



CALL FOR RESEARCH GRANT PROPOSALS UNDER THE SUPPORT TO REGIONAL MULTI-ACTOR RESEARCH NETWORK (RMRN) PROJECT

1.0 Background

Agroecology has emerged as a critical and transformative approach for addressing Africa's persistent food and nutrition security challenges while simultaneously safeguarding environmental sustainability, biodiversity, and climate resilience. Across Sub-Saharan Africa, food systems are increasingly under pressure from climate variability, land degradation, declining soil fertility, loss of biodiversity, and socio-economic inequalities that disproportionately affect smallholder farmers, women, and youth. Conventional agricultural approaches have often struggled to respond adequately to these complex and interconnected challenges, highlighting the need for more holistic, inclusive, and sustainable food system solutions.

Agroecology offers such a pathway by integrating ecological principles, local knowledge, and socio-economic considerations into agricultural production and food system transformation. By promoting biodiversity, improving soil health, strengthening resilience, enhancing resource recycling, and fostering synergies within farming systems, agroecology contributes not only to increased and more stable productivity but also to improved livelihoods, nutrition outcomes, and environmental integrity. Importantly, agroecology emphasizes co-creation and sharing of knowledge among farmers, researchers, policymakers, and other stakeholders, making it particularly relevant for Africa's diverse agro-ecological and socio-cultural contexts. Despite growing evidence of the benefits of agroecology, its systematic integration into national agricultural policies, investment plans, and development strategies across Africa remains limited. This gap is often attributed to weak science-policy interfaces, insufficient policy-relevant evidence, and limited platforms for dialogue between researchers, practitioners, and decision-makers. As a result, agroecology is frequently under-represented in public investment frameworks and national agricultural development agendas, constraining its scaling and wider adoption.

Under the **NDICI AFRICA/2023/447-700 programme**, the Forum for Agricultural Research in Africa (FARA), in collaboration with the Regional Universities Forum for Capacity Building in Agriculture (RUFORUM), is implementing a set of coordinated actions aimed at addressing these gaps. The programme seeks to strengthen science-policy interfaces, support advocacy efforts, and enhance evidence-based decision-making to ensure that agroecology becomes an integral component of national and regional agricultural and food system strategies in Sub-Saharan Africa. By leveraging FARA's continental science agenda and RUFORUM's extensive network of universities, researchers, and Regional Multi-stakeholder Research Networks (RMRNs) and Regional Centres of Excellence for agroecology (RCoEs), the programme creates a platform for sustained engagement between science, policy, and practice.



A key element of this initiative is the provision of targeted financial support to selected researchers and scientists to generate applied, policy-relevant agroecology research outputs. This support is intended to enable the production of decision-support information, policy-oriented studies, and knowledge products that respond directly to the needs of policymakers, practitioners, and advocacy actors. The supported research will contribute to raising awareness, strengthening advocacy, and informing the integration of agroecology principles and practices into national agricultural investment plans, sector policies, and development programmes.

Through this approach, the programme aims to amplify African-led research and innovation in agroecology, strengthen the role of researchers as contributors to policy processes, and support evidence-based advocacy for sustainable, inclusive, and resilient food systems. Ultimately, these efforts will contribute to advancing agroecology as a recognized and prioritized pathway for achieving food security, environmental sustainability, and socio-economic development across the continent.

2.0 Objectives of the Call

The primary objective of this grant is to provide financial support to researchers and experts to conduct specialized studies that will contribute to the advocacy work and

- Feed into decision-support information systems for science-policy interfaces.
- Disseminate and publicize selected agroecology scientific/research outputs.
- Increase awareness and policy support for agroecological principles and practices.
- Demonstrate the contribution of agroecology to the transformation of African food systems.

3.0 Scope of Studies & Priority Areas

Proposals must directly address agroecology principles and align with African agricultural priorities.

Key areas include:

- Agroecological Principles, including but not limited to Biodiversity, soil health, recycling, synergies, resilience, and co-creation of knowledge.
- Policy Advocacy, strategies for the recognition of agroecology as an activity of national interest.
- The role of agroecology in food and nutrition security.
- Gender-sensitive outreach and social inclusion in agroecological practices.



4.0 Eligibility Criteria

This is a closed-competitive call restricted to applicants who meet the following criteria:

1. Applicants must be members of the RMRN/RCoE Consortium, PANAP Networks Member institution. Confirmation of institutional *or network affiliation confirmation is required*.
2. The call is open to students, early-career researchers, academic staff, farmer organizations, NGOs, or research institutes.
3. Applicants must be based in Africa, either through citizenship or institutional affiliation.
4. Applicants must demonstrate the ability to conduct applied research or community-based projects, including access to research sites and/or farmer networks.
5. Applicants must demonstrate compliance with research ethics standards, particularly when engaging with indigenous communities and traditional knowledge systems.

5.0 Financial Support & Modalities

- **Maximum Grant Amount:** Up to EUR 5,000 per selected proposal. A maximum of ten (10) proposals will be funded under this call
- **Eligible costs:** Funds may be used to cover:
 - Monthly stipend support special studies
 - Travel costs to attend national or international conferences for the presentation of research findings,
 - Costs associated with organizing visibility and advocacy meetings.
- **No-Profit Principle:** Grants are awarded in accordance with the no-profit principle as stipulated under the [PRAG](#) guidelines.
- **Financial Accountability:** All expenditures must be fully justified, reasonable and supported by appropriate documentation.

Duration of the Studies: Up to 30th November 2026

6.0 Application Requirements

Interested applicants must submit a complete proposal package comprising the following:

- **Technical Proposal:** A detailed description of the proposed research, including the methodology, alignment with agroecology principles, and the expected policy and /or community impact.
- **Budget:** A detailed and itemized budget outlining the requested funding (up to a maximum of EUR 5,000), with clear justification for each cost item.
- **Work Plan:** A realistic timelines indicating key activities, milestones and deliverables.
- **Curriculum Vitae:** CV of the Lead Applicant, highlighting relevant experience and expertise and any others that will handle key research areas, indicating 3 references
- **Proof of Affiliation:** Documentary evidence confirming membership in the PANAP Network or RMRN/RCoE Consortium.



7.0 Application Submission

Please submit your proposal through the official RUFORUM Information Management System (<https://rims2.ruforum.org/>).

Instructions for submission can be accessed on this [link](#)

8.0 Selection and Evaluation Process

Proposals will undergo a rigorous internal evaluation conducted jointly by FARA and RUFORUM. To be considered for selection, applicants must meet the set [eligibility and quality criteria](#).

Note: Final selection is subject to approval by the EC/INTPA Project Manager. Successful applicants will be required to sign a formal grant contract prior to project commencement.

9.0 Expected Outputs

Selected grantees will be expected to deliver the following outputs:

- Submission of high-quality research reports and/or publication of findings in reputable journals or other recognized knowledge platforms
- Presentation of research results at national and or international conferences, workshops or scientific forums.
- Active participation in agroecology dialogues, policy roundtables and stakeholder consultations to promote uptake of findings
- Contribution to the development or strengthening of decision-support information systems relevant to agroecology and sustainable food systems.

Timelines

Milestone	Date
<i>Call Launch</i>	27 th February 2026
<i>Information Sharing Session with PANAP Network, RMRNs</i>	11 th March 2026
<i>Application Deadline</i>	30 th March 2026
<i>Evaluation Period</i>	By 20 th April 2026
<i>Contract Signing</i>	10 th May 2026
<i>Onboarding</i>	15 th May 2026

For further information: Please contact: cgs@ruforum.org