

**THE MAIZE TRUST / GRAIN SA**  
**CONSERVATION AGRICULTURE - FARMER INNOVATION PROGRAMME**  
**EVALUATION CRITERIA FOR CA RESEARCH PROPOSALS**

**Applicant:**

Criterion	1 Weight (%)	3 Score (1-10)
1. The extent to which Innovation Systems approaches have been included.	15	
2. Level of farmer / community engagement, support and/or networking.	15	
3. Addressing key principles and practices of CA.	15	
4. Proof of systematic planning and preparation of proposal (technical content, quality and rationale).	12	
5. Clear and viable projections and assumptions on bio-physical, economic and social sustainability and <u>impact</u> .	12	
6. Co-funding from and collaboration with other institutions and organizations.	10	
7. Demonstrated capacity of the organisation to deliver the project.	11	
8. Feasibility and Realism of achieving project objectives within resource allocation.	10	
<b>Total</b>	100	

**SCORING:    Excellent: 10    Good: 7    Average: 5    Poor: 3    Very poor: 1**

RECOMMENDED: (Yes or No) \_\_\_\_\_

COMMENTS:

EVALUATOR:

Date:

## EXPLANATION OF CRITERIA

1. Does the proposal clearly explain *How* and *Who* the project will identify and involve as key stakeholders (i.e. people interested in trying to take purposeful action promoting CA in the area) within a so-called farmer-centered *Agricultural Innovation Systems (AIS)* approach? Does it particularly highlight **on-farm, farmer-led research and/or experimentation**, where farmers are lead or equal partners (in identifying research needs, designing, implementing and evaluating experiments), and **innovation platforms**, where farmer (study) groups share, reflect, learn and adapt through interaction and social learning? Experiments should preferably be well designed, e.g. with appropriate treatments and sufficient replications on a sufficient number of farms covering the specific study area or agro-ecological zone. Any other approaches and methodologies from the natural, economic and/or social sciences must be appropriate and in support of the AIS.
2. The proposal should clearly indicate the link to a well organised and committed farmer group, anticipated to be engaged with project activities. Specifically, **farmers should not merely be recipients of new knowledge, but also potential sources and/or partners in its generation, i.e. they are researchers and innovators in their own right**. Assessors will consider the level of engagement and commitment by the farmers/community, which should be clarified in the proposal.
2. Does the proposal address all CA principles and practices appropriately / correctly with the emphasis on quality implementation?

CA principles and practices are:

- Continuous minimum mechanical soil disturbance
- Diversified cropping, including the use of crop rotations and –associations, as well as cover crops
- Permanent organic soil cover

Other principles and technologies, or so-called Good Agricultural Practices (GAP's), applied to compliment CA systems are:

- Integrated soil fertility and acidity management
- Integrated pest and disease management (IPM)
- Integrated weed management (IWM)
- Integrated crop-livestock management

4. Has careful and quality thought (rationale) been given to a structured proposal with technical content of high quality? Has the prescribed proposal format been used (see guidelines attached or contact Dr Hendrik Smith at Grain SA)

5. Is there a clear and realistic **chance** (through well-founded projections, explanations and/or assumptions in the proposal) that the project will make a meaningful **impact**, i.e. leading to bio-physical feasibility (improved soil health), economic viability (improved profitability), social acceptability (improved involvement and respect) and sustainable rural livelihoods (total production and economy)? Is the **plan/ approach/ process/ philosophy** being proposed in the project likely to achieve those impacts? In other words, is there a clear and convincing explanation of how the proposed project will inter alia achieve the following: improve natural resources (the environment), empower and build capacity, inform decision-making, and/or influence practice and learning by groups or organizations to benefit from the project, including the grant recipient itself.
6. In the implementation of the project, what co-funding (cash or in-kind) and collaboration is envisaged with other institutions & programmes, with other (farmer) organisations / networks and/or wider?
7. Applicants are assessed on their (group's) longevity, recent activities, funding history and experience in successfully delivering projects of this nature. This is a measure of the organization, farmer group and/or partnership to deliver results and manage contractual obligations, i.e. suitability of applicant team. Functional people, groups and/or organisations engaged in the proposed project will also impact favourably on the assessment.
8. Proof of realistic and well thought-through use of resources in project planning and implementation. Realistic and well-supported budget. Sound plan/system, activities and possible indicators for (participatory) monitoring and evaluating progress toward proposed outcomes (e.g. changes in natural resources, awareness, will and behaviour). Viable work plan with roles and responsibilities of lead and collaborating organizations clearly defined. Evidence that the proponents can mobilize the necessary collaboration and funding to ensure the success of the project and efficient use of financial resources.