CALL FOR APPLICATIONS FOR ADDITIONAL FINANCING UNDER THE AFRICAN HIGHER EDUCATION CENTRES OF EXCELLENCE (ACE II AF)

In collaboration with the Governments of Malawi and Mozambique, the Inter-University Council for East Africa (IUCEA) and Regional University Forum for Capacity Building in Agriculture (RUFORUM) are jointly launching a Call for Proposals under the Eastern and Southern Africa Higher Education Centers of Excellence Project (ACE II). This initiative will be financed through additional financing to ACE II that will be reviewed by the World Bank Group Board in May 2022. The main objective of the proposed project is to strengthen linkages between universities in participating countries and regional agricultural sector needs through strengthening (i) agri-food related education and training enhanced with transdisciplinary approaches and applied research; (ii) university linkages to the regional agricultural sector - its priorities, needs and stakeholders; and (iii) university partnership with private and public entities related to agri-food both within and outside the region.

The ACE II AF is a result of broad consultations with the governments of Malawi and Mozambique on one hand and IUCEA, RUFORUM on the other. Six key regional gap areas have been identified and prioritized for this Project: (i) agribusiness and entrepreneurship; (ii) agri-food systems and nutrition; (iii) agricultural policy analysis; (iv) agricultural risk management and climate change; (v) rural innovations and agricultural extension; and (vi) statistical analysis, forecast and data management.

The Project will support the governments of the two participating countries to collectively address challenges in the aforementioned key gap areas by (a) selecting African Centers of Excellence (ACEs) through a competitive and transparent process from existing higher education institutions which have certain capacity for research and training in agriculture; (b) strengthening selected universities through professionalizing leadership and management, streamlining administration and capacitating faculty to produce excellent training and applied research which can meet the needs of highly-skilled personnel and knowledge transfer for the agri-food sector; (c) building networks among these institutions to promote regional collaboration, foster partnerships with other institutions, including industries, for training and applied research to produce innovative solutions for real development impact; and (d) developing a culture of results-orientation and accountability in institutional management through a performance-based financing mechanism. As a regional project, ACE II AF will be governed by its Regional Steering Committee (RSC) and facilitated by its Regional Facilitation Unit (RFU).

ACEs will be selected through a competitive and transparent process. The submitted proposals will be evaluated by an Independent Evaluation Committee and the RSC will make the final selection decision. Interested institutions should meet all the
following eligibility criteria: (i) be from the participating countries; (ii) offer PhD program(s) or demonstrate readiness to offer a PhD program; and (iii) have programs in at least two disciplinary areas related to one of the regional gap areas.

Proposals are expected to encompass the following elements: Enhancing capacity to deliver regional high quality training in agricultural sciences to address challenge(s) in at least two key gap areas; a) enhancing capacity in addressing emerging challenges such as COVID-19, b) enhancing capacity to deliver applied research to address the challenge(s); c) the strength of the partnership (national and international) and capacity to build networks and offer capacity development for TVET and other Higher Education Institutions; d) building and strengthening national, regional and inter-regional academic collaboration to raise the quality of higher agriculture education and training; e) partnerships with relevant agro-based institutions that deal with processing, storage and distribution of agricultural produce; f) building and using industry/sector partnerships to enhance the impact of the project on development, and increase the relevance of these centers of education and research; g) enhancing governance and management of the ACE and the participating universities to improve monitoring and evaluation; and h) demonstrated evidence of the applicant university engagement as well as its willingness to take a leadership role in agriculture transformation in the target country.

Higher education institutions from the Republics of Malawi and Mozambique interested in participating in the program are requested to submit their proposals not later than 06th March 2022. A proposal submission form and evaluation protocols are available on this link https://ace2.iucea.org/index.php/download/category/149-ace-af-call-for-proposals

Kindly submit your proposals by email to:

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P.O.BOX 7110 Kampala, Uganda
Email: exsec@iucea.org

And copy to: jmbwambo@iucea.org and m.majaliwa@ruforum.org

For further information contact Dr. Jonathan Stephen Mbwambo, email: jmbwambo@iucea.org or Prof. Majaliwa Mwanjalolo, email: m.majaliwa@ruforum.org