



CENTRE OF EXCELLENCE IN REPRODUCTIVE HEALTH INNOVATION (CERHI)

UNIVERSITY OF BENIN

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Call for proposals on innovative and commercializable research under the World Bank project implemented by CERHI

The Africa Higher Education Centers of Excellence (ACE) Project is a World Bank initiative in collaboration with governments of participating countries to support Higher Education institutions specializing in Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM), Environment, Agriculture, applied Social Science / Education and Health.

All Centres were competitively selected and Nigeria proudly hosted 10 of the 22 Centres of Excellence in the first phase of the Project (ACE I) which was launched in 2014. Other countries include Benin, Burkina Faso, Cameroon, Côte d'Ivoire, Gambia, Ghana, Nigeria, Senegal and Togo. The second phase (ACE II) was launched in East and Southern Africa with 24 centers across Ethiopia, Kenya, Malawi, Mozambique, Rwanda, Tanzania, Uganda and Zambia.

On the basis of the successes recorded in ACE I and ACE II, the development partners World Bank and the French Development Agency (AFD) in collaboration with the African governments, launched the ACE Impact Project in 2018 to strengthen post-graduate training and applied research in existing fields and support new fields that are essential for Africa's economic growth. The project consists of establishing new and scaling up of well performing existing ACEs for development impact, fostering regional partnerships and scholarships, as well as enhancing national and regional project facilitation, monitoring and evaluation.

Today, Nigeria belongs to the second cohort of ACE Impact Countries alongside Benin, Cote d'Ivoire, Niger, the Gambia and Togo. Of the 43 ACEs, 5 Emerging Centers; 1 "top up" center in Social Risk Management; and 5 Colleges and Schools of Engineering under ACE Impact, Nigeria hosts 17. The Centres' operations are facilitated by the Project Implementation Unit domiciled at the National Universities Commission, Abuja.

The Centre of Excellence in Reproductive Health Innovation (CERHI) is one of the ACE IMPACT centres at the University of Benin aimed at building capacity within the West African region for implementing strategic policies and programs in reproductive health.

Components of this call

One of the objectives of the ACE IMPACT projects and of CERHI is to build a culture of implementation of high impact research that results in products that can be patented, registered, and commercialized. This will enable the University of Benin to contribute to economic growth and development of Nigeria and the region by ensuring that research outcomes are manifested in relevant policies, products, and programmes.

It is within this context that CERHI is calling for proposals in the STEM disciplines (Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics), including Environment, Agriculture, applied Social Science/Education and Health disciplines that can lead to innovative and commercializable products.

The key elements that will make for success of the proposals include 1) focus on addressing a key national challenge, and not simply for the sake of conducting research and publishing a

paper; 2) multi-disciplinary approach - research conducted by multiple disciplines rather than by researchers from the same discipline or department; 3) research that explores new concepts, that galvanizes the expansion of new ideas, or that further provides evidence for expanding existing proofs of concept; and 4) gender consideration and mainstreaming of all elements of the research.

Eligibility

This call is open to staff and students at the University of Benin. Group applications especially those that include training of students stand the highest chance of success.

Other criteria include: The principal investigator

1. Must have a Masters or PhD degree in any discipline.
2. Must have previous research experience that demonstrates capacity to undertake the proposed research work and produce quality output within the given timeframe.
3. Must have a high quality analytical and writing skills demonstrated through previous writing samples.
4. Having a research idea that can be patented and commercialized within a reasonable period of time will be an advantage.

Method of application

The application should consist of the following sections:

Title – should describe the key idea and expected outcome of the research

Abstract – should be non-structured and not more than 200 words

The research idea – should briefly describe in less than ½ page the idea to be explored in the research, and why it is important for national development to address the challenge

Project Justification – describe in one and half page (max) the reasons why the research should be conducted and the scientific gaps to be addressed. A compressed literature review should be included in this section citing the most relevant literature

Project Goal and objectives – 2 – 3 SMART objectives should be presented

Conceptual framework or theory of change – less than one page to explain the underpinning concepts behind the research, and how progression to social change would result from the research.

Methodology – about five pages should be devoted to this section to explain how the study will be conducted. It is important that all details of the methodology is provided to show how the goals and objectives of the project will be achieved. This section should include a description of data analysis and ethical review procedures.

Expected outcomes and methods of dissemination – this should include how policymakers and industry partners will be engaged in the research (half a page)

Time line and project management - this should be presented as a Gantt chart.

Budget – include personnel, equipment, data collection/management, interventions and dissemination.

The proposal should be written in Times Roman size 12 font, and single spaced, with cited references presented at the end of the proposal.

Selection Procedure

1. Applicants will be shortlisted based on previous research experience, academic and professional excellence, quality and viability of the research concept note on the first round.
2. The shortlisted candidates are called for interviews and presentation and discussion on their research proposals.
2. Final selection of the applicants will be done after the interviews.

3. After the final selection, a supervisor/mentor from the CERHI Entrepreneurship and Commercialization committee will be assigned to guide the research process.
5. A brief training and orientation will be provided before the commencement of the research.

Terms of Award

The grant is for a total of N10,000,000.0 (ten million naira), which will be paid in two installments, for a maximum grant period of six months. However, should the project be successful, CERHI will help the awardee to seek further funding to expand the scope of the research

Expected deliverables

These include:

- 1) Research report, plans for patenting, registration and commercialization of the product and a business plan for commercialization;
- 2) Presentation of final narrative and financial reports;
- 3) Evidence of publication(s) or submission of papers for publication in a journal; and
- 4) Production of policy briefs and other dissemination materials

Application procedure

Kindly submit your Concept Paper, Curriculum Vitae (CV), Letter of Intent, writing sample and recommendation letters (recommended but not compulsory) addressed to the Program Manager, CERHI, University of Benin, Benin City or by email to info@cerhi.uniben.edu.

Submission deadline: June 30, 2023

Feedback from CERHI: July 15, 2023

Starting of research: August 1, 2023