
**ILO LAUNCHES FOURTH CALL FOR PROPOSALS
TO PROMOTE COOPERATIVES IN AFRICA**

CALLS FOR PROPOSALS

Dar es Salaam, Tanzania (ILO News) -- The International Labour Organization (ILO) announces the launch, on 14 September 2009, of a fourth call for proposals to promote social economy organizations based on cooperative values and principles through the Cooperative Facility for Africa (Coop^{AFRICA}) programme.

Coop^{AFRICA} is a partnership programme implemented by the ILO and funded by the U.K. Department for International Development (DFID) to support the development and promotion of cooperatives in Africa. Partners include the International Co-operative Alliance, the UK Co-operative College, the International Trade Union Confederation, the Committee for the Promotion and Advancement of Cooperatives, and the African Union.

The programme provides assistance through the Challenge Fund, a competitive bidding process, which supports projects on a cost-sharing basis:

- 1) Funding requests below US\$ 20,000 can be submitted at any time during the year under the Coop^{AFRICA} "Small Grants" procedure.
- 2) Funding requests in the range from US\$ 20,000 to US\$ 50,000 are collected twice a year through calls for proposals.
- 3) Funding may in exceptional circumstances be extended up to USD 150,000 during these calls when organizations that have been or are in the process of being recognized as 'Centres of Competence' are involved in the implementation of the project, or are requesting capacity building assistance (through the Challenge Fund for Training).

Calls for proposals are open to 8 African countries under a highly competitive bidding. Three calls have been organised so far: the first in June 2008, the second in November 2008 and the third in May 2009. Through the calls, 55 organizations have already been selected for Coop^{AFRICA} grants, for a total funding of approximately US\$ 2,700,000.

Proposals for the Challenge Fund may be submitted under these categories:

- *Challenge Fund for Services:* aims to facilitate the provision of technical support to cooperative organisations or similar member-based self-help initiatives (e.g. guidance on market information, financial services, business planning, legal issues, etc.) through institutions that demonstrate significant technical expertise in cooperative development

- *Challenge Fund for Innovation*: aims to promote and support non-traditional types of cooperatives or similar member-based self-help initiatives (e.g. entrepreneur cooperatives, social service cooperatives, burial societies, etc.)
- *Challenge Fund for Training*: aims to enhance access to capacity building for the development of cooperatives or similar member-based self-help initiatives (e.g. provision of updated cooperative curricula, staff training, development of training material, etc...) through institutions such as cooperative colleges, cooperative apex bodies, public authorities, social partners, NGOs, etc...).

Who can apply?

- All cooperative-type organizations/self-hep initiatives having identified specific needs related to cooperatives activities and/or areas for assistance to be trained or advised can apply:
 - (a) Pre- or primary level cooperative organizations including primary cooperatives, pre-cooperatives, community-based organizations etc.... They can be project service provider/implementer or the beneficiary
 - (b) Cooperative support organisations (unions, federations, colleges etc...) that carry out higher-level economic, training, capacity building, representative functions on behalf of primary cooperatives. They can be recognised CoC or in the process of being recognised CoC. They are the project service provider/implementer or the beneficiary in case of capacity building needs
- Other stakeholders close to the cooperative movement (i.e. public or parastatal agencies, international and national development agencies, trade unions, employers' associations, NGOs, private companies etc...). Nevertheless, if the applicant does not belong to the cooperative movement, it must demonstrate a clear partnership with a cooperative stakeholder (e.g. cooperative support organisation or primary cooperative) in the implementation process and/or in the design of the proposal. They can be recognised CoC or in the process of being recognised CoC. They are the project service provider/implementer or in exceptional cases the beneficiary.

The ILO invites applications for the three above-mentioned challenge funds. For more information about application form, guidelines, and selection process, please visit the website www.ilo.org/coopafrika.

Note to Applicants:

- It is highly recommended that applicants enter into a **formal partnership with a support organisation** that has the proven capacity to implement the project (i.e. Centre of Competence -see www.ilo.org/coopafrika for information)

- The current **global economic crisis** has already taken a severe toll on the African economy, and it is expected that further falls in exports, enterprise downsizing, credit market imbalances and reduced social spending will occur in the region, resulting, among others, in job losses and declining levels of income. In the light of the crisis, Coop^{AFRICA} encourages applications for projects which address sectors (e.g. commodity markets) that are particularly hard hit, or which contribute to the mitigation of its impact on workers and their families in other ways (e.g. by enhancing access to social services through the cooperative approach).
- In a context where inequalities persist in the rights, resources and opportunities that women and men have in different spheres of life, sustainable and meaningful development is not possible without the **fostering of gender equality**. As such all the projects will need to demonstrate that the particular needs of both women and men have been considered and ensure equal opportunity in their implementation.

*Note: The deadline for the third call for proposals above US\$ 20,000 is **18 October 2009**. Please note that the maximum project duration is **9 months**, and all projects need to be finalized by November 2010.*

To obtain a Word version copy of documents, please send an email to coopafrica@ilo.org or visit www.ilo.org/coopafrica, Challenge Fund Section under "Quick List"