: Technical Approach (**Maximum 5 pages**)
- 3) Section 3: Required—Certification

This is a rolling process with evaluations and selections made over two rounds. As resources are limited, applicants are encouraged to respond quickly. Based on applications, the first round of evaluations is anticipated after **November 27, 2023**. The second round of evaluation will occur after **April 01, 2024**.

Section V. Type of Awards

Grants awarded under this APS will primarily be Fixed Amount Award grants (FAA) or hybrid FAA . There is no provision of in-Kind Grants.

Under FAA grants, RTI will make payments based on submission and acceptance of specific verifiable milestones. Once an award is issued, it will include a fixed price payment schedule with milestones and deliverables negotiated during the final application and award process.

Section VI. Unique Entity Identifier (UEI):

Beginning April 4, 2022, the Unique Entity ID (UEI) from SAM.gov is the authoritative identifier for those doing business with the US Federal government. The Unique Entity ID is generated in SAM.gov (www.sam.gov).

Whereas applicants can submit their Concepts applications without the UEI number. However, grant recipients must provide the UEI before they can receive any funding. Due to delays in processing of UEIs, applicants are encouraged to apply for the number early.

Find guidance on how to obtain a UEI number plus additional general resources that may be useful.

Item	Description	Link or Attachment
Getting Started with Registration and the Unique Entity ID	SAM.gov page with guided process for requesting a UEI and/or obtaining SAM registration	https://sam.gov/content/entity-registration
Getting a Unique Entity ID	Youtube video generated by GSA.gov with guidance for obtaining a UEI.	https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=C87wSCYKTcE
Entity Registration	Youtube video generated by GSA.gov with a walk through of the core data section of an entity registration in SAM.gov for non-federal entities.	https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=leZb5th5UAE

Applicants are encouraged to obtain their UEI number through registration in SAM (<https://www.sam.gov>).

Annex A. APS Application Form

Section I: Basic Information

1. APS Number		
2. Date Application Submitted		
3. Name of Organization		
4. Unique Entity Identifier (UEI) Number (if available)		
5. Organization Representative	Name:	Telephone:
	Title:	Email:
6. Address		

7. Registration	<i>Business Registration Type: (Attach copy of registration)</i> <i>LRA-TIN Number:</i> <i>CDA-Certificate/Letter: (if available)</i> <i>Tax Clearance Certificate:</i> <i>Registration Date: DD/MM/YYYY</i>	
8. Concept Note Title		
9. Type of Organization (Check <u>all</u> that apply)	<input type="checkbox"/> Cooperative <input type="checkbox"/> Small and Medium Enterprise (SME) <input type="checkbox"/> Other (explain): <hr/>	
10. Age of Business	<input type="checkbox"/> 0-5 years of operations <input type="checkbox"/> 6-10 years of operations <input type="checkbox"/> 11+ years of operations	
11. Size of Business	<input type="checkbox"/> 1-49 employees / members <input type="checkbox"/> 50-99 employees / members <input type="checkbox"/> 100-249 employees / members <input type="checkbox"/> 250+ employees / members	
12. Support Requested	<i>(List services and/or items – See Section I for examples)</i>	
13. Location of Activities	<i>(List County or Counties —See Annex B)</i>	
14. Financial Support Requested Approximate (Budget)	Estimated Value of Support Requested from FSNR (USD)	
	Applicant Co-Investment Amount (USD)	

	Total Project/Investment Cost (USD)	
15. Period of Performance	Total Number of Months	

(Instructions have been provided in italics. They do not count toward page limits, and you may choose to delete them.)

- Write your answers in the box next to the questions as you will not be able to change any of the other text.
- When you are answering questions, try to be as brief as possible and only provide information that is relevant to the question set. Please follow the guidelines on the amount of information that should be included.
- Answer all sections and if you do not have an answer for a question, please write 'None' or 'N/A'.

Section 2: Technical Approach (Maximum 5 pages)

1. **Background:** *(Provide a brief background of your organization, current operations in terms of scale, business model and plans for growth and market constraint. Please provide an overview of the cooperative’s current challenges, opportunities, and/or problems. Discuss political, social, economic, and/or environmental conditions that require change.)*

2. **Project Objectives:** *(These objectives should be clearly formulated, oriented towards an impact, be specific, measurable, realistic, and have a time limit. They should demonstrate a clear link to the eligible activities outlined in this APS).*

3. **Project Description:** *(Provide the detailed description of your proposed interventions. Describe how the activities will lead towards strengthening agricultural practices and on-farm processing capacity, diversify livelihoods and increase incomes, and improve market access and year-round availability, accessibility, and utilization of nutritious food. Show how future activities and investments will continue and grow after USAID funding has ended. Demonstrate how this investment will develop market partnerships and linkages with other Agri-based business players).*

4. **Creativity, Innovation and Technology driven:** *(Provide the detailed description of how your proposed interventions provide for innovation, are creative and smart and adopt technology in their application). Show how you will build on previous investment if you have benefited from previous grants. [Mention the amount, period, and source of your grant]*

5. **Co-Investment:** *(Provide a short description of the planned co-investments contribution by your organization towards this activity. For example, list any equipment to be purchased, financial resources that will be accessed for*

the investment, supplies and materials). This is a section where you need to describe the contribution you will make to compliment the grant funds and meet the proposed objectives.

6. **Environmental Impact:** (Identify any potential environmental impacts due to proposed activities and include proposed mitigation measures. This may also include proactive approaches to deter environmental impact through uptake of improved technologies, climate-smart agricultural practices, and other approaches).

7. **Inclusivity:** (Indicate who will benefit from successful implementation of grant activities or investments and why; describe how your program will contribute towards greater inclusion of women, and youth).

8. **Past Performance:** (Please provide a detailed summary of the cooperative or SMEs past performance, including years of experience in the relevant sector).

Section 3: Required—Certification

I, _____ (authorized officer name), the
_____ (title, Chairman/President/Executive Director /
Representative) of _____ (name of business / organization)
that is requesting assistance from the Feed the Future Liberia FSNR activity for the implementation of
the proposed activity certify that all the information presented in this application in response to the APS
is accurate and correct.

Signature: _____

Date: _____

Annex B: Feed the Future Liberia Food Security, Nutrition, and Resilience Activity Countries.

The six priority counties for the Liberia FSNR are Lofa, Nimba, Bong, Margibi, Grand Bassa, and Montserrado.

Hardcopy submission can be made through the addresses below:

Activity Locations	Application Delivery Address
Voinjama District	BRAC Branch Office Police Bye Pass, Voinjama City Lofa County, Liberia
Foya District	BRAC Branch Office Ndama Road, Foya Town Liberia County
Zorzor District	BRAC Micro-Finance Office Balama Community Zorzor Town, Lofa County Liberia
Kolahun District	BRAC Micro-Finance Office Kolahun Town, Kolahun District Liberia County
Bong County	Liberia Food Security & Rural Capacity Building Project Office Gbarnga- Ganta Highway Bong County, Liberia
Monsterrado County	Food Security, Nutrition and Resilience Activity Office 2 nd floor, Prime Reality Building Gibson Street, Mamba Point Monrovia, Liberia
Nimba County	BRAC/FSNR Activity Office LPMC Road, Ganta City Nimba County, Liberia
Margibi County	BRAC Micro-Finance Office Kakata, Margibi County Liberia
Grand Bassa County	BRAC Micro-Finance Office Light Forest Community, Buchanan Grand Bassa County, Liberia