Australia unties aid for African food research

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A new joint program of the Australian International Food Security Centre at the Australian Centre for International Agricultural Research (ACIAR) and Canada’s International Development Research Centre (IDRC) is calling for proposals.

The CA$15 million Cultivate Africa’s Future (CultiAF) fund is a challenge program that aims to improve food security and promote agricultural development in sub-Saharan Africa. It will allocate funds competitively to research initiatives which are relevant for improving post-harvest management, nutrition and water use, and have clear pathways to application.

Announced at the 2013 Africa Agricultural Science Week, the program will be managed by IDRC, with 50 per cent of its funding from ACIAR.

Research organisations from 10 countries – Burundi, Ethiopia, Kenya, Malawi, Mozambique, Rwanda, Tanzania, Uganda, Zambia, and Zimbabwe – are eligible for grants of up to CA$3 million dollars each. The application guidelines note that applicants “may work in partnership with Canadian or Australian organisations but this is not a requirement.”

Traditionally, ACIAR projects have mandated the participation of Australian researchers (something Devpolicy criticised in its submission to the recent ACIAR review), so this is a welcome development.