SCARA APPEAR Students Research Competition

Guidelines

The SCARA (Strengthening capacities for agricultural education, research and adoption in Kenya) Project wishes to announce and call upon students of Egerton University to submit for research concept notes under the themes listed below. Research work can cover topics from natural as well as social science. There are separate entries for female and male students.

The concept notes will be subjected to a peer review process following which authors of selected concept notes will be invited to submit full research proposals as shall be guided by the Action Coordination Committee of the SCARA project.

5 female and 5 male students will be selected for the mentoring program.

1. BACKGROUND

New ICT and specifically ICT4AG technologies will have a significant impact on developments in agriculture, ways farmer access information and use this knowledge to improve crop production, water productivity or access markets. Mainly young male and female farmers with a sound understanding of new communication technologies play a key role in this development. In many ways youth is the key to development and growth. For private sector youths are seen as more serious players to engage with and are better able to capitalize on linkages to private sector actors. Governments on the other hand can leverage a whole range of technologies to improve extension agent practices and effectiveness, which includes new communication technologies and radio alike. Research has also shown that adoption rate of new technologies in the agricultural sector tends to be low, which can be attributed to various socioeconomic factors (including gender), changes in farming systems but also external factors like climate variability and policies. All these factors shape adoption processes and pathways.

The research component has the following specific objectives which are translated into thematic areas:

1. Effective mechanisms for youth in agriculture to address future challenges of water for food and nutrition security, access to information and learning and to improve capacity of future human resources developed
2. Communication and networking channels through partnerships between key actors

(universities, farmer groups, extension services, development actors, infomediaries, media and private sector) to identify options for ICT4Ag and eLearning and mLearning solutions for secondary and tertiary education sector functioning

3. Viable solutions for ICT4Ag evaluated and future potential for development and up-scaling identified

Thematic area topic 1:
Use of participatory approaches to integrate socio-economic, ethical and gender issues into research and dissemination to shorten impact times and increase broad uptake.

Thematic area topic 2:
Barriers for successful and sustainable adaptation and farm level adoption of new technologies.

Thematic area topic 3:
Innovative research in providing sustainable and appropriate solutions in the nexus of climate change, water, food and nutrition security (FNS) and health (soil - water – atmosphere continuum, climate smart agriculture, value chain)

Thematic area topic 4:
Innovative knowledge sharing and dissemination tools for adoption and adaptation (ICT4Ag)

Thematic area topic 5:
Youth and Agriculture – Investing in the future

2. ELIGIBILITY

The call is open to students of all faculties of Egerton University.

Concept notes should be demand driven and aim at enhancing research activities related to one of the thematic topics mentioned before.

3. BENEFIT FOR SELECTED PARTICIPANTS

If the concept note is accepted, one will be invited to prepare a full proposal.
The acceptance of the concept note will guarantee that the student will be able to participate in an online mentoring and training program facilitated by BOKU University and will receive field attachment support for data collection.

In detail the selected candidate will gain access and receive support for:

- Opportunity to have guest access to BOKU/SCOPUS for literature research
- Participate in an innovative training on scientific writing and mentoring system
- Support for field work
- Opportunity to publish the research work in an open access journal
- Present the paper at an international Symposium

4. FORMAT FOR DEVELOPING CONCEPT NOTES

A concept note is a brief outline of a proposed research. The concept note should:

- Outline background, spell out research problem, objectives, methodology, location where the work is expected to be carried out and indicative budget;
- Not exceed 3 pages, excluding the attachments - with single spaced paragraphs and font size 12 Times New Roman in Microsoft Word.

If the concept note is accepted, one will be invited to prepare a full proposal. However, one may be asked to clarify certain issues before proceeding to the full proposal stage.

For submission of the concept note use the application form and the template for the concept note in attachment II which can be downloaded from the project website at:
http://scara.boku.ac.at

1. Research Title 15 - 20 words maximum The title should capture reader's attention on the essential theme(s) of the proposed research. - Show clearly what is being investigated. - Have a concise and focused title. - Be short, preferably not more than one line. - Avoid unnecessary punctuation (commas, colons, semi-colons). - Should not repeat keywords.
2. Selected Thematic Area Select one of the thematic areas and state the major research focus one intends to accomplish in the project
3. Research Problem A short summary of the research problem. What does the investigator want to find out? What will be known after doing this research? What are the research questions? Use a clear and logical style in writing.
4. Background A concise review of the main research work and current issues in the specific subject area. What is already known about this specific subject? This is not a literature review; you do not need to do one for a concept note.
5. Objectives Should clearly state the overall and specific objectives as well as hypothesis.
6. Methodology Outline clearly the methods and approaches of data collection and analysis.
7. Location Indicate clearly where the research will take place and justification for the choice of the site(s).
8. Budget lines Provide indicative budget with key cost centres
9. Project Timeframe Show the duration of the project and the timeline for major activities
10. Motivation Briefly describe your motivation to participate in the competition

5. SUBMISSION OF THE CONCEPT NOTE

Applications should be made to either:

1. Prof. Benedict Mutua (bmmutua@egerton.ac.ke) Egerton University or
2. Dr. Dominik Ruffeis (dominik.ruffeis@boku.ac.at) BOKU University Vienna, Austria

Electronic submissions are preferred by completing all details of the application form published at scara.boku.ac.at and submit them together with your research concept note.

All applications must be submitted by 30 June 2017.

Concept note received after the deadline will not be included in the evaluation.

In electronic submission of concept notes as attachments to emails, ensure that the file name bears the surname of the investigator as a prefix to the file name that is:
"Surname of investigator – SCARA Call for Concept note 2017"

The decisions taken as a result of the review process will be made known to the participants by end of August 2017 latest.