



Seed Fund for Research and Training (SFRT)

The Southeast Asian (SEA) region has a number of promising researchers and scientists whose desire to contribute to the region's development through research and knowledge dissemination initiatives is hindered by lack of funds. This situation serves as a barrier to translating promising research and training into scientific outputs that could be applied to promote development.

To address this concern and in line with the Center's thrust of promoting, undertaking and coordinating research programs relevant to inclusive and sustainable agricultural and rural development of the region, SEARCA will dedicate funds to be known as the SEARCA Seed Fund for Research and Training (SFRT).

The SFRT is envisaged to provide chosen research and training project proposals with limited start-up funds intended to enhance chances of securing long-term support from donor agencies. A grant of up to \$15,000 shall be awarded as seed fund for research/training.

Objectives

1. SFRT aims to provide start-up funds to researchers and scientists who can make significant contributions to the development of the region but lack the funds to carry out their projects.
2. It intends to build capacities of researchers to develop research proposals and conduct the research, mindful of inherent technical, financial, and administrative responsibilities of such an undertaking.
3. It seeks to expand SEARCA's reach in terms of research, capacity building, and contribution to the body of knowledge on ISARD in the region.

Proponent Qualifications

The proponent should be a Southeast Asian national who is a graduate of at least a four-year degree course, with limited research/training start-up funds.

Priority in terms of number of slots will be given to the following:

- SEARCA Graduate Scholarship Alumni
- Faculty and Staff of members of the University Consortium
- Faculty and staff of universities under SEARCA's Institutional Development Assistance Program

Southeast Asian nationals outside of the above-mentioned SEARCA network who are regular employees of development organizations, academic institutions, and government agencies of any of the SEA countries may likewise be considered.

Re-Applying Grantees: Previous grantees may re-apply provided that their last SFRT grant has not been within the preceding two years.

Project Eligibility

Subject Matter: The proposed project should be aligned with Inclusive and Sustainable Agricultural and Rural Development (ISARD), the overarching theme of SEARCA's 10th Five Year Plan (FY 2014/2015 – 2018/2019), along at least one of the following elements:

Social Inclusion in Agricultural and Rural Development

- Participation of poor and vulnerable sectors of rural societies in food and agricultural value chains and agribusiness commodity systems;



- Food and nutrition security for poor and vulnerable sectors of rural societies; and
- Productivity-enhancing innovations and modern technologies.

Sustainable Agriculture and Rural Development

- Natural resource management;
- Climate change mitigation and adaptation in agricultural and rural development; and
- Resilience of agricultural systems to climate impacts.

Regional and Sub-regional Cooperation

- Sub-regional cooperation in trade and investments; and
- Regional market, trade and economic integration.

Institutions and Governance

- Government policies, institutions and governance mechanisms and reforms for ISARD

Features: The proposed project should be all of the following:

- Innovative and is accompanied by an appropriate plan for developing it into a potentially large-scale research/training program greatly relevant to the agricultural and rural development needs of the region;
- Has strong potential for generating significant long-term funding support;
- Can be completed within a period not exceeding one year;
- Details plans for generating future funding support; and
- Specifies a plan for dissemination of results, including policy recommendations, to various stakeholders in modes deemed appropriate

Output: The proposed project should be able to generate:

A research report which can be published as a discussion paper
 At least one policy brief or research/learning/experience note
 When possible, presentation of research results in at least one scientific forum/conference

Proposal Submission

All proposals and related documents should be submitted online (<http://sfirt.searca.org>). All applicants will fill out the system's online submission form completely for their application to proceed and be submitted.

In the event that a problem is encountered in uploading the proposal, said proposal should be emailed to sfirt@searca.org.

Guidelines on proposal format and required documents can be downloaded at SEARCA website <http://searca.org/phocadownload/brochures/SFRT_Guidelines_ISARD.pdf>.

Submission Deadline

All applications should be received by SEARCA not later than 1 August of every year.

Selection Process

An Evaluation Committee using a pre-determined set of criteria shall evaluate the proposals. The Committee will submit a short list of reviewed proposals to the SEARCA Directorate for final selection.

The results of the panel review and selection process will be announced not later than 1 November and project implementation will commence a month after the announcement.

