



**UNITED NATIONS  
UNIVERSITY**

**UNU-INRA**

**Institute for Natural Resources in Africa**

## Home-based Scholars Programme

### *Unleashing the Potential of African Rural Economies through Green Growth*

**Organizational Unit** : United Nations University Institute for Natural Resources in Africa (UNU-INRA)  
**Reference Number** : 2015/UNU/INRA/CTC/(GE)/01  
**Applications to** : ***By Email:*** [recruit-inra@unu.edu](mailto:recruit-inra@unu.edu)  
**Closing Date** : 30<sup>th</sup> June 2015

#### **United Nations University Objectives:**

The United Nations University (UNU) is an international community of scholars engaged in research, postgraduate training and dissemination of knowledge in furtherance of the purposes and principles of the United Nations, its member states and peoples. It serves as a think-tank for the United Nations System, contributes to capacity building particularly in developing countries, and serves as a platform for new and creative ideas and dialogue. For more information please visit [www.unu.edu](http://www.unu.edu).

#### **The Institute for Natural Resources in Africa (UNU-INRA):**

UNU-INRA is one of fifteen Research and Training Institutes and Programmes established by UNU worldwide. The mission of UNU-INRA is to strengthen the capacity of African universities and research institutions to conduct research and produce well-trained, well-equipped and motivated individuals, capable of developing, adapting and disseminating technologies that advance food security and promote conservation and efficient use of the continent's natural resources for sustainable development. For more information, please visit [www.inra.unu.edu](http://www.inra.unu.edu)

#### **Background:**

Over the decades, economic growth has been a major concern of national governments in Africa and of the whole international community. In recent years, it has become evident and there is increased awareness that African countries cannot afford to pursue the path that neglects the environmental consequences of the growth process. There are many reasons for this. African countries are already severely impacted by environmental degradation and climate change. Growth is eroding natural capital which constitutes 25% of the total per capita wealth in these countries and thereby increasing risks to development. Soil erosion, drought and water pollution all have devastating effects. These challenges compound with those of increasing poverty, income inequalities and high unemployment. A paradigm for sustainable global development has emerged recently. It is the concept of green economy, which aims to pursue economic growth and development while preventing environmental degradation, loss of biodiversity and ecosystem services, and erosion of the natural resource base. Although the concept of green growth reconciles development and environmental protection, there is a lack of empirical evidences on how a green growth trajectory can address some of the major developmental challenges in rural Africa that include high unemployment, increasing poverty, environmental degradation, pollution, biodiversity loss, soil erosion and lack of access to energy.

### Request for Proposal Objectives:

In view of the above, the United Nations University Institute for Natural Resources in Africa with funding support from the International Development Research Centre (IDRC), invites proposals from qualified researchers for papers exploring the impact of green growth strategies on rural economies in Africa. We welcome papers from all disciplines, including economics, political sciences, and environmental sciences, as well as others that fit into the following four thematic areas:

1. Green business in rural Africa;
2. Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs) and resource efficiency, productivity and resilience in rural Africa;
3. Rural SMEs, biodiversity and ecosystem services;
4. Institutions and governance for environmentally-friendly business practices.

Although we have a priority for empirical papers, we also accept theoretical papers with strong policy orientations. Empirical papers may be single-country case studies or comparisons of group of countries; they may use historical evidence, survey data, cross and section/time series, experimental approaches, and other methodologies.

This request for research proposals aims at:

- Advancing the understanding of the impact of green growth strategies on employment, competitiveness, innovation in rural African from a business perspective;
- Generating analytical methodologies to understand the nexus between growth, environmental protection and social inclusion;
- Obtaining from the research community relevant evidence on green growth strategies including policy measures and instruments for (un)successful transition towards green economy in rural Africa.

### Some Examples of Potential Research Questions:

UNU-INRA has identified the following potential research questions under its priority thematic areas in green growth for rural Africa. Interested applicants can adopt and design research to address any of these.

#### *Thematic area 1: Green business in rural Africa*

- In what ways and through what measures could green business opportunities in infrastructure, livestock, fisheries, land and other natural resources sectors overcome the problem of growing unemployment in rural Africa?
- What are the opportunities for and constraints to environmental friendly investments in infrastructure such as transport, energy and shelter in rural areas and how can such investments boost labour productivity?
- What are the opportunities for and constraints to innovation in rural green businesses, and what are the implications for land and water management in rural Africa?
- What are the constraints to and opportunities for sustainable growth and expansion of SMEs in fisheries, farming and agro-processing in rural Africa?

#### *Thematic area 2: SMEs and resource efficiency, productivity and resilience in rural Africa*

- How to achieve resource use efficiency in fishery, agriculture and livestock in rural Africa and what is its impact on job creation?
- What are the policy options for increasing firm-level and aggregate productivity for rural green SMEs?

- How could resource use efficiency and resilience in agriculture, mining, fisheries and livestock contribute to improve labour and capital productivity?
- How can rural SMEs contribute to, and benefit from environmental friendly, quality infrastructure in rural Africa, including transport, energy and shelter?

*Thematic area 3: Rural SMEs, biodiversity and ecosystem services*

- What are the ingredients for an attractive business and investment environment for rural SMEs specialising in ecosystem services such as fish-breeding and coastal protection of coral reefs, water filtering, soil protection and carbon sequestration?
- How to leverage the potential of ecosystem services in rural Africa to appeal to SMEs in the area of land and natural resources management, including agriculture, forestry, water and mining?
- Through what channels / mechanisms does commercial ecosystem management contribute to inclusive growth?
- How could green entrepreneurship foster innovation in fishery and livestock management in rural Africa?
- What are the opportunities and challenges to public-private partnerships for ecosystem management in Africa?

*Thematic area 4: Institutions and governance for environmentally friendly business practices*

- What are the ingredients for an optimal institutional framework to promote labour intensive green business activities in rural Africa?
- What are the ingredients for an optimal institutional and legal framework to foster an insurance market around rural ecosystem management businesses and activities in Africa?
- What are the ingredients of the optimal incentive framework that promotes maximum productivity in land, natural resources and infrastructure management businesses while minimizing their negative impacts on environments?

**Contract Terms:**

Proposals in English or French are welcome from all researchers (individuals or groups), but priority will be given to researchers from African universities and research institutions.

Applications from suitably qualified women are particularly encouraged, as well as early-career researchers (PhD candidates and recent post-doctoral researchers).

Successful applicants will be issued UNU Consultants Contracts (CTC) to carry out a research over a period not exceeding six (6) months from their home institutions. A research honorarium will be paid upon delivery of satisfactory first and second drafts of the paper and a two- page policy brief summarizing the main research findings, depending on the qualifications of the researcher(s) and assessment of the proposal. Both of these deliverables must be deemed acceptable by the UNU-INRA project leader before payment will be made. The honorarium is expected to cover all expenses associated with the conduct of the proposed research (including data collection, lab experiments, research assistance, etc.). It is not required to submit a budget.

The papers will be considered for publication in the UNU-INRA Working Papers series (Subject to refereeing) and hence should be limited to 12,000 words or less.

Successful applicants may be asked to attend a 1-2 day review and knowledge sharing workshop (date and venue to be determined) where work in progress will be presented to other researchers for comments and contributions. Costs of attending this workshop will be borne by UNU-INRA in accordance with the United Nations University travel policy.

### **Format and Requirements for Research Proposals:**

Research proposals should be submitted, preferably by e-mail in a single Word or Pdf file:

The file name should have the following format: “**African\_Rural\_Green Growth\_Name of the lead researcher**”.doc/.docx/.pdf

All research proposals submitted either in French or English, should have the following format: proposals should be concise and presented in single-spaced, Arial 12- point font, with a maximum length of 3 pages of A4 paper (not including title and annexes). The following elements are mandatory:

- Preliminary title of the paper;
- Title, Name, address and contacts of the lead researcher, Name and address of the proponent institution ;
- General description of your proposed research (1/2 page max);
- Brief statement of your main research questions and a description of your main hypotheses to test your research questions (1/2 page max) ;
- Description of the methodologies that will be used to answer your research questions (1 page max);
- Description of your main data and data sources (1/2 page max);
- Description of how your proposed research makes a significant contribution to green growth knowledge for rural Africa (1/2 page max).

### Mandatory Annexes

- A1 - References
- A2 - Short one-page CVs of the lead researcher and proposed main team members (including details such as address, gender, nationality, date of birth)
- A3 - Short one-page introduction letter to demonstrate how the research leader/team has the skills and expertise to address the research questions posed

### **Evaluation of Research Proposals:**

UNU-INRA will evaluate each research proposal based on the following selection criteria:

- (i) Significant contribution to green growth knowledge for rural Africa (30%);
- (ii) Technical merit of the proposal (40%) and;
- (iii) Technical capacity of the researcher/research team (30%).

Applications will be ranked on the basis of the extent to which the relevant proposal meets the criteria. Based on this assessment, pool of suitable proposals will be determined. From this pool, accepted proposals will be drawn by a decision panel. The decision panel will consider additional criteria such as diversity of topics addressed and geographic and gender diversity. Only successful applicants will be contacted.

### **Publication and Copyrights Considerations:**

UNU-INRA will formally pursue several publication options after the selection of accepted proposals. The editorial team will draw from accepted proposals in order to develop a journal special issue and/or an edited volume to submit to a publishing house. The editorial team may contact successful applicants in the development of the special issues and/or edited volume proposal (such as the revision or shortening of papers, for instance).

While payment of the honorarium will be made upon delivery of the first and second drafts of the Paper and policy brief as mentioned above, the final version of the journal special issue and/or edited book will not be completed at that point. After payment has been made, researchers may be asked to:

1. Respond to reasonable requests by the publisher and/or editors to finalize the special journal issue/edited volume;
2. Participate in at least one knowledge-sharing event around the launch of the special journal issue/edited volume.

Payment of honorarium will transfer copyright of research papers produced to UNU-INRA. The purpose of this copyright transfer is to allow UNU-INRA to effectively negotiate with publishers of journals and/or books in order to seek the most desirable possible publication outlet for a related set of papers. However, all publications will bear the name(s) of the author(s). If no (further) publications are to be expected by UNU-INRA, the copyright can be returned to the author(s).

#### **Timelines (GMT - Greenwich Mean Time):**

06 May 2015	Announcement posted
31 May 2015	Final opportunity for sending questions on the request for research proposals
30 June 2015	Proposals due
15 July 2015	Target date for feedback on paper selection
01 August 2015	Target date for completion of necessary administrative procedures
30 December 2015	Target date for submission of the first draft
15 Jan -30 Jan 2016	Target period for work-in progress workshop
30 Feb 2016	Target date for submission of second draft
30 Apr 2016	Target date for submission by UNU-INRA of selected papers to journals and publishing houses. Knowledge-sharing events will be planned subsequently.

#### **Submission Process:**

1. Research proposals should be submitted, preferably by e-mail to [recruit-inra@unu.edu](mailto:recruit-inra@unu.edu)
2. Inquiries: Any inquiries should be directed to: [atewamba@unu.edu](mailto:atewamba@unu.edu)
3. Please do not provide a budget

#### **Notice:**

Due to the large number of expected applications, only short-listed candidates will be contacted. Unsuccessful applications can neither be acknowledged nor returned.

The successful candidate will not hold international civil servant status nor be a “staff member” as defined in the United Nations Staff Rules and Regulations. **UNU-INRA does not sponsor a working visa for this application.**

Applications from suitably qualified women candidates especially from developing countries are particularly encouraged.