

## **BUSITEMA UNIVERSITY RESEARCH AND INNOVATION FUND (BURIF)**

### **CALL FOR PROPOSALS 2025/26**

#### **1.0. BACKGROUND AND CONTEXT**

Busitema University is implementing the 5-year strategic plan 2025/26 – 2030/31 with a vision to be a center of excellence in science, technology and innovation.

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 Government of Uganda (GoU) allocated special funding to Busitema University to support high impact research and innovation towards commercially viable products leading to commercial products geared towards the attainment of the Uganda Vision 2040.**

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 2025/26.**

The BU-RIF grant will last for utmost **10 months** and will support research and innovation outputs 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 NDPIII.

## 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 areas 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 2025/26, three categories will be awarded through a competitive selection process. Each grant will be assessed vigorously for value for money.**

CATEGORIES	AMOUNT [UGX]	NUMBER OF PROJECTS	SUPPORT FOR PHD SCHOLARS	TOTAL
CAT I	500,000	100		50,000,000
CAT II	50,000,000	7		350,000,000
CAT III	15,000,000	7	7	105,000,000
<b>TOTAL</b>				505,000,000

The recommended duration is **10 months**; all projects should ideally be done by June 2026.

### 3.0. **APPLICATION AND ELIGIBILITY**

#### 3.1. **Application process**

- **Cat 1 grant will be handled on a rolling basis by the DGSRI, requests can be sent directly to the DGSRI [dgsribusitema@gmail.com](mailto:dgsribusitema@gmail.com)**
- **Cat 2 and 3 project proposals must be submitted electronically (online) at the platform <https://forms.gle/34W4ML6qRzYSkYt8A> by Friday, 21<sup>st</sup> November 2025, 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](mailto:dgsri.adm@busitema.ac.ug) and c.c. to [rsammy.eng@busitema.ac.ug](mailto:rsammy.eng@busitema.ac.ug) and [dgsribusitema@gmail.com](mailto: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/ University Secretary.
- (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 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 for 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) **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.
- (xi) **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) 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.
- (iii) 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 JOURNAL PUBLICATION INCENTIVE**

The incentive is designed to encourage and reward researchers for publishing high-quality research papers in reputable impact factor journals. The grant of **UGX 500,000** is available for each eligible journal paper published during 2025/26 academic year.

- (i) The published paper must be in a journal with either an impact factor issued by Thomson Reuters or indexed by reputable databases Scopus/Web of Science/DOAJ.
- (ii) The impact factor of the journal must be current and verifiable.
- (iii) The applicant must be either the first author, corresponding author, or project principal investigator (PI) of the published paper.
- (iv) In cases where the paper has multiple authors, only one author can be the beneficiary of the grant. The beneficiary must provide a signed agreement from the co-authors acknowledging the selection of the grant recipient if applicable.

- (v) The applicant must submit proof of the published paper, including:
  - A digital or hard copy of the paper.
  - The DOI number of the paper.
  - A link to the paper on the journal's official website.
  - The publication date must be within the current academic year.
- (vi) The grant is non-transferable and cannot be claimed by another author once disbursed.
- (vii) The researcher is eligible for multiple grants if they publish more than one paper meeting the criteria.
- (viii) All decisions made by the review committee are final.

### **3.5 CATEGORY II APPLICANTS**

- (i) Proposals should be driven by well-continued consortia of multidisciplinary and inter-disciplinary groups to further research on previously funded BURIF projects.
- (ii) The proposals should indicate prototypes, proof of concept and publications from previous funding (if applicable).
- (iii) The research project should aim at commercialization or registration of a local patent or utility model within a period of 12 months.

### **3.6 CATEGORY III APPLICANTS**

- (i) Applicants must be at a stage where they have 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.
- (vi) Providing proof of preliminary published manuscript, literature, as well as critical or systematic reviews related to the student's research topic, will be considered an added advantage.

#### **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.**

#### **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 RGMCI. 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
<b>Contribution to Uganda's Development Priorities</b>	20 Marks	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>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</li> <li>Anticipated economic social and/or environmental benefits arising from the project, period</li> </ul>
<b>Research problem and questions</b>	20 Marks	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Is the problem defined?</li> <li>Does the research/innovation problem have a clear link to</li> </ul>



		<p>the national development priorities?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Is the problem aligned with the thematic priorities of the University Research Agenda?</li> </ul>
<b>Objectives</b>	10 Marks	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Are the objectives linked to the problem stated?</li> <li>Are the objectives SMART?</li> </ul>
<b>Methodology</b>	20 Marks	Are the methods appropriate?
<b>Need</b>	20 Marks	<p>Detailed justification of the budget;</p> <p>Co-contribution of resources (cash and in-kind) from partners</p>
<b>Dissemination</b>	10 Marks	Will the project have a feasible output in terms of a journal manuscript/Utility model or patent?
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>100 Marks</b>	

#### 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:

- Awardees will attend a mandatory online training in financial grant management and accounting for research grant.
- Since the funding is from the GoU, awardees will be required to develop a procurement plan for key project items.
- All awardees will sign a contract with the Grants Management Unit.
- All projects will be required to provide a summary, objectives and team members to DICT for the creation of a weblink to the project.
- 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**

<b>S/N</b>	<b>ACTIVITY</b>	<b>DATE</b>
1	Call Open	Friday, 7th November 2025
2	Call Close	Friday, 21 <sup>st</sup> November 2025
3	Stage 1 Review	Monday, 24 <sup>th</sup> November 2025
4	Stage 2 Review	Thursday, 27 <sup>th</sup> November 2025
5	Research Grants Management Committee	Monday, 1 <sup>st</sup> December 2025
6	Award Letters	Thursday, 4 <sup>th</sup> December 2025