

BUSITEMA UNIVERSITY RESEARCH AND INNOVATION FUND

(BURIF)

CALL FOR PROPOSALS 2023/24

1.0. BACKGROUND AND CONTEXT

Busitema University is implementing the 5 year strategic plan 2020/21 – 2025/26 with a vision to be a center of excellence in science, technology and innovation. The plan under Objective 2: Increasing High Impact Research, Innovation and Entrepreneurship, Busitema University through the Directorate of Graduate Studies, Research and Innovations (DGSRI) is on course in building its research portfolio through three strategic directions:

- i) Recruitment and development of outstanding researchers at all career stages.
- ii) Production and effective sharing of high-quality research.
- iii) Adoption of a 'systems approach' to managing research.

The Directorate of Graduate Studies, Research, and Innovations (DGSRI) operationalized the Busitema University Research and Innovation Fund (BURIF) in 2018/19 academic year over the years the fund has benefitted over 80 researchers through the competitive research, innovation and publication grants.

The role of research as a change agent to the communities and sustainable development of low income countries cannot be underestimated. Universities are the source of knowledge and have proven the capacity to tackle societal problems in the process of so doing they become more relevant to society at large. University knowledge can be used to enhance economic growth in Uganda through technology transfer, innovation, and business incubation.

The country is currently implementing the 3rd National Development Plan (2020/21 – 2024/25). To achieve the respective sector specific development plans, universities will have to address the pressing research gaps facing the country and champion the solutions which will eventually lead to social economic transformation and hence lead to the middle-income status.

The Government of Uganda (GoU) has allocated special funding to Busitema University to support high impact research and innovation towards commercially viable products. In the financial 2023/24, the GoU allocated UGX 1 billion shillings (USD 268,000) as an investment or seed grant with the main goal of supporting high impact research, the overall result leading to commercial products geared towards the attainment of the Uganda Vision 2040.

With the funding from the GoU, the BURIF grant will have the following outputs:

- i. Over 200 Publications per annum.
- ii. Over 5 innovations or startups rolled out to the community/commercialized per annum.
- iii. Increased research capacity and increased number of professors.

As previously managed, the BURIF will be driven on the foundation of the national research and innovation strategy and the approved University Research Agenda.

The DGSRI therefore, invites applications for the Busitema University Research and Innovation Fund (BU-RIF) in any Busitema University thematic research priority areas for the year 2023/24.

The BU-RIF grant will last for utmost **12 months** and will supports high impact research and innovation projects within Busitema University.

1.1. **University Research Agenda**

The process of developing the research agenda was highly participatory. A consultative meeting was held with Deans, Heads of Departments and senior academic staff, the drafted research priority areas were circulated to the university community for input and finally, the research agenda priorities were harmonized with the NDP III.

2.0. **OBJECTIVES AND SCOPE**

2.1. **Objectives**

The objectives of the BURIF program include the following:

- a) To strengthen and build the research capacity of Busitema University staff.
- b) To foster interdisciplinary research within the university research agenda thematic areas.
- c) To increase the university's visibility.

2.0. **Scope**

The program will support projects in the following Busitema University research agenda priority areas as set out in the university research agenda:

- i) Transformative Education for Sustainable Development, Entrepreneurship and Job Creation
- ii) One Health
- iii) Wealth Creation through Agriculture and Animal Production
- iv) Appropriate Technologies and Clean Energy
- v) Environmental Sustainability and , Climate Risk Management
- vi) Public and Private Sector Development and Enterprise Management
- vii) Science, Technology, Engineering And Mathematics (STEM)
- viii) Cross-Cutting Issues

Each applicant should submit only one (1) application in one of the research priority area indicated above.

Applications will be assessed on a competitive basis, to optimize the contribution made through GoU investment towards research.

The projects should have a clear indication of their contribution to:

- i. Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)
- ii. Uganda Vision 2040
- iii. National Development Plan III.

In the year 2023/24, Ten (10) BU-RIF projects across three categories will be awarded through a competitive selection process. Each grant will be assessed vigorously for value for money.

CATEG ORIES	AMOUNT [UGX]	NUMBER OF PROJECTS	SUPPORT FOR PHD SCHOLARS	TOTAL
CAT 1	150,000,000	4		600,000,000
CAT 2	50,000,000	4		200,000,000
CAT 3	15,000,000	2	2	30,000,000
CAT 4	78,000,000			78,000,000
TOTAL		10	2	908,000,000

The recommended duration is **12 months**; all projects should ideally be done by June 2024.

3.0. APPLICATION AND ELIGIBILITY

3.1. Application process

Research proposals must be submitted electronically (online) at the platform <https://forms.gle/34W4ML6gRzYSkYf8A> by Friday, 1st September 2023, 6:00PM East Africa

The Research Grants Management Committee will not consider applications submitted by any other means. Applicants are therefore advised to prepare their submissions on-time.

If an applicant experiences any challenges in the submission process, they should send an email to: dgsri.adm@busitema.ac.ug and c.c. to rwahwires@gmail.com and dgsribusitema@gmail.com

3.2 General Eligibility

- (i) A full-time Busitema University staff who holds a valid and current appointment specifically issued by the Directorate of Human Resources.
- (ii) Individual researchers or research teams will be required to have a letter of support from the Head of the academic unit under which the lead researcher is tenured.
- (iii) Researchers from other institutions of higher learning are not eligible to neither apply as principal investigators (PI) nor co-PI but can be collaborators.
- (iv) The PI shall be active in service (not on study or sabbatical leave).
- (v) The PI shall attach a copy of his/her appointment letter or most-recent letter of promotion.
- (vi) A researcher cannot be a PI on more than **ONE** application. It is allowable for any person to be a team member on up to a maximum of three applications.
- (vii) For each application, it is a requirement to indicate a co-Principal Investigator who will be co-signatory to the contract upon award and will be jointly responsible for the results; the requirements for one to be a co-PI are like those required of a PI.
- (viii) Applications should be accompanied by a research proposal to be submitted online.
- (ix) Collaborations with research personnel with a minimum of a master's degree from government agencies, civil society organizations, independent research institutions, business and industry is encouraged.
- (x) **Applications for CAT 1 and CAT 2 must include undergraduate students/ Graduate Fellows in their applications and the same should be budgeted for.**

- (xi) **Previous BURIF beneficiaries who have not fully closed or accounted for the previous awards are barred from applying for this call until they are awarded project closure letters from the Faculty Deans/Heads of Departments and the Grants Management Unit (GMU) for that phase of funding.** The project closure letters should mention the research outputs i.e., Publications/Product prototypes/Patents.
- (xii) **Previous BURIF applicants who have fully accounted and had project closure letters, should work with the Directorate of ICT to ensure the funded project gets a weblink before applying for this call.**

3.3 **Eligible Expenses**

- (i) Budgets should be submitted online using the budget template and should be for one financial year.
- (ii) Acceptable expenses are those normally associated with research: data collection, analysis, report writing, computing costs; equipment; development of new research technology and domestication of technology is welcome.
- (iii) **Multi-year projects should indicate so but should only submit a budget for one financial year.**
- (iv) Requests to fund article processing charges will be handled on case by case basis, however, this will only happen for manuscripts that are written and ready for publication, or in the publication pipeline (accepted or in press). **The grant will only cater for publications in journals with Impact Factors.**
- (v) Under personnel costs, researchers should not budget for salaries for staff who are on government payroll because this will constitute double payment, however, a budget for key critical project staff (Graduate Fellows, Research Assistants, Project Coordinators) not under the government payroll can be included in the budget.
- (vi) Researchers should submit a clear workplan with clearly marked deliverables within the project lifespan. These will be used for the budget monitoring and implementation.

3.4 **CATEGORY I APPLICANTS**

- (i) Proposals should be science driven by well constituted consortia of multidisciplinary and inter-disciplinary groups to address research on applied research. This should be articulated in a research protocol covering multidisciplinary areas with one overall deliverable for the main project area and two additional sub areas - to be delivered by fellows recruited into the project. All these should be delivered on the budget of UGX150,000,000=

- (One Hundred and Fifty Million Shillings).
- (ii) The proposals should indicate the scientific driving area, capacity building through fellowship training and curricular development and each should be well budgeted for.
 - (iii) The overall project leader should be a senior member of staff with a proven track record of research, capacity building and curriculum development.
 - (iv) Capacity building through hands on mentorship of two (2) graduate fellows per grant. The fellows shall be recruited as per the guidelines of the Busitema University Graduate Fellows policy.
 - (v) The fellows will be allocated teaching and tutorial responsibilities at the implementing faculty and each fellow must work on a key research question on the main project with a research output.
 - (vi) The project must commit to the development of at least one curriculum through which the University will further solve the problem being researched through training at either masters or PhD courses. Preference is for master's and PhD curricular, however, if the project would like to address training gaps through postgraduate diplomas, short or certificate courses then indicative budget for these areas should be lower than for masters or PhD. The maximum budget for development of curricular shall not exceed UGX 10 million for Master and PhD.
 - (vii) The research project should publish at least one paper/file a patent within the period of 12 months. Whereas each of the Fellows should publish at least one paper within the period of 12 months.

3.5 CATEGORY II APPLICANTS

- (i) Proposals should be science driven by well constituted consortia of multidisciplinary and inter-disciplinary groups to address research on applied research. This should be articulated in a research protocol covering multidisciplinary areas with one overall deliverable for the main project area and one additional sub areas - to be delivered by a graduate fellow recruited into the project. All these should be delivered on the budget of UGX50,000,000= (Fifty Million Shillings).
- (ii) The proposals should indicate the scientific driving area, capacity building through fellowship training and curricular development and each should be well budgeted for.
- (iii) The overall project leader should be an early career researcher and must have earned at least a masters or doctorate degree in an academic discipline or professional field.
- (iv) The fellow shall be recruited as per the guidelines of the Busitema University Graduate Fellows policy.

- (v) The fellows will be allocated teaching and tutorial responsibilities at the implementing faculty and each fellow must work on a key research question on the focused project with a research output.
- (vi) The research project should publish at least one paper/file a patent within the period of 12 months. Whereas the Graduate Fellow should publish at least one paper within the period of 12 months.

3.6 CATEGORY III APPLICANTS

- (i) Applicants must be at a stage where they have been approved for full registration as PhD students at Busitema University. Because the research funds are provided for one year funding cycles, PhD students with provisional registration will not be eligible for funding under this award since the time required for them to complete full proposal development and to start data collection is unlikely to fit within the financial year.
- (ii) The BURIF PhD research grants are limited to PhD students who do not have prior funding for their studies or whose funding is inadequate to cover their research. Applicants in the latter category must make full disclosure of their other funding sources and what they cover.
- (iii) Applicants should provide a letter of support from any one of the following: 1) The Head of their Department, or 2) The Dean of their Faculty.
- (iv) Applicants should provide a letter of support from one of their Supervisors within Busitema University. The letter should clearly indicate that they do not have other funding that fully covers their research/training activities, or where such funding is available, they should indicate what aspects of the student's study program it covers and the funding gap. The supporting Supervisor will be designated as a co-Investigator on the research project.
- (v) BURIF PhD Research Grant applicants will submit a competitive project proposal for the available funding. The proposal ought to specify the objectives for the full research project. It should also indicate which of the full research objectives will be specifically met by the available funding for this financial year.

3.7 CATEGORY IV APPLICANTS

- (i) CAT 4 projects will support the purchase of key critical small research equipment and maintenance costs of already existing research infrastructure.
- (ii) The Head of Department/Head of Research Group where the research infrastructure is domiciled shall apply through the Dean of the Faculty to the DGSRI.

4.0 SELECTION AND ASSESSMENT PROCESS

The selection will follow a two-stage process:

Stage I

All proposals will undergo an eligibility check and the eligible proposals will undergo an independent evaluation system; technical blind peer-review process.

Stage II

A technical university committee will assess the results from two independent reviewers and applicants of recommend viable projects will be invited for face-to-face presentations to the Research Grants Management Committee (RGMC).

The final selection of proposals will be undertaken by the University Research Grants Management Committee (RGMC). The RGMC reserves the right to determine/change the number and size of awards based on prevailing circumstances informed by demand, quality of applications, availability of funds and level of utilization of funds by grantees.

The RGMC will ensure that there is equitable distribution of the research projects, a faculty can only host one CAT 1 project.

5. ASSESSMENT CRITERIA

Selection of the research proposals follows the following assessment criteria:

(i) Innovation

Does the research involve the development of new methods, the integration of existing methods into new tools, or the application of existing methods in a novel way that improves and extends their utility? Proposals which simply apply existing methods in conventional contexts will not be considered innovative.

(ii) Scientific Excellence and Originality

Is the proposed research potentially of very high quality in relation to the highest international standards of scientific excellence in all of the sectors and disciplines that it includes? Would the project add value to existing research on the topic of the proposal? Are the proposed methods sound and is the proposed research feasible?

(iii) Development Relevance

Does the proposed research address issues that present significant challenges to the specified field? Are the anticipated development outcomes and possible pathways to impact clearly and convincingly argued? Have gender issues been mainstreamed in project design and objectives?

(iv) Equity and Inclusion

Measures will be taken to ensure that all faculties will benefit from the fund. The University Research Grants Management Committee (RGMC) will also ensure that women researchers and junior faculty are well represented in the grant portfolio.

6.0 CONTRACTING AND AUDIT

Successful grant applicants will be required to enter into a research and Innovation (R&I) grant agreement with the University and be subject to technical and financial audit as per the university regulations.

All funds disbursed shall be accounted for in a timely and acceptable manner as per the university accounting principles.

7.0 REPORTING REQUIREMENTS

The successful applicant must submit progress reports **every quarter** to the Grants Management Unit on the progress of the project with justification and copy of publication(s) resulting from the project.

8.0 DISSEMINATION AND DATA SHARING

Information about research funded by the University will be made available on the University website. Grant holders will be expected to promote the dissemination of the results of their research as widely as possible, based on the premise that publicly-funded research data are a public good, produced in the public interest, and should be made openly available to other researchers in a timely manner to the maximum extent possible.

9.0 REVIEW PROCESS OF FULL APPLICATION

9.1. Merit Criteria

Applications will be referred to an evaluation panel of the RGMC. Panel members shall be required to sign appropriate non-disclosure agreements. If a member of the evaluation panel shall have a direct

conflict of interest in relation to a proposal, he/she would be required to declare it and to abstain from participation in ranking the relevant proposal(s).

The evaluation panel will then make a detailed assessment of each proposal – which shall involve a viva voce with the research teams. The panel shall report to the DGSRI on its findings and provide recommendations regarding those proposals deemed most worthy of funding. Based on this report, and about the total funds available, a recommendation will be made to award grants.

9.2. Summary of Selection and Merit Criteria

MERIT CRITERIA	MARKS	REMARKS
Contribution to Uganda's Development Priorities	20 Marks	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Detailed plan for contributing to one or more of the objectives and targets of Uganda's NDP III and Vision 2040 – scientific output, employment creation Anticipated economic social and/or environmental benefits arising from the project, period
Research problem and questions	20 Marks	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Is the problem defined? Does the research/innovation problem have a clear link to the national development priorities? Is the problem aligned with the thematic priorities of the University Research Agenda?
Objectives	10 Marks	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Are the objectives linked to the problem stated? Are the objectives SMART?
Methodology	20 Marks	Are the methods appropriate?
Need	20 Marks	Detailed justification of the budget; Co-contribution of resources (cash and in-kind) from partners
Dissemination	10 Marks	Will the project have a feasible output in terms of a journal manuscript/Utility model or patent?
TOTAL	100 Marks	

10.0. PASS MARK

To this call, the pass mark shall be 60%, however, grants will be awarded based on the availability of funds and on a competitive basis.

11.0. NOTIFICATION OF SUCCESSFUL APPLICANTS

Successful applicants will be informed by email. Researchers should be cognizant of the fact that not all research applicants should expect to be funded - this is a normal part of the grants processes.

The RGMC will be as impartial and as technical as possible in the selection process to ensure that the best projects win. Not winning a grant should therefore not be construed as being a result of an unfair selection processes.

12.0. POST-AWARD PROCESS

Due to the urgent need of results from the grant, the DGSRI will conduct several post-award activities before the release of the funds to the grant beneficiaries:

- i. Awardees will attend a mandatory online training in financial grant management and accounting for research grant.
- ii. Since the funding is from the GoU, awardees will be required to develop a procurement plan for key project items.
- iii. All awardees will sign a contract with the Grants Management Unit.
- iv. All projects will be required to provide a summary, objectives and team members to DICT for the creation of a weblink to the project.
- v. The release of project funds will be in phases subject to proper accountability and achievement of key project milestones.
- vi. The Grants Management Unit will track project deliverables and accountability. Consistent failure to demonstrate deliverables or utilize funds might lead the decision of issuance of unspent balances to other grantees or reserve projects.

13.0. INTELLECTUAL PROPERTY

- i. The Busitema University Intellectual Management Policy shall apply.
- ii. Intellectual Property derived through the Government grants will be owned jointly by the awardee Teams and Busitema University as stipulated.
- iii. All awardee teams grant to Busitema University and the Government of Uganda a non-exclusive, royalty-free, perpetual license to use any resultant or derived intellectual property (e.g., product, service, or technology) that will be developed using the Government grants for development work of public benefit without encumbrance.
- iv. For IPs with commercial value, the University Intellectual Property Management Committee will undertake a determination of what percentage of stake the university will claim on the basis of its investment into the idea.

- v. All proceeds accruing from commercialization of IP generated via government grants, following the conclusion of the grant period will be negotiated on a case-by-case basis amongst the parties, but with the researchers taking a controlling stake.

IMPORTANT DATES

S/N	ACTIVITY	DATE
1	Call Open	Friday, 4 th August 2023
2	Call Close	Friday, 1 st September 2023
3	Stage 1 Review	Friday, 15 th September 2023
4	Stage 2 Review	Friday, 22 nd September 2023
5	Research Grants Management Committee	Monday, 25 th September 2023
5	Award Letters	Wednesday, 27 th September 2023