

FLETCHER D-PRIZE COMPETITION

2023-2024 Academic Year

Agriculture Challenges

Propose Your Own Proven Agriculture-Related Intervention

We challenge you to launch a new organization that helps smallholder farmers earn more. Fletcher D-Prize will award up to \$20,000 to teams with a plan to launch an initial pilot serving approximately 100 beneficiaries and a vision to expand country-wide, serving at least 100,000 beneficiaries within 5 years.

Background

There are at least 475 million family farms in the world that are less than 2 hectares in size.¹ In rural sub-Saharan Africa, 75% of people living on \$1 a day work in agriculture.² We are interested in expanding any intervention proven to help smallholder farmers earn more.

Right now we have two agriculture challenges: One asks entrepreneurs to distribute high-quality seed and fertilizer to help farmers grow more, the other to distribute post-harvest loans and storage technology to help farmers store harvest to sell later in the year when prices rise.

However, we are open to other ideas and are still seeking interventions proven to have substantial impact. We have a few ideas on what these interventions may look like. Our ideal intervention will target people living in extreme rural poverty. It should also be proven to substantially increase impact metrics, like household income or household consumption. There must also be a large delivery gap, where large numbers of people are not expected to have access to this intervention in the next decade. Currently we think there may be an opportunity for an intervention that distributes a bundle of agroforestry inputs alongside training and support, or expands access to weather index insurance to reduce vulnerability to climate shocks.

In our search we have also found a number of interventions that don't meet our criteria. For instance, we currently don't believe helping smallholder farmers buy livestock for the purpose of

¹ Lowder, Sarah K., Jakob Scoet, and Saumya Singh. "What do we really know about the number and distribution of farms and family farms in the world?." Background paper for the State of Food and Agriculture 8 (2014).

² [Jack, B. Kelsey. "Market inefficiencies and the adoption of agricultural technologies in developing countries." \(2013\). p. 2](#)

storing value has much impact. In addition, this challenge is not meant to support aquaculture or beekeeping.

Your Distribution Challenge

Fletcher D-Prize will award up to \$20,000 to a social entrepreneur who can launch a new business or NGO that increases distribution of an existing and proven agriculture intervention and designs a better plan to increase access and scale quickly.

Guidance for proposing your own intervention

1. **IMPACT:** *What is the expected social impact of your intervention?* Fletcher D-Prize is only interested in distributing cost-effective interventions that are unquestionably proven to improve the lives of underserved people.

Your intervention should have an estimated economic impact on those living in extreme poverty comparable to our existing distribution challenges. For example, our Livelihoods challenge asks entrepreneurs to distribute a poverty graduation model found to increase household savings by 100-156%, productive asset gains by 15%, and per capita income by 5%. Our Quality Inputs challenge asks entrepreneurs to distribute a combination of commercial seed and fertilizer designed to improve harvests by 30% or more for smallholder farmers living on \$1 a day.

You will be asked to provide evidence supporting your intervention in the initial concept note submission. Your evidence must come from a highly credible outside source, such as a paper in a peer-reviewed academic journal, interventions supported by international organizations like the UN or World Bank, or research from [IPA](#), [J-PAL](#), and [GiveWell.org's intervention reports](#). If you do not cite a credible source validating the impact of the poverty solution you plan to distribute, we will be unable to support your proposal.

Once you've shown the intervention is proven to have impact, you will need to explain where delivery gaps are, and why they exist. A strong applicant will include evidence detailing where there is a great need for this particular intervention, and demonstrating that it isn't being satisfied by competing distributors or alternative products already. We want to know why, if the intervention is so great, hasn't it been scaled by others already?

We must also understand the expected marginal impact you will make if you are able to serve those delivery gaps. We want to understand how you will measure your impact on the people you serve, and what your expected impact will be.

2. **MODEL:** *What is your idea to deliver this intervention to underserved people?* A strong submission will include a clear distribution model. We want to understand exactly how you will connect your intervention to those in need.

A plan that includes hiring or activating a last mile distribution force must include details on how these roles are recruited, trained, and incentivized to distribute your intervention.

3. **SCALE:** *How will you grow this venture to serve as many people in need as possible, and secure the funding to do so?* A winning idea must be scalable and aim to grow nationwide. We want to understand what your venture looks like when it is serving at least 100,000 or more people. This means thinking through every aspect of your idea. For instance, is your intervention relevant to multiple regions in your country of operation? Are the costs to run your organization still manageable when serving 100,000 people? Do the logistics still work? How large is your distribution team, and how much managerial and administrative support will they require?

Fletcher D-Prize offers pilot funding that typically supports operations for no more than three months. Meaningful scale requires significant capital. A winning idea must have a compelling plan to raise this capital as soon as possible, including a compelling outline of potential sources and how to approach these sources and convert them into supporters.

Helpful Resources

- IPA's [Agriculture Studies](#)
- Previous winners in this space include [PHK Trading](#) (Ethiopia).

Ready To Apply?

Download a First Round Application Packet and start creating your proposal at <https://sites.tufts.edu/dprize/>.

Questions? Email Ariane Theis at Ariane.Theis@tufts.edu.