



# Inter-University Council for East Africa

P O Box 7110, Kampala, Uganda

Tel: +256 +256 772-340-544

E-Mail: [exsec@iucea.org](mailto:exsec@iucea.org)

Website: [www.iucea.org](http://www.iucea.org)



## **CALL FOR AFRICAN CENTERS OF EXCELLENCE (ACEs) TO HOST INCUBATION CENTERS**

### **Co-Financing Development of Incubation Centers or Learning Factories**

**CLOSING DATE: 24 August 2018**

# ACE II

Eastern and Southern Africa  
Higher Education Centers of Excellence Project



The World Bank is partnering with eight Governments in Eastern and Southern Africa in an innovative project with the aim of improving the quality of training and research in higher education, and reducing the skill gaps in key development priority areas. The Eastern and Southern Africa Higher Education Centers of Excellence (ACE II) Project supports the governments of Ethiopia, Kenya, Malawi, Mozambique, Rwanda, Tanzania, Uganda, and Zambia in strengthening selected African Centers of Excellence (ACEs) to deliver quality post-graduate education and build collaborative research capacity in the following priority areas: (i) Industry, (ii) Agriculture, (iii) Health, (iv) Education, and (v) Applied Statistics. The ACE II Project implements three components, namely (i) strengthening the 24 higher education institutions into regional ACEs in Eastern and Southern Africa in a set of defined regional priority areas (US\$ 140 million); (ii) providing capacity building support to these ACEs through regional activities (US\$3 million); and (iii) supporting coordination and management of the implementation of components (i) and (ii) (US\$5 million).

As Regional Facilitation Unit (RFU) for the ACE II Project, the Inter-University Council for East Africa (IUCEA) leads the implementation of key elements of Component 2 of the project, aimed at building strong and sustainable regional partnerships and collaborations to produce competent Masters and PhD holders for the regional market and improve the quality of teaching in higher education and quality of production and services in public and private sectors. IUCEA wishes to invite ACEs to compete through co-financing development of incubation centers or learning factories by 4 disciplines (industry, agriculture, health and education/statistics) within the ACE II Project. Through establishment of incubation centers, we aim to develop the region's four (4) best ACEs into regional research hubs that will demonstrate the pathways for the transformation of research outcomes into innovative products or policies.

## JUSTIFICATION

The visions espoused by all countries in Eastern and Southern Africa (ESA) appear to put a distinctive and growing emphasis on knowledge production, scientific innovation, and closer convergence between research and sustainable development. A shared view about the region's research and innovation performance, however, is that it is mainly focused on generating research publications, but not at commercializing innovations. Whereas the idea of a "gap" between research done in academia and its translation into marketable products is certainly not new, the approaches some academic institutions and companies are taking to bridge that gap remain a big challenge. For instance, over the five-year duration of the ACE II Project, collectively the ACEs plan to publish almost 1,500 journal articles, launch more than 300 research collaborations with private sector and other institutions, among other academic and research outputs such as patents.

Implementers of ACE II Project should strive to ensure that research findings and innovation outputs generated are turned into tangible and impactful products and services for the socio-economic development of society. The benefits of successful research studies can be meaningful only if the results are converted into marketable and consumable goods (medicaments, diagnostic tools, machines, and devices, etc) services, or inform policies. They must also continue to place more emphasis on the promotion of entrepreneurship, and the facilitation of businesses to develop, register and commercialize trademarks, copyrights and patents. Therefore, support is required for streamlining effective partnerships between businesses, universities and research institutions to ensure that that science translates into innovative technologies, products and services for the marketplace. Establishment of incubation centers in universities will bring academia and industry closer to each other by providing graduate students and faculty a platform to commercialize their research, academic outputs and other technology based business ideas.

## **GUIDELINES FOR SELECTION OF INCUBATION CENTERS**

The following factors will be considered in selecting an ACE to host an incubation center:

### **1. Existing physical infrastructure**

- Physical space including premises with suitable working space
- Research and innovation facilities, including labs, relevant support equipment, etc
- Office support, including access to secretarial services, equipment (copiers, telephones, etc) and receptionist services
- Use and optimization of internet technologies, (including accessible, reliable and high speed Internet connectivity)

### **2. Quality and level of education and research**

- Volume and level of research output, scientific publications, patents, etc
- Proximity to industrial nucleus or demonstrated relations with the private sector
- Capacity to attract top students from the region

### **3. High value-added differentiated services and products**

- Regionality of the center i.e. mechanisms for incubating ideas from other centers in the same field
- Ability to provide free as well as pay services for some of their support packages
- Capacity for coaching on technical aspects, IP protection, and business plan development
- Development of a viable sales and marketing strategy for the product or service

### **4. Management support**

- Commitment and willingness of the host university to support the incubator
- The position of incubation in the corporate mission, plans and/or strategies of the host institution
- Faculty that demonstrates strong linkages with industry
- Intellectual property policy and management
- The creation of a task force with regular meetings in order to coordinate actions

### **5. Partnerships and networking**

- Evidence of partnerships with prominent organisations across programmes, including large multinationals (e.g. healthcare, telecommunications), financial institutions, professional services providers, small to large research companies, technology companies, social enterprises and charities
- Linkages with business umbrella bodies, including the chamber of commerce, businessmen's association, etc
- Networking opportunities, including identifying and/or making contact with mentors, peers/alumni, and potential investors

### **6. Sustainability options**

- Terms and amount of financing support available as seed capital for co-financing
- Ability to network with venture capitalists for mentoring and financial support to the start-ups
- Synergies created between companies and relationships that may contribute to the incubator's sustainability

## **INCUBATOR SELECTION AND FINANCING ARRANGEMENTS**

The following processes will be used in incubator selection and financing:

- i) Proposals submitted by interested ACEs within the ACE II Project
- ii) Initial screening conducted by RFU for basic eligibility:
  - a. only applications from any of the 24 ACEs within the ACE II Project are allowed
  - b. proposals must address any one of the four priority areas: industry, agriculture, health, and education/statistics)
- iii) Proposals passed through the eligibility screening will be forwarded to the Regional Steering Committee (RSC) for endorsement
- iv) Endorsed proposals will be evaluated by an Independent Selection Panel (ISP), using an evaluation protocol in two stages
  - a. a technical assessment by three experts who have knowledge and experience in the respective disciplines
  - b. an in-depth, on-site assessment of the ACEs whose proposals will have been short-listed from the first stage by a team of experts
- v) The teams will assess leadership and management capacity of the ACE, and ascertain the feasibility of acting as an incubation center, given the existing capacity of staff, facilities and infrastructure for research, incubation and administration
- vi) As part of evaluation, each center shall provide a breakdown of equipment or infrastructure it requires to be supported to a maximum of USD: 250,000. Completeness and feasibility of the costs to achieve the required objective shall be measured accordingly. The centres shall however be part of the procurement process and will take full charge of contract management and verification of invoices for settlement by IUCEA/RFU. In proposing some items, each center shall take into consideration the impact on the environment and the timeframe it may take to obtain necessary local authority approvals in their proposals.

## PROPOSAL SUBMISSION

Interested ACEs are advised to submit their proposals by e-mail not later than 5.00 PM East African Time on **24 August 2018** addressed to:

Executive Secretary  
Inter-University Council for East Africa  
P O Box 7110, Kampala, Uganda  
Tel: +256 772340544  
E-mail: [exsec@iucea.org](mailto:exsec@iucea.org)  
Website: [www.iucea.org](http://www.iucea.org)  
[ace2.iucea.org](http://ace2.iucea.org)  
E-Mail: [exsec@iucea.org](mailto:exsec@iucea.org); [ace2rfu@iucea.org](mailto:ace2rfu@iucea.org)