



**CENTRE OF EXCELLENCE IN REPRODUCTIVE
HEALTH INNOVATION (CERHI)
UNIVERSITY OF BENIN**



Ugbowo Campus, P.M.B 1154, Benin City, Edo State, Nigeria
Email: info@cerhi.uniben.edu URL: <http://cerhi.uniben.edu>

August 4, 2023

The Vice Chancellor
University of Benin
Benin City.

Request for Approval for CERHI Grants to Three Awardees

The African Centre of Excellence in Reproductive Health Innovation (CERHI) as part of her approved workplan for 2023 for DLI 5.3 (Entrepreneurship milestone) advertised a call for proposals on innovative and commercializable research among the staff and students of the University of Benin (see attached advert).

The Centre received eight proposals out of which five proposals were shortlisted. A 5-member committee chaired by the Provost of the College of Medical Sciences, Professor Wilson Sadoh was set-up to assess the five proposals (see attached terms of reference of the committee and the report of the assessment).

The Centre then invited the best three Principal Investigators (PIs) and their teams to make power-point presentations of their proposals and the proposed impact of the research. This review stage was conducted by an eight-man committee which included the Deputy Vice Chancellor Academics; Professor Ray Ozolua.

The PIs of the three shortlisted proposals were then issued grant award letters (see attached) and were requested to submit all the necessary documents so as to commence the project by August 1, 2023.

The purpose of this memo is to kindly request the Vice-Chancellor to approve the sum of **Thirty Million Naira only (N30,600,000)** being funds for grants awarded to the three University of Benin Academic staff and their respective teams to conduct the proposal within six months starting from August 2023 as stipulated in the advert.

Below are the names of the PIs and the amounts awarded:

S/N	Name of Investigator	Department	Phone number	Amount award
1	Professor Ekeoba Isikhuemen	Forest Resources and Wildlife Management	08033885159	10,000,000
2	Dr. Peter Akhator	Mechanical Engineering	08054153416	10,000,000
3	Mr. Ojeaga Evans Imanah	Chemistry	08053259077	10,000,000

The award will be made in three tranches of which the first is 50% while the second will be 30% and the third, 20% as described in the attached award letter.

I thank you for your consideration

Professor Friday Okonofua
Centre Leader

Or Bursary
Approved N30,600,000
NS/okun
15/8/23
CA (CERHI)
PLS process the request

23
05
23



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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



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July 3rd, 2023

Professor Wilson Sadoh
Provost, College of Medicine
University of Benin

Dear Professor Sadoh,

Request to Chair a Committee for the Assessment of Submitted Proposals for CERHI Grant Award

I write to very respectfully invite you to chair an expert committee that would assess shortlisted proposals that were submitted under the recent call by CERHI for proposals that address marketable developmental ideas.

Other members of the committee include the following:

1. Prof Akhere Omokhua, Department of Medical Biochemistry, University of Benin - Member
2. Dr. Lorretta Ntoimo, CERHI Associate, Federal University, Oye-Ekiti - Member
3. Professor Anthony Ogbibu, Director IPTTO, UNIBEN - Member
4. Dr. Elsie Ugege, Researcher and Lecturer, CERHI - Secretary

The terms of reference of the committee are as follows:

- To assess the proposals according to the attached criteria
- To rank & recommend proposals that can be funded under this initiative
- To make any other recommendations as appropriate

Your selected candidates will be interviewed by Project Management Committee of CERHI, before the grant awards are made.


Attached are the following documents;

1. Recommended criteria
2. The call for proposal advert

I will be most grateful if you can forward the report within 2 weeks.

By copies of this letter, other members of your committee are being informed of their appointment.

Thank you,


Professor Friday Okonofua
Centre Leader

CRITERIA FOR SHORTLISTING

1. Novelty of idea- 20marks
2. Multi-disciplinary of the team and track record- 15marks
3. Methodology which includes feasibility and internal validity- 35marks
4. Plans and potential for commercialization -20 marks
5. Appropriateness of budget - 10 marks

TOTAL = 100 Marks

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

SUBMISSIONS

Prof. Anthony E. Ogbeibu
 11/7/23

S/N	TITLE OF PROPOSAL	BUDGET	Novelty of idea (20)	Multi-disciplinary of the team and track record (15)	Methodology which includes feasibility and internal validity (35)	Plans and potential for commercialization (20)	Appropriateness of budget (10)	Total
1	Development and characterization of biodegradable nanocomposite films for food packaging	10,000,000	15	10	25	8	6	64
2	Pilot production of essential oils (EOs) from four African medicinal plants (<i>Apium graveolens</i> , <i>Okoubaka aubrevillei</i> , <i>Dioscoreophyllum cumminsii</i> , and <i>Moringa oleifera</i>) and investigate their antimicrobial and antioxidant properties	9,997,000	12	12	30	13	8	75
3	Synthesis of cellulose nano-crystals doped cocoyam starch bionanocomposite films for application in packaging industries	9,800,000	15	7	20	5	5	52
4	Process Development for Synthesis of Composite Refused-Derived Fuel Briquettes from Wood and Plastic Wastes in Nigeria	8,940,162.00	15	12	28	14	6	75
5	DEVELOPMENT OF MEASUREMENT INSTRUMENTS AND INTEGRATED INDEX FOR EXAMINING AND CREATING ENTREPRENEURIAL ECOSYSTEMS IN NIGERIAN UNIVERSITIES	9,780,000	10	10	20	5	6	51

**A Report on the Meeting of the Committee for the Assessment of Submitted Proposals
for CERHI Grant Award held on Tuesday July 11, 2023 at the CERHI Conference
Room**

In response to the letter dated July 3, 2023 from CERHI, founding a 5-Member Committee to convene and assess research proposals submitted for CERHI research grant and which also stated the terms of reference upon which decisions should be based, this document offers a report on the considerations and conclusions made in the meeting.

The designations of the committee members are:

Professor Wilson Sadoh	Chair
Professor Akhere Omonkhua	Member
Dr. Loretta Ntoimo	Member
Professor Anthony Ogbeibu	Member
Dr. Elsie Ugege	Secretary

The meeting was scheduled for 10:00am on Tuesday July 11, 2023 at CERHI Conference Room. At 10:00am, there was a meet-and-greet session by members on ground - Professor Sadoh, Professor Omonkhua and Dr. Elsie Ugege. Afterwards, The CERHI Centre Leader, Professor Friday Okonofua, came into the room to address the Committee briefly about the significance of the meeting and underlying purpose of the CERHI Grant Awards and to check that logistics for the meeting are in place.

The Chair, Professor Sadoh, formally declared the meeting open at 10.18am with an opening prayer by Vivian Onoh (as requested by the Chair), who was providing and distributing the printouts of the proposal submissions. Professor Ogbeibu had earlier called in to remind the Committee that he would be joining the meeting after concluding a lecture session within the university, while Dr Loretta Ntoimo was unavoidably absent.

Professor Ogbeibu joined the meeting at about 10:55am, just while the Committee was still deliberating on the first proposal read. Together, the number of committee members in attendance were four (4), namely: Professor Wilson Sadoh, hereafter referred solely to as the Chair, Professor Akhere Omonkhua, Dr. Elsie Ugege and Professor Anthony Ogbeibu.

As introduced earlier, the proceedings of the meeting was based on the CERHI Terms of Reference, as listed below:

1. To assess the proposal according to the following:

Criteria	Marks	Total (%)
Novelty of idea	20	100
Multi-disciplinary team and track record	15	
Methodology which includes feasibility and internal validity	35	
Pians and potential for commercialisation	20	
Appropriateness of budget	10	

2. To rank and recommend proposals that can be funded under this initiative
3. To make any other recommendations as appropriate

A total of five (5) proposals were shortlisted to this Committee while on seat for the assessments. This is the first time the committee members would see and read the proposals submitted. To ensure further transparency in applying the CERHI Reference Terms, the Chair proposed some guidelines:

- To read all five (5) proposals independently by each member. This is to ensure engagement with diverse perspectives of the members.
- Recommend and agree on marks (marking scheme described in table above) for different sections of the proposal by each member immediately after reading but not to find the total marks per proposal, yet. This was to ensure each proposal is given its due credit of uniqueness and to guard against any personal and/or sub-conscious preference for a particular research field, respectively.
- Where committee members cannot agree on a consensus score for sections of any proposal, the median of the score range proposed by members was accepted as the true score.
- To only collate the total marks for each candidate after reading and scoring all sections of the five proposals submitted.

Professor Akhere Omonkhua proposed the next item.

- To anonymize the proposals, as would also support the agenda of the meeting. Based on this, Vivian Onoh was requested to help detach the Letters of Intent and first pages of the CVs which carried their names and any other identifiable information from all proposals, before she left the room. These details were only revealed after reading any proposal.

Following from the above, every member of the committee present was given a copy of each proposal to read in silence and discuss thereafter, one after the other. When everyone had finished reading each proposal, a discussion followed about the strengths and weaknesses of the proposed research work. This was embedded in the contexts of novelty, a multi-disciplinary team and track record of research work, methodology including feasibility and internal validity, plans and potentials for commercialisation and appropriateness of budget. These contexts are in line with the demands of the CERHI's Terms of Reference for assessment of these draft proposals. Scoring was done for each part of the proposal immediately after discussions and counter-arguments. The consensus score was entered into a Scoring Sheet which was earlier provided to the members of the committee by Vivian Onoh. This sheet is presented in the next page. Of note, this sheet contains information -- component and aggregate scores -- that fulfils the first of the three points of CERHI's Terms of Reference.

S/N	Title of Proposal	Budget	Novelty of idea (20)	Multi-disciplinary of the team and track record (15)	Methodology which includes feasibility and internal validity (35)	Plans and potential for commercialization (20)	Appropriateness of budget (10)	Total (100 %)
1	Development and characterisation of biodegradable nanocomposite films for food packaging	10,000,000	15	10	25	8	6	64
2	Pilot production of essential oils (EOs) from four African medicinal plants (<i>Apium graveolens</i> , <i>Okoubaka aubrevillei</i> , <i>Dioscoreophyllum cumminsii</i> , and <i>Moringa oleifera</i>) and investigate their antimicrobial and antioxidant properties	9,997,000	12	12	30	13	8	75
3	Synthesis of cellulose nanocrystals doped cocoyam starch biocomposite films for application in packaging industries	9,800,000	15	7	20	5	5	52
4	Process development for synthesis of composite refuse-derived fuel briquettes from wood and plastic wastes in Nigeria	8,940,162	15	12	28	14	6	75
5	Development of measurement instruments and integrated index for examining and creating entrepreneurial ecosystems in Nigerian Universities	9,780,000	10	10	20	5	6	51

To fulfil the second CERHI Terms of Reference, which is to rank and recommend proposals that can be funded under its initiative, the populated Scoring Sheet also steered members to offer some analyses.

The total percentage score for each proposal ranged from 51 to 75 (refer to the Scoring Sheet, above). Two candidates' scores tied at 75%. This leaves the committee to rank the proposals as follows:

Ranking the scores	Candidate
First	Candidates 2 and 4
Second	Candidate 1
Third	Candidate 3
Fourth	Candidate 5

The recommendation of proposals that can be funded by the CERHI Initiative should naturally follow the rankings above.

Lastly, the third Term of Reference for the meeting was to make any other recommendations as appropriate. On this basis, the Committee thought the overall ideas described in the proposals were fascinating and a summary feedback should be offered to help appreciate how and where their writings (in)adequately responded to the demands of the CERHI Grant Award's Terms of Reference. This is presented in the table, thus:

S/N	Summary Feedback per Draft Proposal	
1	Development and characterisation of biodegradable nanocomposite films for food packaging	There were elements of novelty in terms of the use of cocoyam, but no consideration for its costs and possible places to source them. As a suggestion, there should perhaps be a collaboration with an Agric Scientist, to guide in the choice of cocoyam species, as well as a partnership with environmental groups to further explore ethical issues. The content of the Methodology section was not robust. Although the idea presented had a commercial potential, there was no plan to achieve this. The budget section had issues of under- and over-pricing.
2	Pilot production of essential oils (EOs) from four African medicinal plants (<i>Apium graveolens</i> , <i>Okoubaka aubrevillei</i> , <i>Dioscoreophyllum cumminsii</i> , and <i>Moringa oleifera</i>) and investigate their antimicrobial and antioxidant properties	To argue further for the choice of plants and about Steam versus Cold Distillation methods. Although the proposal was about steam distillation, the Committee thought to point out the possible benefits of cold distillation instead, like conserving phytochemicals in plants. The Methodology section contained robust information and there were considerable attempts at planning the commercialisation of the product. The budget was detailed and appropriate.

3	Synthesis of cellulose nano-crystals doped cocoyam starch bionanocomposite films for application in packaging industries	Some level of novelty was present, there was a lack of a multi-disciplinary approach, methodology not informative, commercial potential of product not identified and market plans were absent. Also, the budget lacked details.
4	Process development for synthesis of composite refuse-derived fuel briquettes from wood and plastic wastes in Nigeria	There is novelty present and a good grip on an inter-disciplinary team, the Methodology section was informative, identified the commercial potential and had plans for the market. However, certain aspects of the budget were not clear, like "information dissemination = 3,000,000" and "running cost". Specific detail would have been beneficial to understand what they meant.
5	Development of measurement instruments and integrated index for examining and creating entrepreneurial ecosystems in Nigerian Universities	There was no novelty in the work, as it proposed to repeat a study already done. Multi-disciplinary team approach was not detailed enough, methodology did not offer robust information, there was absolutely no commercial potential in the idea as no product was coming out of it, and of course, no need for a plan for it. However, the detail in the budget section was fair.

In concluding the assessment, every member put their names, date and signature on their individual Scoring Sheet. This, together with other materials read/used for the meeting were submitted to the Chair, who in turn handed them all to Vivian Onoh.

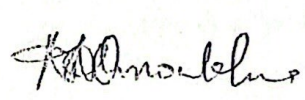
The Chair rounded off the meeting with a Vote of Thanks by himself and closed the meeting at 1:05pm. The meeting lasted 3hours and 5minutes, that is, from 10:00am to 1:05pm.

Thank you.

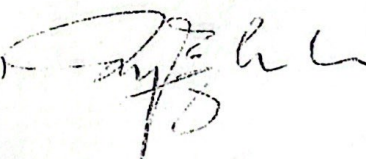
Professor Wilson Sadoh (Chair)

 17/07/23


Professor Akhere Omonkhua (Member)

 18/07/2023

Professor Anthony Ogbeibu (Member)

 18/07/2023

Dr. Elsie Ugege (Secretary)

 17/07/2023



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July 24, 2023

Mr. Ojeaga Evans Imanah
Department of Chemistry
University of Benin

Dear Mr. Imanah,

Sub-Grant Award Letter

I am pleased to inform you that after a detailed review by experts on your proposal titled, '**Development and Characterization of Biodegradable Nanocomposite Films for Food Packaging**', the African Centre of Excellence in Reproductive Health Innovation (CERHI) has decided to fund the proposed project with the total amount of **Ten Million Naira (N10,000,000) only**.

The grant award covers the six months grant period from August 1, 2023 to January 31, 2024. The award will be made in three tranches.

In the first tranche, a payment of 50% of the total grant will be given after you sign the terms of the contract as listed below.

The second tranche of 30% will be given after three months of satisfactory narrative and financial reports has been submitted while the third tranche of 20% will be paid after the final submission of narrative and financial reports with evidence of commercializable products.

The first tranche will be made upon completing the following conditions;

1. Provide a revised budget to comply with the N10,000,000 amount with the budget line items clearly identified. Also give detailed specification of what is to be procured.
2. Submit the hard copies of the curriculum vitae of other investigators in your team
3. Submit a Timeline (implementation plan) for the total execution of the project
4. Submit the institutional account number for the payment
5. Submit a curriculum vitae and support letter of a Senior Professor who will be part of your team
6. Sign the contract document

Thank you and congratulations,

Professor Friday Okonofua
Centre Leader, CERHI



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July 24, 2023

Dr. Akhator E. Peter
Faculty of Engineering
University of Benin

Dear Dr. Akhator,

Sub-Grant Award Letter

I am pleased to inform you that after a detailed review by experts on your proposal titled, '**Process Development for Synthesis of Composite Refuse-Derived Fuel Briquettes from Wood and Plastic Wastes in Nigeria**', the African Centre of Excellence in Reproductive Health Innovation (CERHI) has decided to fund the proposed project with the total amount of **Ten Million Naira (N10,000,000) only**.

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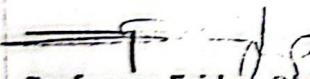
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Thank you and congratulations,


Professor Friday Okonofua
Centre Leader, CERHI



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July 24, 2023

Professor Ekeoba Matthew Isikhuemen
Faculty of Agriculture
University of Benin

Dear Professor Isikhuemen,

Sub-Grant Award Letter

I am pleased to inform you that after a detailed review by experts on your proposal titled, '**Pilot Production of Essential oils (EOs) from four African Medicinal Plants (*Apium graveolens*, *Okoubaka aubrevillei*, *Dioscoreophyllum cumminsii* and *Moringa oleifera*), and investigate their antimicrobial and antioxidant properties**', the African Centre of Excellence in Reproductive Health Innovation (CERHI) has decided to fund the proposed project with the total amount of **Ten Million Naira (N10,000,000) only**.

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2. Submit the hard copies of the curriculum vitae of other Investigators in your team
3. Submit a timeline (Implementation plan) for the total execution of the project
4. Submit the institutional account number for the payment
5. Sign the contract document

Thank you and congratulations,


Professor Frigyes Okonofua
Centre Leader, CERHI