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**Embassy of the Kingdom of the Netherlands – Kenya**

**Food and Nutrition Security Programming**

**Call for Concept Papers**

***Indicative grant amount:***

*15 million Euros*

***Duration:***

*5 years*

***3 Possible Programmatic areas -***

- *Market-Driven Production Systems*
- *Integrated Market Systems and Value Protection*
- *Inclusive Market Development in ASAL and Frontier Systems*

**A. Introduction**

The 2026-2029 Multi Annual Country Strategy (MACS) for Kenya defines the strategic cooperation between the Netherlands and Kenya. This builds on a long-standing partnership between the two countries, that spans over decades of economic and development cooperation, and which is anchored on shared interests.

Food and Nutrition Security continues to be a priority theme in the MACS and is seen to contribute to both economic and social impacts that strengthen the Netherlands earning capacity as well as that of Kenya. Underpinning the 2026-2029 MACS is the current Netherlands foreign policy which outlines three main policy themes as: Water, Food Security and Health. The prioritized thematic areas strategically contribute to three key Dutch interests which are Trade and Economy, Security and Stability, and Migration and Refugee Response. The strategic enabling areas of focus in the MACS are: Good Governance, Human Rights, Rule of Law and Civic Space.

This call aims to strategically contribute to solutions that respond to development opportunities in the Kenyan context. The ambition for this round of programming is anchored on a two-pronged approach that distinguishes between (1) opportunities for programming in the ASAL counties, where interventions build on the socio-economic development potential while also having a strong focus on stability strengthening, and where there could be linkages to the refugee responses, and (2) programming opportunities in the traditionally known growth corridor areas of the country, with a stronger link to private sector engagement. Engrained across the two pronged approach is that interventions should be market-led and have a demonstrable link to Dutch actors and Dutch earning capacity, while at the same time seek to strengthen local leadership and ownership, as well as local earning capacity.

This call therefore, invites concept papers from qualified consortia to implement interventions under the Food and Nutrition Security (FNS) program framework. The program aims to catalyze the transformation of Kenya's agri-food system into a market-driven, climate-resilient, and inclusive system that enhances productivity, improves food and nutrition security, and expands sustainable economic opportunities.

The program focuses on key agri-food subsectors with high relevance for food and nutrition security and economic growth in Kenya, these are: livestock, horticulture, and aquaculture/fisheries, alongside emerging value chains in ASAL and frontier systems.



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## **B. Program Scope**

This call for concept papers is for developing an FNS program in Kenya funded by the Netherlands government. The Embassy commissioned a scoping study on the agri-food sector of Kenya to inform this call for concept papers. Three strategic programmatic intervention areas were identified by that scoping study. A summary of the scoping report is made available online.

The three strategic programmatic areas as identified by the scoping study balance Kenyan and Dutch policy objectives and interests and identify opportunities with a clear added value for the Netherlands in the larger complex of ongoing initiatives in the development partner landscape. Any concept paper that is to be submitted is expected to demonstrate how their interventions contribute to any or multiple of the 3 identified programmatic areas, as shown below.

### ***Program 1: Market-Driven Production Systems***

Focuses on strengthening productive capacity and supply reliability through market-driven and climate-resilient production systems. Interventions should:

- Improve productivity and climate resilience including water Energy Food (WEF)-linked systems
- Strengthen input systems (feed, seed, genetics, hatcheries)
- Build commercially viable producer organizations
- Enable aggregation at production level
- Align production with market demand (volume, quality, timing)

### ***Program 2: Integrated Market Systems and Value Protection***

Focuses on addressing the “missing middle” by strengthening aggregation, first-mile value protection, and market coordination systems. Interventions should:

- Strengthen aggregation, logistics, and cold chain systems
- Improve quality assurance, standards, and traceability
- Support processing and value addition
- Enhance market access and trade facilitation
- Strengthen market actors (SMEs, cooperatives, processors) as system anchors

### ***Program 3: Inclusive Market Development in ASAL and Frontier Systems***

Focuses on developing viable and inclusive market systems in ASAL counties by combining resilience, enterprise development, and market creation. Where possible and relevant, integration of refugees is encouraged. Interventions should:

- Strengthen rangeland and resource governance systems
- Support WEF-integrated and climate-resilient production systems
- Develop market pathways across livestock, horticulture, aquaculture, and emerging value chains (including, but not limited to poultry, camel milk, gums, resins, beekeeping)
- Support enterprise development and SME growth
- Enable livelihood diversification linked to markets
- Integrate conflict-sensitive and climate-resilient approaches

*For more details on the selected program areas, please refer to the scoping report.*

- **Geographic scope**

Proposed geographic area(s) should be specified in the concept paper. Bonus points will be awarded to interventions that will be active in ASAL counties. We welcome activities in all areas of Kenya, but activities in certain ASAL counties will receive three or two bonus points during scoring. Interventions that include counties from both categories will be awarded 3 bonus points.



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**Counties that will be awarded 3 bonus points.**

Turkana, Marsabit, Samburu, Isiolo, Mandera, Wajir, Garissa, Tana River, Lamu, West Pokot.

**Counties that will be awarded 2 bonus points**

Laikipia, Narok, Kajiado, Meru, Tharaka-Nithi, Embu, Makueni, Kitui, Taita Taveta, Kilifi, Kwale, Nyeri, Baringo.

- **Crosscutting thematic scope**

All proposals should demonstrate how their interventions contribute to:

- **Inclusion (GESI):** Meaningful participation and benefit for women, youth, underserved groups, including refugee communities where applicable.
- **Climate Resilience:** Clear pathways for climate change adaptation and mitigation.

Where relevant, proposal should demonstrate how their interventions contribute to

- **Nutrition:** Contribution to availability and access to diverse and nutritious foods.
- **Knowledge & Learning:** Contribution to shared learning, evidence generation, and scaling.

- **Implementing approach**

We require initiatives to be locally-led and require proposals to demonstrate how they are implementing principles of locally-led development cooperation. The consortium should further demonstrate that the concept paper is also a co-creation with a mandated government authority at county level or/and at national level. When working with communities and mandated authority, the concept paper should indicate to what level these actors were involved in drafting the document and indicate in what way they will be engaged in the writing, conceptualization and budgeting of the full proposal. Consortia are encouraged to include different areas of expertise in their skill-mix and have organizations from different backgrounds and diverse areas of society.

### **C. Criteria**

All submitted concept papers will be checked to see if they meet certain minimum requirements. These threshold criteria will be checked to decide whether concept papers are considered for evaluation.

#### *Threshold Criteria*

- The Consortium lead should be registered in Kenya.
- Consortium size should be minimum of 2 and a maximum of 4 organizations.
- The maximum budget should be 15 mln euro (or equivalent in KES).
- The project timeline should be 5 years.
- Annual grant disbursement should not be more than twice the lead applicant's average annual turnover over the last 3 years.
- The lead applicant should have a track-record of FNS-related project implementation in Kenya for at least 3 years.
- Indirect costs including overheads should be less than 15% of the total project budget.
- Companies or for-profit organizations that are consortium members are only eligible when applying non-commercial rates.



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### *Evaluation Criteria*

Concept papers that meet the minimum requirements will then be assessed based on 9 topics, as described in the table below.

#### **D. Concept Paper Template**

The concept paper submitted should include these required sections as mentioned below. The paper should not be more than 7000 words in total.

	<b>Required Sections</b>	<b>Scoring Weight</b>	<b>Description</b>	<b>Evaluation Criteria</b>
1	Strategic Alignment	5%	Specify selected programmatic area(s). Explain how the intervention is aligned with Dutch and Kenyan policy priorities, including county specific alignment as applicable. Present a basic stocktaking of other relevant initiatives, and how yours relates to them.	To what extent is this activity aligned with EKN priorities and GoK sector relevant priorities. How is it aligned with 1 or multiple program areas as identified in the scoping report.
2	Budget	10%	Check guidelines on budget specification in Annex 1.	To what extent is the budget fit for purpose, are overheads acceptable, is it good value for money? Is it feasible and realistic? Is it accurate, justified, competitive and compliant?
3	Consortium roles and responsibilities	10%	Define the decision-making architecture and demonstrate overlapping and complementarity in roles, expertise, and responsibilities.	To what extent is the consortium balanced, with clear roles and responsibilities, with complementary expertise and a strong track record. Does the consortium include a local partner with physical presence in one of the areas of implementation? To what extent is the governance clear? Are reporting lines and financial flows mapped?
4	Technical Approach	25%	This section should include a theory of change that details the main approach which should follow from a strong analysis. Include a broad description of activities. Mention any innovations and how the	Is there a logical link between activities, outputs, and the long-term impact. To what extent is it evidence based? Does this realistically fit within the context? Is this more innovative, or more about scalability?



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			intervention contributes to systemic change. Outline scaling approaches.	What's the systemic impact and the projects ability to address structural constraints?
5	Market Orientation and Commercial Viability	10%	Explain the Market-Led approach of your intervention and assess commercial viability of (aspects of) your intervention. Include an outline on private sector engagement and how co-investment could be leveraged.	Does the concept paper demonstrate strong understanding of the market and the value chain? How convincing and realistic is the strategy for Private Sector Engagement? Do all market actors have a financial incentive to continue the relevant activities after funding ends? What is the clarity of the commercial viability pathway, including in ASAL contexts? What is the potential to leverage Dutch expertise and partnerships, and contribute to Dutch earning capacity?
6	Institutional Capacity & Experience	15%	Detail the track record of all consortium members. Explain expertise and experience. If main positions (project manager or technical lead) are known, share those. CV's can be annexed.	How valid is the evidence of co-creation with local institutions and system actors? What is the track record? Are possible CV's showing a good match with the required expertise?
7	Inclusion & Climate integration	10%	State how the intervention plans to integrate vulnerable groups, and how it addresses climate change.	What is the strategy on inclusion, climate resilience, and nutrition sensitivity. Are there concrete steps being taken to ensure this? For example: analysis, expertise in the team, dedicated budget lines, mentioned in the ToC and possibly log frame?
8	Risk Management	10%	Share an analysis of the main risks and possible mitigating measures. Be realistic and frank about residual risks.	To what extent are contextual, programmatic and corruption risks identified, monitored and managed? Are the residual risks acceptable?
9	Pathways to Sustainability	5%	Outline sustainability strategies to be applied beyond project duration and the exit strategy.	Is the project designed to be absorbed into existing Kenyan government structures or existing market systems? Is there a clear timeline for the phasing out of donor support? Did the target community have a say in the project design, ensuring they actually want it to continue after the project ends?



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### **E. Submission Timelines**

The submission should be made latest by **15<sup>th</sup> of June 2026** to [nai-os@minbuza.nl](mailto:nai-os@minbuza.nl). Questions and clarifications about this call should be submitted in writing to the same email address, not later than **27<sup>th</sup> of May, 2026**. One document detailing all answers to questions submitted will be posted on the website by the **9<sup>th</sup> of June 2026**.

Concept papers within a 5-point margin of the highest-ranked concept paper will be considered technically comparable. For these proposals, the embassy reserves the discretionary right to make a final selection based on portfolio balancing, including geographical distribution and thematic diversity.

The selected concept paper(s) will be invited to submit a full proposal.

### **ANNEX 1. Budget Specifications**

Budget should outline all major expenditure categories, including, but not limited to:

- A) Direct Costs:
  - i) Personnel costs,
  - ii) Travel / transport costs,
  - iii) Costs for program activities, broken down by objective.
- B) Indirect costs.

Additionally, the budget should clearly specify the amount allocated to each implementing partner. Any co-funding or own contributions should also be mentioned here.