

AFRICA LEAD Agribusiness Leadership Program

Training the Next Generation of Agribusiness Professionals

Program Purpose

AFRICA LEAD is funded by the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) to support capacity building under the Government's Feed the Future (FTF) Initiative and the African Union's Comprehensive Africa Agriculture Development Program (CAADP).

A major component of AFRICA LEAD is to collaborate with U.S., international and African agribusinesses on an Agribusiness Leadership Program aimed at facilitating a much greater commercial model of agricultural production and value addition in Africa. The broad goal is to support skills transfer that will help African agribusinesses improve their viability and performance as measured by factors such as increased revenue, reduced costs, improved distribution, and enhanced product quality—elements that when massed will scale up agriculture and increase food security on the continent.

The AFRICA LEAD Agribusiness Leadership Program will develop learning assignments that combine on-the-job training, formal classroom instruction, informal interaction, and other activities that match a host company's objectives and preferences with the needs of participating staff of beneficiary organizations. The focus of the assignments will be consistent with the agriculture and food security themes of FTF and CAADP. These themes are broad subject matter categories that offer considerable latitude in the types of assignments. The ultimate goal of the Agribusiness Leadership Program is to build scalability and longevity by institutionalizing the program within host and beneficiary companies to train the next generation of agribusiness leaders in sub-Saharan Africa.

With this document AFRICA LEAD is soliciting feedback from prospective host and beneficiary organizations regarding the content, approach, and format of learning assignments, and to gauge interest in participating in the Agribusiness Leadership Program.

General Guidelines for Assignments

The Agribusiness Leadership Program will focus on placing individuals with host companies in Africa, the U.S. or internationally for a period of one to three months, with six month placements in particular instances, to expose participants to effective, efficient agribusiness practices. Assignments will reflect the skills set needed by the private sector.

Examples of assignment categories, though not exhaustive, include the following:

- Procurement / Purchasing
- Food Manufacturing
- Quality Assurance and Food Safety
- Logistics and Warehousing
- Marketing
- Financing
- Commodity Trading

More general guidelines for assignments are shown below.

- Assignments may be designed around specific commodities or products and address particular stages or activities within a value chain from input supply to consumer sales. The current focused value chains include horticulture, rice, maize, dairy, and livestock.
- Assignments may also be designed around processes, functions, or activities that cut across commodities or value chains, for example, access to credit and finance, climate change adaptation, and commodity trading.
- Each assignment should expose participants to modern agriculture and agribusiness practices that will benefit small-to-medium-scale producers and processors, in particular women.
- Assignments should address the limiting constraints to increasing the quantity, quality and choice of food, and reducing costs to consumer through improved production and marketing efficiencies.
- Ideally assignments should be replicable within the same company or with new companies.

Assignments are expected to produce mutual benefits for the host company, the participant and the beneficiary company. Of particular importance would be the lasting professional and personal relations that develop between the host company mentors and their African colleagues.

Direct benefits to host companies will vary by type of learning assignment: an agribusiness may establish an assignment with a prospective supplier as it explores an expanded supplier base; another could be structured as a test run for a

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firm's internal training and mentoring program; or an assignment could focus on geographies that are targets for business expansion.

In some circumstances host companies will be able to align assignments with their own African agribusiness strategic plans. Companies will also be able to access low risk and low cost introductions to African agribusiness networks and better understand African culture and business approaches.

Companies placing participants, the beneficiary firms, will benefit from on-the-job experience, intensive contact, and customized practices which are very difficult to convey in typical training environments. Participants in the assignments, in addition to applying the tools learned to their jobs, can leverage their experience by mentoring others in their organizations and industry associations.

Agribusiness Leadership Program Process

The first step in matching host companies and beneficiaries is to determine the level of interest among potential host organizations, to learn about their mentoring, training and internship programs, their growth plans as it relates to Africa, and the core expertise and skills that they could foster in a program participant. AFRICA LEAD will then develop a participant profile and vet it with each host company.

The second step is for AFRICA LEAD staff located in South, East, and West Africa to identify prospective candidates based on the candidate profile. AFRICA LEAD staff will notify the agribusiness community, the CAADP country teams, and other donors of the Agribusiness Leadership Program, and solicit candidate nominations.

- The basic requirements for each candidate include the following:
 - Mid-senior-level staff with management responsibility
 - Recognized leader among his or her peers
 - At least 3 years of work history with their organization
 - A minimum of 7 years work experience in a field relevant to the assignment
 - To achieve maximum impact candidates will be drawn equally among men and women.

The third step in the process will be to review potential candidates that meet the requirements. AFRICA LEAD staff

will request a CV and a one page statement of interest plus a statement of support from the candidate's supervisor. The statement of interest will address the content of the training and mentoring the applicant is seeking, how the applicant and the company intend to use and leverage the training, and how the applicant will apply and share his/her experience within their company and with a larger audience. AFRICA LEAD will review applicants for best matches and submit no more than four candidates to the host company for review and selection.

Roles and Responsibilities

AFRICA LEAD: The Agribusiness Leadership Program will cover travel and related costs, living expenses, and local transportation costs. Housing costs will be covered as necessary. AFRICA LEAD will also provide administrative and logistical support for visas, travel, and accommodations.

If the host company requires a confidentiality agreement with the participant, AFRICA LEAD will assist in this process. AFRICA LEAD staff will also conduct exit interviews with each participant to obtain feedback about the assignment and the quality of the experience, which will be shared with the host company.

Hosts: Hosts are expected to contribute to the program costs by providing their staff time, expertise, training facilities, and if available, subsidized housing for participants. Following each assignment, AFRICA LEAD will conduct a brief telephone interview with the relevant host staff to determine their perception of the program, challenges encountered, recommendations for improvement, and their willingness to sponsor additional participants.

Beneficiaries: Participants will apply the tools learned to their jobs to improve their productivity. They will be expected to share their experience and skills within their organization and with the broader association of agribusinesses to which their organization belongs, national or regional. Following the assignment, AFRICA LEAD will request that each participant complete a brief on-line survey to assess their experience with the program.

Contacts

To learn more about how your company can participate in the AFRICA LEAD Agribusiness Leadership Program, contact:
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