



## **Call for Concept Notes Scholarship Competition**

The Ghana Strategy Support Program (GSSP) is a research, communication, and capacity-strengthening program of the International Food Policy Research Institute (IFPRI). The program aims to strengthen the capabilities of researchers, administrators, policy-makers, and members of civil society in Ghana to develop and implement agricultural and rural development strategies.

To strengthen capacities as well as better utilize research, GSSP is initiating a scholarship program for supporting Master's level thesis research. In addition to offering students resources and collaboration opportunities to build their research capabilities, the program aims to enhance the relevance of this body of research to improving the effectiveness of agricultural and rural development strategies in Ghana. The support will be restricted to research in social sciences on topics directly related to agricultural and rural development. The scholarship will consist of a sustenance grant of \$4,000 dollars (\$1,000 per month) to complete the thesis.

Interested applicants are invited to submit concept notes for funding of their thesis research. Concept notes should be 4 – 6 pages total with a maximum of 1500 words in Times Roman font, 1.5 line spacing. The following are guidelines for the preparation of the concept notes:

1. Cover page: Should include the following
  - a. Research Title: This should be concise, focusing on the essential theme of the research
  - b. Name of student (applicant), program of study and level, department and University
  - c. Endorsement by the applicant's Head of Department
2. Background: Provide a concise review of the main research work and current issues in the specific subject area. This section is not meant to be a full literature review, however it should indicate what is already known about the subject of study.
3. Research problem: Provide a clear and simple description of the research problem, including main research question and sub-questions. This is a brief summary of what you want to research into. It spells out what you want to find out; what you want to know after the research; what the research questions are. Provide the primary research question, followed by sub-questions, stated in a clear and logical manner. Research problems should be of relevance to current issues affecting agriculture in Ghana.
4. Research objectives: State overall research purpose and related specific objectives, which follow from the research questions.
5. Hypotheses: State hypotheses to be tested.

6. **Methodology:** Outline the methodology you intend to use for the research. This should include a brief description of the analytical framework, methods and tools for analysis of data, and data that you will likely require.
7. **Expected output(s):** Give an indication of outputs from each stage of the research process and timelines.

### **Research Themes and Sub-themes**

The following are research themes and sub-themes for your guidance. Note that the themes are based on the data available from the pilot Ghana Agricultural Production Survey (GAPS), which is the main source of data for research in this call. Students will be given limited additional funding to collect complementary data if necessary (e.g. qualitative data from participatory processes).

- (I) **Agricultural productivity and drivers (Crop and livestock)**
  - a. Effectiveness of research and extension, and access to markets on productivity)
  - b. Agricultural productivity (growth) and poverty reduction
  - c. Technology adoption and agricultural investments
  - d. Institutions and agricultural productivity (growth) – land tenure, contract farming and embedded services.
  - e. Link between resource quality (soil type, prevalence of weeds, access to irrigation water, intensity of land use), technology adoption and productivity.
  - f. Quality of land preparation and land productivity
  - g. Spatial patterns of agro-input use and comparative analysis of input prices across districts.
  - h. Spatial comparative analysis of Technical Efficiency in the production of key agricultural commodities. What is the frontier production in each district for a commodity (e.g. maize, rice, groundnut, soybean) and how far are farmers from the frontier?
- (II) **Environmental management**
  - a. Effectiveness and drivers of farmer responses (adaptation and mitigation measures) to climate change – land management practices, planting of trees
  - b. Extent of conservation agriculture and its impact on productivity and farm incomes.
- (III) **Access to services and markets**
  - a. Mechanization centers and access to mechanization services.
  - b. Household storage facilities, costs, and market access, including destination and means of transportation.
  - c. Access to credit and drivers – who has access; from which source(s); for what commodities.
- (IV) **Diversity in agriculture (Youth, women, other resource poor farmers).** This theme is a cross-cutting one and can be addressed under any of the above themes. For example, ‘access to resources and types of constraints’ could be addressed with a focus on the youth, gender, or resource poor farmers.

**Timelines to Note:**

- Concept Notes: Due June 15, 2012
- Successful applicants notified by June 29, 2012
- Full Proposals: Due August 15, 2010
- Workshop for presentation of proposals: First week of September
- Announcement of scholarships: September 30, 2012

Concept notes should be submitted to Ms. Esther Mensah by email at [IFPRI-Ghana@cgiar.org](mailto:IFPRI-Ghana@cgiar.org) no later than 5pm on June 15th. For questions regarding submissions, Esther can be reached at 0302-780-716. More details on the scholarship program can be found on the GSSP blog ([www.gssp.ifpri.info](http://www.gssp.ifpri.info)) along with additional information as it becomes available.