



CALL FOR APPLICATION TO SUPPORT INNOVATIVE-ACTION-RESEARCH AND INCUBATION/ START-UPS IN RICE AND HORTICULTURE VALUE CHAINS IN TANZANIA

1. Background

The Regional Universities Forum for Capacity Building in Agriculture (RUFORUM), in collaboration with Sokoine University of Agriculture (SUA), is implementing a five-year MasterCard Foundation-funded programme known as TAGDev 2.0. This programme works with 12 lead African universities across Tanzania, Uganda, Kenya, Cameroon, Ghana, Nigeria, Benin, Morocco, Zimbabwe, South Africa, and Malawi. Its purpose is to strengthen the capacity of universities and TVET institutions to skill and empower young Africans, enabling inclusive and climate-resilient transformation of agriculture and agrifood systems.

Within this framework, SUA is implementing the Agri-food Systems and Entrepreneurship Development in Rice and Horticulture Value Chains (AGRIFOSE-RIH) project in Tanzania and the Nelson Mandela African Institution of Science and Technology (NM-AIST) is one of the collaborating partners in this national initiative.

As part of this collaboration, NM-AIST is inviting its innovators, qualifying for incubation, and those in ongoing incubation program in the NM-AIST Innovation-Based Incubation Centre to apply for innovation development funding support. The support will help incubatees and potential innovators to advance and develop start-ups and achieve market readiness in the rice and horticulture value chains.

2. Objectives of the engagement

The AGRIFOSE-RIH project will support NM-AIST participants whose innovations demonstrate clear potential for research advancement, prototype development, or commercialization. Successful applicants will receive supervision and guidance to refine their innovations and develop viable enterprises. Support will focus on innovations and services within rice and horticulture value chains, including but not limited to:

- i. Agriproduct processing and value addition,
- ii. Innovative extension and advisory services with ICT applications
 - a) Pest management services,
 - b) Soil health and testing services,
 - c) Agricultural input supply services and
 - d) Climate-smart agriculture (CSA) technologies
- iii. Digital technology in storage and warehouse services,

- iv. Harvesting and post-harvesting technologies and services,
- v. Agricultural wastes recycling technologies
- vi. Mechanization and irrigation infrastructure maintenance services,
- vii. Agricultural product-based food services, distribution and transportation,

3. General required qualifications of applicants

Applications are open to **NM-AIST incubates and Researchers who meet ONE of the following criteria:**

3.1 General Requirements

- i. Must be an NM-AIST-affiliated innovator with a potential solution (market-ready MVP, prototype) and currently enrolled for incubation at the NM-AIST Innovation-Based Incubation Centre.
- ii. Must have approved (MSc or PhD) proposal for action research that addresses at least one of the thematic areas stated in Section 2 above on rice and/or horticulture value chains.

3.2 Application Requirements

Applicants must submit:

- i. Innovation/Action research proposal (with approval letter from Dean/Supervisor).
- ii. Description and business plan/budget
- iii. Motivation letter explaining the intended outcomes and requested support.

3.3 Submission Deadline

All documents must be submitted by **Monday, 24th November 2025** to Incubation Management Office (IMO): incubation@nm-aist.ac.tz
Copy to project coordinators: kelvin.mtei@nm-aist.ac.tz and angela.mkindi@nm-aist.ac.tz.