



# CALL FOR JOINT RESEARCH PROPOSALS IN AGRO-PROCESSING (FOOD AND FEED) AND LEATHER VALUE CHAIN DEVELOPMENT IN UGANDA AND KENYA



**Call Opening Date:**

6<sup>th</sup> January 2025

**Call Closing Date:**

9<sup>th</sup> March 2025 23:59 EAT

**Information Session:**

13<sup>th</sup> January 2025 10:00 EAT

## Table of Contents

1.0 BACKGROUND.....	1
2.0 RATIONALE AND SCOPE OF THE JOINT CALL .....	3
3.0 OBJECTIVE OF THE CALL .....	6
4.0 FOCUS AREAS .....	6
5.0 FUNDING LEVEL.....	7
6.0 ELIGIBILITY .....	9
7.0 PROPOSAL PREPARATION .....	10
8.0 KEY ELEMENTS FOR INCLUSION IN THE PROPOSAL.....	11
8.1 Other relevant Considerations .....	12
9.0 PROPOSAL REVIEW PROCESS.....	15
9.1 Assessment Criteria .....	16
9.2 Awards.....	18
10.0 SUBMISSION AND TIMELINE .....	18
10.1 Submission process.....	18
10.2 Key Timelines .....	20
11.0 FURTHER INFORMATION AND CONTACTS.....	20

## 1.0 BACKGROUND

The Ugandan National Council for Science and Technology (UNCST) is a Government of Uganda (GOU) agency under the Secretariat of Science, Technology, and Innovation in the Office of the President (STI-OP). UNCST is mandated under the Laws of Uganda (CAP 209) to facilitate and coordinate developing and implementing policies and strategies for integrating Science and Technology (S&T) into the national development process. It also provides grant support to scientific innovations across all domains of Science, Technology, and Innovation (STI), aligned with the priorities outlined in the National STI Policy (2009), National Development Plan III and Uganda's Vision 2040.

Kenya's National Research Fund (NRF) is a government agency established under the Science, Technology, and Innovation (ST&I) Act No. 28, Section 32 of 2013. The NRF facilitates research to advance science, technology, and innovation by mobilizing, allocating, and managing financial resources. It aims to create an effective national innovation system that generates knowledge and innovations critical to Kenya's growing economy. The Fund prioritizes research activities that address national challenges while fostering national and transnational partnerships.

UNCST and NRF-Kenya are both participants in the Science Granting Councils Initiative (SGCI) which seeks to enhance the capacity of





participating councils to support research and evidence-based policies that contribute to socio-economic development across sub-Saharan Africa. The SGCI is jointly funded by United Kingdom (UK) Foreign, Commonwealth & Development Office (FCDO), Canada's International Development Research Centre (IDRC), South Africa's National Research Foundation (NRF), the Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency (SIDA), The Norwegian Agency for Development Cooperation (Norad) and German Research Foundation (DFG).

Under SGCI's framework, UNCST and NRF-Kenya secured a bilateral grant to fund projects that align with the following thematic areas:

1. Manufacturing and Industrialization.
2. Sustainable Economies and Societies.

Funding of €450,000 will be allocated to four selected research projects, with proposals due by 9<sup>th</sup> March 2025, and notification of successful applicants by 2<sup>nd</sup> June 2025. The research projects are expected to be completed within 36 months. For proposal guidelines, applicants are encouraged to visit [www.nrf.go.ke](http://www.nrf.go.ke) or [www.uncst.go.ug](http://www.uncst.go.ug).



## 2.0 RATIONALE AND SCOPE OF THE JOINT CALL

Under this call for proposals, the UNCST and NRF-Kenya will focus on two primary themes: manufacturing and industrialization, and sustainable economies and societies. These themes will be addressed through two specific interventions: upscaling the leather value chain and supporting Agro-processing for industrialization in food and feed. A key priority is to enhance food security and streamline agricultural and livestock practices within the East African Community (EAC) by harmonizing agricultural policies and implementing joint programs to improve production efficiency.

Over 70% of industries in the EAC rely on agriculture as a primary source of raw materials, and agricultural commodities make up approximately 65% of the region's intra-regional trade volume. The EAC Food Security Action Plan (FSAP), adopted in 2011, serves as the first coordinating instrument to implement flagship projects aimed at transforming agriculture in the region.

Value addition to primary produce varies widely across the region. For instance, while commercial crops like coffee, tea, and sisal undergo significant processing, others like cassava, sorghum, and millet are minimally processed. Emerging technologies, such as advanced bioprocessing, offer innovative solutions to enhance Agro-processing and value addition. Additionally, there is a global trend towards creating



market opportunities for new protein sources like insects, algae, and Spirulina as alternatives to traditional animal proteins.

These initiatives align with the strategic visions of both countries. Kenya's Vision 2030 highlights Science, Technology, and Innovation as key drivers for industrialization, with an emphasis on increasing the contribution of the manufacturing sector to Gross Domestic Product (GDP) from 10% to 20% by 2030. Uganda's Vision 2040 identifies low industrialization and limited value addition as major challenges, with the country's GDP heavily reliant on primary products. The industrial base in Uganda is dominated by sectors like metallurgical, food processing, leather, textiles, and pharmaceuticals, which use outdated technology and produce low-quality goods that are not globally competitive.

According to the National Resistance Movement (NRM) Manifesto (2021-2026), Uganda has substantial leather resources but over 90% of leather products are imported, despite the country's potential within the EAC Common Market. Uganda demands 25 million pairs of shoes annually, but only 1 million are produced locally, with the rest imported. A new leather finishing tannery in Kawumu, Luwero District, was established to process locally produced wet blue into finished leather. This initiative aimed to reduce reliance on finished leather imports and create a significant revenue opportunity. By processing wet blue into finished leather locally, the tannery reduces raw material costs for leather goods



production, generates local employment, and improves productivity by facilitating easier access to finished leather for manufacturers. However, research contributions to Uganda's leather sector remains limited.

Kenya, despite being the fifth-largest cattle producer in Africa, faces challenges in utilizing its leather resources effectively. Most of its leather is exported as “wet blue” or raw hides, and there is substantial demand for leather products locally and globally. The leather waste, particularly from second-hand markets, represents a lost opportunity for job creation, improved livelihoods, and tax revenue. Kenya spends KES 197.5 billion annually on clothes and footwear, highlighting the potential demand for the hides and skins sector. Kenya is also one of six countries selected to participate in the pilot phase of the African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA) Initiative, which provides a new Africa-wide market for its leather products. However, capacity building remains a significant challenge in the leather value chain.



### 3.0 OBJECTIVE OF THE CALL

This Bilateral Joint Call aims to generate critical knowledge to enhance food security, and the leather value chains, driving socio-economic transformation in Kenya and Uganda. Specifically, the funding opportunity is intended to:

- 1) Support research that generates evidence-based solutions to improve food security in Kenya and Uganda.
- 2) Fund research that enhances the competitiveness and sustainability of the leather value chain in both countries.
- 3) Support capacity building of post graduate students (MSc and PhD) in Agro-processing (Food and Feed) and Leather Science and Technology through research projects.

### 4.0 FOCUS AREAS

Researchers working in the areas of Agro-processing (Food and Feed) and leather value chain development in both Kenya and Uganda will collaborate to develop joint research proposals focusing on these priority areas. UNCST and NRF-Kenya will co-fund demand-driven, joint research projects that address critical issues within these priority areas.





## 5.0 FUNDING LEVEL

The total funding available for sub-granting to the four (4) research projects is Euros 450,000. Therefore, the total budget limit for project activities in each research proposal is set at €112,500. Each joint proposal should consist of two equal budget components: one for the project activities of the research team in Kenya and one for the research team in Uganda.

The budget should include detailed justifications/budget notes for each line item in the detailed budget spreadsheet, following the guidelines in this section.

Key researchers' roles and the percentage of time (man-hour) they will devote to the project must be clarified. The research grant does not cover salaries for project team members, but man-hours devoted to the project work. Budget rates should align with the policies of the respective institutions hosting the PI/Co-PI.

These collaborative research projects will be implemented over a period not exceeding thirty-six (36) months. Permissible budget items include:

- Graduate Training at PhD and master's level (i.e each research project is expected to train at least one PhD and two masters)
- Material costs directly linked to the research project, such as durable materials, expendable items, field expenses, travel costs, or third-party charges.
- Direct costs associated with the use of research infrastructure.



- Costs for organizing conferences and workshops related to the funded research.
- Costs for national and international cooperation and networking activities are directly associated with the funded research.

Note:

- (a) Personnel Costs for research team members (not exceeding 10% of the total requested budget), overheads (not exceeding 7% of the total project budget) and stipend for the students are also eligible costs.
- (b) Applicants' host institutions will be required to co-fund (either in cash or kind) the total budget of the project and are expected to commit in writing.
- (c) The selection of students should also reflect the collaboration between Kenya and Uganda. In addition, teams should consider gender, equity and inclusivity.



## 6.0 ELIGIBILITY

The eligibility criteria are as follows:

- a) Each proposal must involve a research team consisting of members from the two countries, led by a PI from one country and a co-PI from the other. The PI will be responsible for the overall project's technical and administrative coordination, as well as the timely delivery of technical and financial reports.
- b) A strong multidisciplinary and collaborative approach among researchers and institutions is encouraged.
- c) Projects should demonstrate gender and inclusivity responsiveness in team composition, student selection, methodology, data management, and dissemination strategies.
- d) Lead applicants should be researchers from public/ private research and higher learning institutions registered either in Uganda or Kenya.
- e) Inclusion of other collaborations in the research project is allowed but their role in the project should be clear.
- f) Letters of support from the participating institutions in Kenya and Uganda of the PI and Co- PI are required. Proposals without these letters will not be considered.
- g) The grant will fund only research projects in the focus areas of (i) Agro-processing with a focus on food and feed, and (ii) Leather value chain development. Proposals should demonstrate the



application of scientific principles or basic scientific discoveries to solve real-life challenges.

- h) PI must hold a PhD degree, preferably in a related field to the focus area with the ability to supervise graduate students. Applicants are required to establish research partnerships in the collaborating countries.
- i) PI in Uganda and Kenya must meet the following criteria at the point of application: (i) Have experience in previous research related to Agro-processing and leather manufacturing. (ii) Possess the ability to mentor a research team and supervise graduate students.

## 7.0 PROPOSAL PREPARATION

These guidelines are provided to assist researchers in developing proposals for potential funding in the identified focus areas of Agro-processing (food and feed) and leather value chains development. Researchers must adhere to these guidelines; failure to do so will result in proposal rejection. Submission of a research proposal does not guarantee funding. Research and outreach projects demonstrating high impact at the grassroots level within the project timeline and at a reasonable cost will be prioritized. Applicants should use the Times New Roman font, size 12, with 1.5-line spacing using the Research Proposal Application Template available on the website under section 8.0 below.





## 8.0 KEY ELEMENTS FOR INCLUSION IN THE PROPOSAL

The Application Form should be jointly completed by both the PI and Co-PI (see ANNEX I for the form). This application form should be accompanied by relevant attachments. All sections of the form, as highlighted below, should be completed in full:

- Summary of the related previous research work. The PI should provide a brief summary of the previous related research project.
- Justification for requesting funding support. In addition to providing motivation for funding support, the PI should attach a completed Project Proposal. The Researchers' Project Proposals should include the following information (see ANNEX I for the form):

### **Part 1: General Information**

(Title of the project, project acronym, keywords, project contribution to national/ regional/international priorities, and a publishable summary of the project).

### **Part 2: Project Team Members**

Full details on project team members and their roles in the projects. CVs of the partnering researchers be attached.

### **Part 3: Project Description**

Problem statement aims and objectives, rational and literature review, methodology and proposed research plan, anticipated outputs and outcomes, and potential impact.

## Part 4: Detailed Budget

- Budget overview for the whole duration of the project
- Outline of how the project would positively impact and contribute to development of food security/ or leather value chain, and human capital (MSc and PhD) in the two countries.
- Highlight of challenges and/or potential risks that might be experienced by the PI and Co-PI and the proposed mitigation measures.
- Summarized budget including contribution by the main applicants' host institution.

### 8.1 Other relevant Considerations

The following information is expected to be included in the research proposal:

#### a) Gender Equity and Inclusivity

Applicants are required to incorporate mechanisms that promote gender-balanced representation and participation throughout the project. Aiming for at least 40% participation from the underrepresented gender, applicants must demonstrate equal opportunities for women and men in project management and implementation. The research objectives should explicitly target gender disparities, promote equity, or benefit both men and women. Projects should consider gender intersectionality, including geographical inclusion, early career researchers, and other vulnerable groups such as the persons with



disabilities (PWDs). Applicants are encouraged to establish gender-specific targets and performance indicators to track gender results and impacts. They should also allocate financial resources for gender equality and empowerment activities for disadvantaged groups. Overall, mainstreaming gender into the research's design, methodology, and analysis is crucial to ensuring that gender perspectives are central to the funding.

### **b) Results and Dissemination**

Applicants must clearly define expected outputs from the research project and describe the strategy for disseminating findings. The target audience and beneficiaries should be identified by the applicant, and plans for using research results to influence policy and practice should be outlined. Different dissemination platforms and media engagements should be described, demonstrating how the research findings will reach a broad audience.

### **c) Open Science Modalities**

Open Science is a priority in this funding call. Applicants are expected to make their research products accessible via Open Access platforms and repositories. Budgeting for workshops or forums to disseminate findings is required. The Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning (MEL) framework should reflect adherence to Open Science principles, facilitating knowledge and resource sharing between Uganda and Kenya.



#### **d) Research Integrity**

Applicants must adhere to research integrity principles, obtaining ethical clearance from their institutional Research Ethics Committees (RECs). A Research Permit from the relevant regulatory agencies is mandatory and should be budgeted for. If the project involves controlled substances, a Controlled Substance Registration Certificate must be obtained. For research involving human participants or animal as research subjects, appropriate ethical clearances **MUST** be obtained prior to project implementation.

#### **e) Team Composition from Applicant Organizations**

All significant contributors to the intellectual direction of the research and those responsible for project tasks should be listed. Team members should include their field of expertise. A maximum two-page CV for all the research team members must be included.

#### **f) Project Governance**

Briefly describe the governance structure of the project, including the composition and qualifications of the research team, their roles, and any planned partnerships with universities or research institutes. The involvement of the private sector or beneficiaries in the design, management, and execution of the project should be clarified. The role of university or institute management and how the governance structure may influence the success of the program should be discussed.





### **g) Proposed Project Timeline**

Provide a chart outlining key activities, timelines, and milestones within a period not exceeding 36 months.

### **h) Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning (MEL)**

NRF-KENYA and UNCST, in collaboration with host institutions from Uganda and Kenya, will be responsible for MEL. Successful applicants will be provided with MEL templates.

## **9.0 PROPOSAL REVIEW PROCESS**

The selection of successful proposals will be undertaken jointly by the interdisciplinary and inter-sectoral Technical Committee through an independent online evaluation system. The submitted proposals will undergo an administrative and eligibility check by a joint NRF-Kenya and UNCST grants management team to check for completeness, eligibility and adherence of proposals to the call guidelines. The proposals that pass the administrative and eligibility check will then be evaluated by a technical evaluation committee consisting of independent technical peer reviewers from both the academia and industry selected from the two countries. The selected proposals will be required to outline in their submissions a strategy for knowledge management that fosters active engagement of all collaborating partners during project implementation as well as a strategy for disseminating research findings with broader national and international stakeholder groups. The proposals that pass the administrative review will undergo a two-stage technical evaluation process:

- (i) Online technical review scoring (75% of total score);
- (ii) Proposal defense for the research teams (25% of total score).

## 9.1 Assessment Criteria

Peer review and Proposal defense (of research projects) will be conducted in accordance with NRF-Kenya and UNCST policies. Selection of the research proposals will follow the following criteria:

- a) **Relevance to thematic and focus areas (5%):** Alignment with the call's focus and objectives.
- b) **Scientific merit (25%):** Innovation, feasibility, log frame, and methodology.
- c) **Impact potential (25%):** Expected contribution to human capital development (e.g. number graduate students), industrialization, policy formulation, and potential contribution to national development plans and Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).
- d) **Collaboration strength (10%):** Effective partnerships between Ugandan and Kenyan institutions including plans for collaborating with other relevant organizations and student selection
- e) **Gender and Inclusivity (5%):** proposal should be able to show commitment to gender equity and inclusivity such as gender balance in the project team, target beneficiaries, proposed interventions and Budgets.
- f) **Budget Efficiency (10%):** appropriateness of the budget and justification for amount requested.



- g) **Track record of applicants (5%):** expertise and experience of individuals or organizations involved in the project; and composition, integration and complementary roles of team members.
- h) **Dissemination (5%):** A clear research results synthesis and dissemination plan should be included
- i) **Workplan (5%):** timelines of planned activities
- j) **Results Indicators (5%):** Quality of the research results indicators for Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning (MEL)
- Each proposal will be assessed by a minimum of three (3) external expert reviewers and evaluators, who will assign a numerical score for each of the three categories of peer review and evaluation as above mentioned.
  - The funding decision made by UNCST and NRF-Kenya will be final. NRF-Kenya and UNCST reserve the right to cancel the process at any time without prior notice and/or at its discretion to grant all or none of the awards under this Call. Moreover, grants will only be awarded subject to the availability of funding.



## 9.2 Awards

Successful applicants will be issued an award letter containing details of the funding, after which contractual agreements will be drawn up. Incorrect information on the application form, costs that do not adhere to the call guidelines, and negotiations with institutions regarding the terms and conditions of the funding can lead to contracting delays.

## 10.0 SUBMISSION AND TIMELINE

### 10.1 Submission process

- Applications must be submitted using the UNCST grants Online Submission System at <https://www.grants.uncst.go.ug/Kenya-Uganda Joint Application form>
- You must first create an account on the online system to be able to proceed.
- Applications should be submitted in English.
- Incomplete applications will not be considered for funding.
- The application system will automatically close by the deadline and no new submissions will be allowed.
- Only one application per PI and co-PI can be submitted, i.e. a PI or Co-PI cannot be a PI or Co-PI in any other submission.
- Only submissions made through the online system will be accepted.





- Only applications approved by PI and Co-PI's research institutions and supported by all the collaborating partner institutions will be accepted.
- The application package should include: the full proposal, a PI's cover letter, letters of support from all collaborating institutions, and the CVs of all the research team members.
- All electronic attachments should be in pdf format (proposal, logical framework, CVs, letters of submission and support put together in one pdf document). Budgets to be submitted in both pdf and excel formats.
- All applications will be reviewed based on quality and merit. A full proposal template can be downloaded from the following links:

(i) [https://www.grants.uncst.go.ug/Kenya-Uganda Joint Call for proposals](https://www.grants.uncst.go.ug/Kenya-Uganda_Joint_Call_for_proposals)

(ii) [https://www.nrf.go.ke/Kenya-Uganda Joint Call for proposals](https://www.nrf.go.ke/Kenya-Uganda_Joint_Call_for_proposals)

All proposals will be received and processed confidentially, respecting intellectual property rights.



## 10.2 Key Timelines

**Application Open:** 6<sup>th</sup> January 2025

**Application Deadline:** 9<sup>th</sup> March 2025 at 23:59, EAT

**Information Session (webinar):** 13<sup>th</sup> January 2025 at 10:00 EAT

**Review and Shortlisting:** 16<sup>th</sup> March 2025 to 15<sup>th</sup> April 2025

**Award Date:** 2<sup>nd</sup> June 2025.

**Note:** NRF-Kenya and UNCST reserves the right to change the above-mentioned dates at any stage

## 11.0 FURTHER INFORMATION AND CONTACTS

Researchers should direct inquiries as follows:

### a. Uganda:

- SGCI Programme-Geoffery Sempiri: [g.sempiri@uncst.go.ug](mailto:g.sempiri@uncst.go.ug)  
(Office Tel: +256 (0) 414 705 534).
- Grants and call related matters - Agwang Florence:  
[f.agwang@uncst.go.ug](mailto:f.agwang@uncst.go.ug) (Office Tel: +256 (0) 414 705 545)
- ICT Related Enquiries- Collins Mwesigwa: [c.mwesigwa@uncst.go.ug](mailto:c.mwesigwa@uncst.go.ug)  
(Office Tel: +256 (0) 414 705 512).

### b. Kenya:

- SGCI Programme-Jacob Njagih: [jnjagih@nrf.go.ke](mailto:jnjagih@nrf.go.ke)  
(Tel: +254 721 281 207).
- Grants and call related matters-Jackline Muyalo:  
[jmuyalo@nrf.go.ke](mailto:jmuyalo@nrf.go.ke); (Tel: +254 712 444 853).
- ICT Related Enquiries- Laura Odhiambo: [lodhiambo@nrf.go.ke](mailto:lodhiambo@nrf.go.ke)  
(Tel. +254 708 759 450).

