



## AFRICAN ECONOMIC RESEARCH CONSORTIUM

### COLLABORATIVE MASTERS PROGRAMME IN AGRICULTURAL AND APPLIED ECONOMICS (CMAAE)

#### CALL FOR RESEARCH PROPOSALS UNDER THE THEMATIC, FACULTY, MASTERS AND PhD THESIS RESEARCH PROGRAMMES

#### Programme of Accompanying Research for Agricultural Innovation- PARI

### 1. Background

Established in 1988, African Economic Research Consortium (AERC) <https://aercafrica.org/> is a premier capacity building institution in the advancement of research and graduate training that inform economic policies in Africa. The principal mission is to strengthen local individual and institutional capacity to conduct independent, rigorous inquiry into problems pertinent to the management of Sub-Saharan African economies through synergistic programmes combining economic research with postgraduate training in economics, and agricultural and applied economics.

AERC's Collaborative Master of Science Programme in Agricultural and Applied Economics (CMAAE) gives a voice to the issues related to agriculture, food security and environmental management including climate change. The CMAAE programme involves 17 departments of Agricultural Economics in 13 countries in the Eastern, Central and Southern Africa regions. The programme of study entails coursework and a thesis offered for over five semesters. The first two semesters, comprising core courses, are taught at the campus of the university offering the degree, after which students proceed to the Shared Facility for Specialization and Electives (SFSE) usually held at the University of Pretoria for a period of four months (August to November) to be taught elective courses by a team of visiting lecturers sourced internationally. Each student is also required to present and defend their research proposal at a Graduate Thesis Seminar during their stay at the University of Pretoria and finalize their thesis at their respective universities.

### 2. The Funding Source

ZEF ([www.zef.de](http://www.zef.de)) is an international and interdisciplinary research institute of the Rheinische Friedrich-Wilhelms-University of Bonn active in research, capacity building, policy dialog and public awareness as well as international networking. ZEF's research aims at finding solutions to development-related issues by working on crosscutting themes of central importance for the developing world. ZEF is leading the research project titled, *Program of Accompanying Research for Agricultural Innovation (PARI)* <https://research4agrinnovation.org/> and funded by the German Federal Ministry of Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ). PARI's overall goal as an independent accompanying research program is to support the scaling of agricultural innovations in Africa and India, and thereby contributing to the development of the



African and Indian agricultural sector by generating innovation through science and technology.

### **3. The Objectives**

PARI collaborates with partners from Africa and Germany to contribute to sustainable agricultural growth, food and nutrition security in Africa. PARI research seeks to identify investment opportunities in the agriculture sectors and rural areas of Africa with the aim of improving food security and creating employment and income opportunities. PARI has partnered with the African Economic Research Consortium to deliver this objective through AERC's four of its research delivery mechanisms, namely Faculty research, Thematic research, Master's thesis research and PhD thesis research.

### **4. Research Delivery Mechanisms**

*Thematic research* is a learning-by-doing research modality that is fundamental to AERC's capacity building activities, with the biannual research workshops remaining key to the peer review process intended to maintain and yield high quality research output on topical African economic development issues. A thematic research grant is awarded to a researcher whose proposal has been peer reviewed at a Biannual Research Workshop, and vetted by external resource persons, and then approved for funding by the AERC Programme Committee. Researchers are required to present an interim report at a subsequent Biannual Research Workshop for further peer review among researchers and monitoring by the resource persons. Satisfactory final reports progress to publication stage during which the report is externally reviewed and are published upon recommendations by two external reviewers.

*Faculty Research* is conducted by faculty members of network universities of the AERC Training Programme on themes of current interest in the field of Agriculture and Applied Economics. Research proposals received following calls are reviewed and the best selected for grant awards. The faculty then do research and present their findings in agricultural economics profession forums or AERC Biannual Research Workshops as side events. The higher quality papers are published in the *African Journal of Agriculture and Resource Economics (AfJARE)*, often as special issues. These help to build the research and teaching capacity in the AERC network universities.

*Thesis research, both MSc and PhD* are conducted by graduate students of the AERC Collaborative postgraduate programmes (Collaborative Masters in Agricultural and Applied Economics - CMAAE, Collaborative Masters in Economics - CMAP, Collaborative PhD in Economics - CPP or PhD in Agricultural Economics students. The students are guided by their professors to research on carefully selected topics of current interest from conceptualization of thesis topics, proposal development, methodologies, empirical execution, results, write-ups, and finalization.



## 5. The Scope of the Research

The research themes relate to innovative approaches to stimulating the economic development of rural areas in Africa, with a focus on sustainable agricultural growth and food system development, including the following:

- a) Mechanization, automation and skill development in agricultural production and food processing;
- b) Digitalization in agriculture, food and nutrition;
- c) Enhancing opportunities for the youth in the rural economy;
- d) Employment opportunities in agricultural production and in post-production segments of the value chain;
- e) Inputs use in agriculture (seed, fertilizer, pesticides, irrigation, other technologies);
- f) Potentials for and innovations in livestock and livestock products development in Africa
- g) Improving the policy context and contributing to evidence-based policy processes.

The geographic scope includes the countries that are already part of AERC's Training Programme (including fragile states) as well as priority countries in PARI (Benin, Burkina Faso, Cameroon, Ethiopia, Ghana, Kenya, Malawi, Mali, Nigeria, Togo, Tunisia and Zambia), as well as other countries in Africa (Côte d'Ivoire, Uganda, Senegal, Tanzania and Rwanda).

## 6. Deliverables and Reporting Requirements

The faculty and thematic researchers will be required to:

- a) Develop high quality research work of global standards to help inform policy making in Africa;
- b) Present research findings in AERC biannual research workshops and any other dissemination forums as may be organized by AERC;
- c) Provide high quality research papers that are publishable in reputed journals;
- d) Generate a policy brief.

The MSc and PhD thesis researchers will be required to:

- a) Develop high quality thesis of global standards to help inform policy making in Africa;
- b) Present research findings in AERC-approved dissemination conferences and any other forums as may be organized by AERC;
- c) Generate high quality research papers that are publishable in reputed journals.

## 7. Duration of the Research

MSc thesis researchers will be required to complete their research in 6 months while PhD thesis researchers, thematic and faculty researchers will be required to complete their research in 18 months.



## 8. Selection Criteria

A total of 15 MSc research grants are earmarked for award, five (5) each in 2019, 2020 and 2021 and two (2) PhD research grants to be awarded in 2019. Six (6) faculty research grants (3 each in 2020 and 2021) are earmarked for award, while two (2) thematic research grants will be awarded in 2020. For MSc and PhD thesis research, only postgraduate students who have successfully completed their coursework and who would like to conduct thesis research in any one of the areas of research mentioned above are eligible to apply. The applicants must be bona-fide students of the AERC collaborative training programmes.

For Faculty and thematic research, applicants should meet the following requirements:

- a) PhD in Agricultural Economics, Economics, Development Economics or related field;
- b) A faculty member of the AERC network university or PARI partner country;
- c) Provide an innovative and technically sound research proposal addressing one of the above PARI themes.

## 9. Application Process

Applications clearly indicated *“Faculty Research - AERC/PARI”*, *“Thematic Research- AERC/PARI”*, *“MSc Thesis Research- AERC/PARI”* or *“PhD Thesis Research- AERC/PARI”* on the subject line can be sent to the following address on or before **September 14, 2019**.

The Director of Training  
African Economic Research Consortium  
P.O. Box 62882 – 00200  
Nairobi Kenya,  
Or by email to the following addresses: [cmaae@aercafrica.org](mailto:cmaae@aercafrica.org)

Please attach an updated curriculum vitae clearly indicating:-

- i. Key academic qualifications
- ii. Professional training and certificates obtained
- iii. Employment record clearly stating the name of employer, period of employment, position held and brief description of main responsibilities
- iv. Names and addresses of 2 references who can provide a reference on your work
- v. Personal declaration signed on your CV as follows:-

*“I hereby certify that the details provided in my CV are at the best of my knowledge true, complete and accurate. I acknowledge that an inaccurate statement or omission in a personal declaration or other document might result in rejection of my application or termination of my contract. The African Economic Research Consortium (AERC) may verify any statements which I make in my application”.*