

Innovate UK

Results of Competition: Agri-Tech Catalyst - Early Stage Feasibility - Round 6
Competition Code: 1607_FS_SAF_AGCATES6

Total available funding is £4m across Early Stage, Industrial Research and Late Stage from DFID

Note: These proposals have succeeded in the assessment stage of this competition. All are subject to grant offer and conditions being met.

Participant organisation names	Project title	Proposed project costs	Proposed project grant
Crop-Innovations	AFLA - project - Acoustic Filtration Lab-free Apparatus for better aflatoxin management in Kenya	£165,678	£165,678
Bora Biotech Ltd.		£46,191	£32,334
LabXero Ltd		£117,086	£81,960
Secure Harvests Ltd		£30,535	£21,375
ACE Environmental Consultancy Ltd.		£31,062	£21,743
Project description - provided by applicants			
<p>The AFLA project is a cross-sector collaboration combining the expertise of a UK research charity, 2 Kenyan companies; a leading testing lab & a green energy specialist, & 2 UK companies; a technology R&D provider with sample extraction tech & a biotech commercialisation specialist. The project will examine the feasibility of using an acoustic separation platform for purification of aflatoxins from crops & address the challenge of the economic loss of contaminated waste through alternative use strategies. Aflatoxins (toxins from storage mould) are a significant threat to food security, particularly in developing nations. Testing & monitoring are vital but, due to complex sample prep, high cost, inaccessibility & lack of alternative use options, aflatoxin testing is not thoroughly implemented & billions of people are at risk. This innovative project will develop a novel, rapid procedure for extracting & concentrating aflatoxins. When integrated with down-stream diagnostics, the extraction platform could enable a low-cost, portable test system for on-site aflatoxin monitoring, increasing ease & frequency of testing. Together with strategies for mitigating economic loss of waste from contamination, the resultant increase in crop value & safety will bring about a step-change in on-farm management.</p>			

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Secure Harvests Ltd	ELFF- Ethiopian Lupins for Food and Feed	£150,506	£105,354
Amhara Regional Agricultural Research Institute		£38,620	£38,620
Royal Botanic Gardens Kew		£150,339	£150,339
Soya UK Ltd.		£34,906	£24,434
Project description - provided by applicants			
<p>The Ethiopian lupins for food & feed (ELFF) project will improve livelihoods for Ethiopian smallholder farmers by: i) improving supplies of high quality protein for animal feed, ii) providing a potential cash crop for human consumption & iii) improving soil fertility & thus crop productivity. This innovative project will explore the feasibility of a white lupin breeding programme to combine traits from Ethiopian & UK varieties, producing lines that benefit Ethiopian farmers in the first instance but also lines benefiting agriculture in many other countries. Ethiopian agriculture relies heavily on livestock but lack of affordable protein sources means that livestock is not reaching its full value. Developing sweet white lupins for grain & forage could revolutionise smallholder agriculture in many parts of Ethiopia. The project will assess Ethiopian varieties to identify promising lines for improvement, & identify markers & genes that confer low alkaloid production. These loci can be used in a subsequent targeted & marker assisted breeding programme. The project will also conduct a feasibility study for a full-scale breeding programme based on the ELFF project, develop a comprehensive business strategy for novel varieties in Ethiopia & also for possible introduction of lupins into the surrounding African countries.</p>			

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CIELivestock Limited	Development of a novel diagnostic test for Contagious Bovine/Caprine Pleuropneumonia disease	£42,568	£29,798
Biotangents Limited		£229,279	£160,495
Sidai Africa (Kenya) Limited		£124,777	£87,343
Project description - provided by applicants			
<p>Livestock provide an invaluable source of protein to developing nations. In Africa, livestock also play a crucial role in developing economies with 80% of farmland being managed by small-holding farms (FAO, 2008). Outbreak of disease can have a catastrophic impact to African farmers, having both financial and nutritional consequences. A UK-Kenyan consortium has been formed to tackle Contagious Bovine/Caprine Pleuropneumonia (CBPP/CCPP) - a highly contagious disease causing the suffering and mortality of cattle and goats in developing countries. The aim of this project is to develop a new diagnostic test which will allow for early detection of infected animals to prevent further disease spread throughout the herd. The consortium is composed of CIEL; an UK Agri-tech centre of livestock research excellence, Sidai; a social enterprise company based in Kenya who aim to provide livestock centres of excellence and Biotangents; a UK start-up company with exciting new diagnostic technologies to facilitate early detection of disease causing microbes. The funding of this project will allow crucial work to take place to develop an early stage prototype, which if successful, will be further funded by private investment.</p>			

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Participant organisation names	Project title	Proposed project costs	Proposed project grant
Crop-Innovations	GENEPRINT: Novel business strategy for decentralised seed supplies increasing resilience in Zambia	£114,940	£114,940
Zambian Agricultural Research Institute		£42,237	£42,237
Arcis Biotechnology Holdings		£79,955	£55,969
Genesoup Ltd		£35,280	£24,696
Secure Harvests Ltd		£45,366	£31,756
Project description - provided by applicants			
<p>The GENEPRINT project is a cross-disciplinary collaboration between a Zambian research institute, a UK-based charity, a UK-based agri-business consultancy & 2 companies with specialisms in Biotech to explore the market & technical feasibility of a novel business model for localised production & marketing of high quality locally-bred seed in Zambia. The innovative idea pushes scientific & commercial boundaries by using genetic analysis to support certification of farmer-bred varieties that can then be marketed & sold through local multiplication companies. The idea is at an early stage & during the project the consortium will explore the commercial potential for localised production of high-quality, locally-bred varieties & the scientific/technical feasibility of portable genetic analysis supporting certification of the farmer-bred varieties. The project meets the challenge of improving small farm productivity by improving access to high-quality seed supplies, optimised for local agronomic conditions. The novel enterprise contributes to the economic growth of Zambia, increasing revenues for male & female smallholders & helping to protect valuable genetic resources. The strategy will initially be implemented in Zambia, but once demonstrated, the novel protocols could be used worldwide.</p>			

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