

Call for Proposals 2008

Mink'a Fund

Chorlaví Group

“Rise in agricultural prices: a chance for small rural producers?”

1. The Chorlaví Group calls public and private organizations and civil society institutions interested in the rural problems of Latin America, to participate in the Mink'a de Chorlaví Fund 2008 Contest. The subject of this year's contest is: “Rise in agricultural prices: a chance for small rural producers?” In this contest, the Fund will allocate an estimated sum of US\$ 175,000 which will be distributed between 10 and 12 projects. Please visit www.grupochorlavi.org or write to concursochorlavi@rimisp.org for further information.

2. The Mink'a de Chorlaví Fund Contest comprises 2 stages: selection of project profiles and selection of final projects to follow a systematization process. In the first stage, 20 profiles will be pre-selected from which the responsible institutions will elaborate a systematization final proposal. The Fund resources will be allocated in strict score order within this project group under the criteria set below, until all available resources for this Contest are used. However, it will aim at ensuring the maximum geographic representation, considering the criteria mentioned below. The deadline for each stage is specified in the section “Deadlines” hereof.

CHORLAVÍ GROUP

3. The Chorlaví Group is an interactive network seeking to stimulate and facilitate decentralized social learning processes. It aims at improving the quality and effectiveness of the initiatives designed to transform rural societies in Latin America and the Caribbean, within the scope of sustainable rural development. The Chorlaví Group is a program supported by the Interchurch Organisation for Development Cooperation (ICCO) from the Netherlands and the International Development Research Center (IDRC) from Canada. Rimisp (Latin American Centre for Rural Development) is the Executive Secretariat of the Chorlaví Group.

4. The Group's work is organized based on Social Learning projects, which consist on a set of systematization processes as well as critical reflection, dialogue, communication and documentation activities, among others. Through a methodical, analytical and comprehensive procedure, a concrete issue is identified. The project focuses on this

particular issue, particularly on its learning aspects and specific objectives. . A social learning project involves dozens of organizations, groups, networks and individuals from numerous countries in Latin America and the Caribbean.

5. This learning project comprises the following:

- A state of the art document summarizing advanced knowledge and experiences on the project's subject.
- A selection of 10 to 12 innovative experiences in which systematization processes have been conducted within the subject matter. Such projects will be chosen through the Mink'a de Chorlavi's open contest.
- A compared analysis of innovative experiences that have been systematized.
- On-site workshops and e-conferences at local and international level.
- Documentation of all the proposed products disseminated through an electronic bulletin and a website.
- A communication and impact strategy.
- Distance training courses prepared from the results of all the above-mentioned criteria.

DEFINITIONS

6. The following definitions will be used for the 2008 Call for Proposals:

a) Rise in agricultural prices: It refers to the rise in relative prices of some traditional agricultural products (milk, rice, corn, wheat, soybean, etc.) in both, national and international markets, within recent years, and that will continue in the future as a result of the changes of world food demand by emerging economies, the reduction in product availability due to the production of biofuel and the effects of climate change, among others.

b) Small producers: In general, it refers to producers with limited access to land and water, who are mainly devoted to the farming of traditional products, usually with the participation of their families with whom they associate in order to participate in the market. It is worth mentioning that among them are those who are net food producers, that is, who produce more food and, consequently, gain more profits than they really need; compared to those who are net consumers and, therefore, their land production results insufficient for consuming or obtaining the food they need at home. Among these two situations, there are several intermediate cases.

c) Opportunities: Refers to the chances that small producers may have to turn the rise in relative prices of agricultural products in the medium and long term into: profit increase; new or better organizational methods or arrangements; political claims or market recognition by type or quality, price and products, including organic production; or social

claims and movements regarding the identity linked to a product, such as the corn in Mexico or in Mesoamerica, using their experiences as such mentioned in “a” above.

d) Systematization: A critical reflection and ordering process from one or more development experiences around a pre-defined query or concern, with the participation of local actors and geared at the development of learned lessons which allow enhancing the agents’ own initiatives as well as contributing to a broader knowledge body.

WHAT TYPE OF EXPERIENCES SHOULD BE SYSTEMATIZED?

7. Experiences that at least meet the following characteristics should be systematized:

- a) Experiences of small producers devoted to the traditional activities that have been affected by the rise in prices, whether positively or negatively, who work in association with others and who supply in different levels internal or external markets, and who have, therefore, knowledge related to the best forms of managing such products. Processes in which small poor producers, with insufficient resources, are negatively affected by the rise in food prices and who in consequence find other ways of food supply.
- b) Processes carried out by these small producers to take advantage of the opportunities as a result of the rise in agricultural prices, using their previous experiences to position and attain political and market recognition regarding the type or quality and price of foods offered by them, and claims by agricultural or non-agricultural movements regarding the identity linked to a product, such as corn.
- c) Processes in which small producers establish new and better organizational forms to achieve greater visibility of their production in society and in markets.
- d) Experiences no depending exclusively on cooperation agents or external investors and, therefore, having their central decisions made through the associations’ internal mechanisms.
- e) Cases involving or impacting or which can involve an important proportion of the population in the territories where they live and that can result in significant lessons for public policies.

QUESTIONS TO BE ADDRESSED BY PROJECTS PARTICIPATING IN THE 2008 CALL FOR PROPOSALS

8. The rise in agricultural prices has been consolidated as a global trend with a projection, according to recent studies, which surpasses 2010. Among the products being affected by the rise in relative prices are: meat, cereal, dairy, oil, etc. The concerns come from the effects this rise in prices might have on food security: product stocks go down and the prices put at risk the nutrition of the poorest people.

9. In this context, systematizations about this subject must aim to answer the following central question: **How small producers, having limited resources, may take advantage of the conditions of traditional agricultural product high prices in order to better place their production before the State, society and the market?**¹

10. This central question can be taken on by the projects participating in the Contest, through more specific subjects and questions, such as the following:

a) Could small producers' collective action gained from past experiences be useful to take advantage of the potential benefits of the rise in prices? Could they visualize their production and attract the attention on identity-related products? What kind of experiences lead to that purpose: production support, joint acquisition of input, commercialization through contracts, associative management? Activist movements? Experiences of participation in alternative circuits of commercialization, such as those of fair trade or organic production? Who are benefited and who are not, considering the various segments of small producers?

b) Are such actions, like the ones mentioned above, putting the small producers in a better place in the medium and long term in the markets and society, as well as in public policies?

c) Do these actions take into consideration the situation of the poorest people in the rural territories and, consequently, include levels of solidarity?

d) How do the intermediary systems transfer the rise in prices to the small producers? Could small producers use their organizational capacity in terms of commercialization to better place themselves in it or to arrange alternative commercialization systems that may allow them to visualize their roles? Are there small producers' innovations regarding organizational forms?

e) What and how is the impact that these initiatives have on the poorest people, territories, workers, farmers, peasants without or with little land?

f) How is the rise in prices affecting the land market?

g) Is the rise in fertilization and mechanization production costs higher for small producers?

h) Which public policies have been implemented by the countries to face this rise in prices? Have small producers and their movements influenced such policies? Have these policies helped small producers? What are the effects of development programs

¹ This central question should be reflected in the general purpose of the proposals to be submitted in the Contest 2008.

and projects in small producers? Do these programs help small producers and their basic products?

i) What would be the environmental impact for those communities which aim at taking advantage of the rise in prices (extension of agricultural frontier, intensive use of soils, etc.)?

j) What public political lessons may arise from these experiences?

EXPECTED RESULTS FROM THE 2008 CALL FOR PROPOSALS

11. The entities participating in the Contest whose projects are finally selected will have to participate in the complete cycle of the social learning project of the Mink'a de Chorlaví Fund. This cycle includes three main stages, within a one year term approximately:

a) Carrying out the selected systematizations, including a coordinating workshop where those responsible for each winning project should participate and where agreements are adopted so that all the selected projects develop a coherent and articulated group.

b) The comparative analysis of project results aiming at drawing more general and valid conclusions, lessons and recommendations.

c) A process of strategic communication of the entire cycle's results.

12. The main result of the projects submitted to the 2008 Call for Proposals will be a systematization document. Such systematization should produce conclusions, lessons learned and recommendations referring to the questions of paragraph 9 and 10 hereof.

13. The final reports of the selected projects will constitute the main input for a comparative analysis, which together with a consultation and discussion process (through e-conference), should produce a synthesized document which answers the main question asked in paragraph 9 hereof.

DEADLINES

14. The deadlines for the stages of the Contest are:

July 28, 2008

Publication of the 2008 Call for Proposals and Regulations on Group Chorlaví's website.

September 20, 2008

Deadline to receive clarifying queries concerning the Call for Proposals and its Regulations or any other aspect which might be of interest to participants.

September 30, 2008	Deadline to submit project profiles (13:00 h, Santiago de Chile time) .
October 27, 2008	Publication of evaluation results of project profiles.
December 5, 2008	Deadline to submit proposals and additional documentation required in the Regulations section (13:00 h, Santiago de Chile time) .
December 15, 2008	Publication of selected projects on Group Chorlavi's website .
December 31, 2008	Subscription of contracts with organizations executing the selected projects.
February, 2009	Workshop for coordinators of the selected projects.
July 17, 2009	Presentation of progress reports.
December 31, 2009	Presentation of technical, financial and final reports.
January-March 2010	Review of final reports and comparative analysis.
April 2010	Synthesis e-conference

MINK'A DE CHORLAVÍ FUND REGULATIONS

15. This Contest is ruled by the Mink'a de Chorlavi Fund Regulations. It is essential for the interested applicants to know in advance and analyze these Regulations in detail. This document contains information on:

- a) The characteristics of the organizations that may submit proposals to the contest.
- b) Deadlines for project profile and proposal presentations and other important information.
- c) Profile eligibility evaluation and selection criteria, proposal selection and merit evaluation criteria.
- d) Maximum amounts that the Fund will donate, budget items that may be financed and the matching fund requirements.
- e) Profile and proposal submission, evaluation and selection process.

- f) Format guidelines which the profiles and proposals must follow.
- g) Contracts to be signed with the winning organizations and matching fund transfer procedures for Fund contributions to the projects.
- h) Selected project execution deadlines.
- i) Technical, financial, partial and final report requirements.
- j) Mink'a de Chorlaví Fund Committee faculties to make decisions related to this Contest.
- k) Other general aspects of the Contest and the Mink'a de Chorlaví Fund.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION

16. The Regulations, as well as other information of interest, are available online at (www.grupochorlavi.org/) or can be requested at:

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All the official information related to this contest will be published at www.grupochorlavi.org/. All interested parties are encouraged to regularly visit this website to get timely and relevant information that could be useful for their participation or proposal.