



UNIVERSITY OF MAURITIUS

Call for Proposals -

Research to be conducted by Young Researchers/ Junior Policy Makers

Services Sector Development in SADC and ESA Region

1. Context

The Southern African Development Research Network (SADRN), a regional initiative funded by Canada's International Development Research Centre (IDRC) and managed by Trade and Industrial Policy Strategies (TIPS), has as objective to co-ordinate and deliver policy-relevant research in the southern and eastern African region.

The envisaged outputs of the SADRN in the medium term are as follows:

- Increase the supply of policy-relevant research in the SADC region;
 - Improve the policy relevance of research through strengthening the capacity of policy-makers to be discerning research 'users';
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- Develop an appreciation for evidence-based policy-making by engaging policy-makers in the design, specification, implementation and review of research projects; and
 - Build institutional capacity in key policy research institutes in SADC via the creation of Working Groups in focused thematic areas of research.

SADRN's research efforts are focussed within three broad thematic areas, namely:

- Industrial policy and sector development at the regional level;
- Service sector development and the impact on poverty; and
- Trade policy and its linkages to pro-poor growth.

The University of Mauritius (UoM) has been selected by TIPS to host the thematic research area on "**Services Sector Development and Poverty Alleviation**".

The Services sector is seen both as economically rational from the standpoint of an individual participant, and as economically beneficial to the society. Many services are key inputs to all or most other business e.g. infrastructure services such as energy, telecommunications and transportation; financial services which facilitate transactions and provide access to finance for investment; health and education services which contribute to a healthy, well-trained workforce; and legal and accountancy services which are part of the institutional framework required to underpin a healthy market economy. Thus, the service sector is fast becoming a key part of the investment climate, and can have a much wider impact on overall business performance and the level of investment, and hence growth and productivity in the economy. There's growing recognition that "services do matter" to developing countries, including African countries. The services sectors can be particularly important in terms of employment, because many are labour-intensive. Trade in services can improve economic performance and provide a range of traditional and new

export opportunities¹. As generally recognised, the development of the labour-intensive sector can help reduce poverty by generating labour-intensive growth (McCulloch, Winters and Cirera, 2001).

2. Call for Proposal

In April 2009, the UoM, called for research proposals from African Researchers and Academics from the SADC and ESA region. Five research proposals have already been selected for funding by the University. During the first week of May 2009, the University called for research projects by policy makers from the SADC and ESA region on the subject of “Enhancing Trade in Services” in the broader context of “Services Sector Development and Poverty Alleviation”. The deadline for this call is 25th May 2009.

Now the University is inviting proposals for research, which will improve policy relevance and build capacity at the same time. The objectives are two fold:

1. To build capacity of young researchers/academics to conduct research with policy relevance, and
2. To build capacity of junior staffs at Ministries who would, in the future, be part of the policymaking team, to bring about policy changes supported by research.

The idea behind this call for proposal is to bring academics with limited policy level experience to work with experience policy makers; and the young government employees, with limited capacity for research to work with experienced academics or experienced researchers from reputable research institutions. These studies are intended to narrow the gap that exists between academic research and the research needed by policy makers. On one hand policy makers do not have time to conduct research or do not have the skills to use academic tools to conduct research and on the

¹ Cali, Ellis and Te Velde (2008)

other hand, academics spend their time conducting academic research which are important for their promotion (i.e. published papers or conference papers) exercise and thus very rarely end up conducting policy relevant research.

Potential issues, which proposals could address, include the following:

- Better Infrastructure and Logistics to enhance development in the region
- Increasing exports of Services through movement of Natural Persons (Mode IV) – what should be done? Since the aim of SADC, by 2015, is to become a common market², which would involve movement of natural person, it could be interesting for researchers to start conducting studies in this area. However, selection of research proposals will by no means be limited to only this mode of services exports.
- How to attract Business Processes Outsourced by Developed Countries – Which Businesses? (Including Professional Services)
- Exports of Tourism and Medical Tourism – Synergies Among Institutions in the Country
- The Country as an Educational Hub – What Needs to be Done?

The potential issues indicated here are only few examples of what can be researched. Researchers should therefore not limit their choice to these topics alone.

² A common market is a customs union with common policies on product regulation, and freedom of movement of the factors of production (capital and labour) and of enterprise.

3. Requirements

It is expected that each proposal will include the following:

- Background: The ***policy context*** of the proposed research.
- Objective(s): A statement of the specific research objectives, the issues to be addressed, and the questions that would be answered
- Existing knowledge: A brief review of works already undertaken in the proposed context. Also the existing policy of the state on the research topic
- Proposed Methodology: a description of the proposed research methodology – surveys, interviews, econometrics, including a discussion of data requirement and availability (and, where necessary, data collection strategy)
- Results, value added, and policy relevance: Anticipated results and how they might contribute to knowledge, future research and especially ***public policy***.

The University of Mauritius intends to fund five studies. Only one proposal per country will be funded. Therefore the five studies will come from five different SADC/ ESA member countries.

Interested researchers should submit the following:

- CVs of the team members;
- Timeline of the proposed research, including a brief description of activities and timeline needed for each activity and the total duration of research project shall not exceed 4 months; and
- Each proposed research would be headed by a either the young academic or young staff at Ministries.

A bursary of ZAR 10,000 will be given for each selected proposal. These bursaries would be given to the young academics or the young government

employees and the fund can be used towards funding incidental costs related to the research³.

4. Selection Criteria

The selection of the proposals will be based of the highest marks obtained in terms of both quality of proposal and experience of the senior researcher/policy maker. 25% of marks will be assigned to experience of researchers/ policy makers and 75% of marks to quality of proposals.

Marks will be allocated for each of the following sections of the proposals: problem statement (10), in-depth knowledge of the sector (or sub-sector) of that country (15), methodology to tackle the problem (25) and policy relevance of the outcome (25).

5. Submission of Proposal and Important Dates

Proposals should be submitted electronically to the project coordinator:

Sawkut Rojid – s.rojid@uom.ac.mu

The deadline for submitting proposals is June 15th, 2009.

Selected researchers will be notified by June 20th 2009

The first draft of the study is due on September 10th, 2009

The Submission of the final study is on 15th November 2009.

Copies of the studies will be distributed during a policy workshop on services which will be held in December 2009.

³ The Bursary will be paid as follows: 30% Of payment will be made on acceptance of proposal, 20% on submission of interim report and the remaining 50% on submission of final report.

Technical questions regarding the call for proposal and the inception workshop can be directed to the members of the co-ordinating team:

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