

NATIONAL UNIVERSITIES COMMISSION



UPDATE ON THE CALL FOR PROPOSALS FOR THE AFRICA CENTRES OF EXCELLENCE FOR DEVELOPMENT IMPACT (ACE IMPACT) PROJECT

Introduction

Following the May, 2018 release of a pre-announcement letter to introduce the Africa Centres of Excellence for Development Impact (ACE Impact) Project, so that potential applicants could begin to develop their Proposals, the National Universities Commission (NUC) hereby calls for Proposals from all universities in Nigeria. Universities are encouraged to submit Proposals that address development challenges through focused programmes of postgraduate education and applied research under the ACE Impact Project.

Objective and Expected Results

The Project development objective is to increase quality, quantity and development impact of postgraduate education in selected universities through regional specialisation and collaboration.

The expected results of the Project include:

- Increase in the number of students (regional and female) enrolled and graduating from the Masters and PhD programmes
- Improvement in the quality of programmes (including increase in number of programmes and ACE host institutions that obtain international accreditation, stronger regional and global partnerships)
- Improvement in the relevance of the trainings and applied research evident through:
 - o Increase in amount of externally generated income
 - o Increase in number of industry/sectoral partners and stronger commitments from these partners (through funding, internships, advisory board participation, etc.)
- Evidence of substantial development impact attributable to the project.

Approximately ten (10) Component 1 Centres are anticipated to be supported in pre-identified thematic sectors and must respond to specific topical Terms of Reference that will be specified in the formal Call for Proposals. These sectors are expected to include **water, ICT, power (energy), urban design, coastal degradation, environmental/social safeguards, math/science education, quantitative economics and health.** The Terms of Reference

will focus on the training/skills needs as well as some particular research priorities that the centers are expected to address.

Regional Scope

The ACE Impact project is designed to strengthen targeted regional higher education capacity of West and Central Africa. This regional focus is a key element of the project. In responding to this Call, institutions should describe how the proposed Centre serves a regional need and will grow its regional impact through education and research activities. ACE Impact Centres are expected to serve as regional hubs . recruiting students from across the region (30% of Centre enrollments), building regional partnerships, and conducting applied research on a development challenge that is relevant to West and Central Africa.

Industry/Sectoral Engagement

Institutions intending to respond to the ACE Impact Call for Proposals are strongly encouraged to reach out to potential local, regional, and international industry partners. In addition to helping define the education and research goals of the proposed Centre, industry is expected to join the Industrial Advisory Board (IAB) and to contribute financially to the activities and sustainability of the ACE Impact Centres. Evidence of strong commitments and demand from industry/sectoral partners are expected to be submitted (including commitment letters, market surveys, etc.)

Academic Partnerships

Academic partnerships . national, regional, and global . are encouraged for potential ACE Impact Centres, and can be with individual collaborators or at the department/centre/institutional level. In the proposal stage, institutions should identify academic partners who commit to collaborate with the centre to support its mission. These partnerships may build upon previous collaborations, or may be new and indicate a need or opportunity for the proposed Centre. Partnerships may: (1) raise the education and research capacity of the proposed Centre by leveraging the expertise (and/or resources) offered by the partner and that may not exist at the Centre; (2) increase the capacity of partner institutions in the region to deliver quality education and research; and/or (3) build a network . with specialisations among the members . that can raise regional capacity to address a Development Challenge.

Nigerian universities are also encouraged to forge partnerships across Federal, State and Private universities across the six geo political zones.

E. Evaluation Process

All proposals submitted for Component 1 centers in the ACE Impact project will be evaluated through an open, rigorous, transparent, competitive and merit-based process consistent with international standards for funding research centers. The evaluation process will consist of two sequential steps: Desk Evaluation of the written proposal; and On-site Visit to a short-list of proposed Centres.

F. Updated timeline

- 10 August 2018 Submission of proposed centre topics. Each Vice-Chancellor to send a list of the proposals in the pipeline to the NUC.
- 13 August 2018 Inauguration of National Proposal Evaluation Committee.
- 14 August 2018 Interaction with the proponents in the form of a Workshop at the NUC.
- 24 August 2018 Close of the Call for Proposals. 4 printed copies of each proposal and a soft copy should be submitted at the NUC by this date. Proposals that are ready before this date can be submitted before the deadline.
- 27 - 31 August 2018 NUC will review the proposals and give feedback to the proponents.
- 07 September 2018 Final submission of Proposals. 2 printed copies of each proposal and a soft copy should be submitted at the NUC latest by 3 p.m. on this date.
- 10 - 28 September 2018 Review and submission to the World Bank

This updated timeline has been circulated to all Vice Chancellors. The information is also available on the NUC website: www.nuc.edu.ng ; and the ACE Project website: www.ace.edu.ng

G. Partnerships

The ACE Impact project has sought to establish strategic partnerships with leading international research funding organisations (RFOs), research performing organisations (RPOs) and national development organisations to strengthen the project. It is anticipated that Agence Française de Développement (AFD) will co-finance ACEs with the governments and World Bank. Additional higher education and research agencies from France, Germany, Japan, the UK and the USA are expected to support researchers collaborating with the ACE Impact Centres.

For enquiries, please contact the Secretariat of the ACE Project in the National Universities Commission.

Signed

Professor Abubakar Adamu Rasheed, mni, MFR
Executive Secretary
National Universities Commission
26, Aguiyi Ironsi Street
Maitama
Abuja
www.nuc.edu.ng