

WOLAITA SODO UNIVERSITY
OFFICE OF THE VICE PRESIDENT FOR RESEARCH AND TECHNOLOGY
TRANSFER
GUIDELINE FOR THEMATIC RESEARCH PROJECT (TRP) PROPOSAL DEVELOPMENT

GENERAL DIRECTIONS

Please read carefully the directions given in this document and include all the mandatory sections in your thematic research proposal. As your proposal will be forwarded to anonymous reviewers, the clarity of your proposal matters a lot for it to be evaluated/assessed successfully. Craft your thematic research proposal by strictly adhering to the directions in this document. Detailed elaboration of what your proposal must include is given below:

1. TITLE OF THE TRP

The title should:

- be concise, specific, and descriptive of the research's focus and approach
- include relevant keywords that align with the field of study
- highlight the main question the research addresses and the potential impact of the findings
- Self-explanatory
- Free of redundancies such as 'a study of.....or 'an investigation of.....
- Free of any abbreviations/acronyms
- Maximum of 20 words

2. TEAM COMPOSITION (*NOT TO BE INCLUDED IN PROPOSAL DOCUMENT*)

Team members must be organized in such a way that it addresses multi/inter-disciplinary expertise, senior-junior staff mix, gender fairness (25% proportion) and inclusion of PhD and/or Masters students.

Thematic research project (TRP) coordinators and sub-project leaders cannot assume the same role for other projects in the given fiscal year, but they can be members in three other projects. ***DO NOT SHOW names of thematic research project (TRP) coordinator, sub-project leaders and members in your proposal document.***

3. TOTAL AMOUNT OF GRANT REQUESTED (ETB) _____

- Budget ceiling for small-scale TRP = Max. 300,000.00
- Budget ceiling for medium-scale TRP = Max. 1,000,000.00
- Budget ceiling for large (grand) TRP = Max. 3,000,000.00

4.

DURATION OF THE TRP	
COMMENCEMENT	END
DD/MM/YYYY	DD/MM/YYYY

5. SUMMARY OF THE TRP

This is an overview of the intentions of the project, the actions that would lead to the desired outcomes. This section includes background, problem including of why the topic was chosen, methods, expected outcomes and envisaged impacts (max. 1/2 page).

6. PROBLEM STATEMENT OF THE TRP

Introduce the problem

- Start with a hook-compelling fact
- Provide evidence of the problem-1 or 2 sentences (how it affects individuals, communities, or systems)
- Offer a brief history and the current state of the problem and explain why existing solutions are inadequate.
- Demonstrate how you are equipped to address the problem
- Convey the urgency of addressing the problem now and briefly mention the positive outcomes your project aims to achieve (max. 1.5 pages).

7. OVERARCHING GOAL OF THE TRP

This is to uncover, analyze, and report on patterns or themes within a dataset to provide deeper insights and understanding of the research topic or issue. This process involves systematically identifying recurring ideas, meanings, or patterns within the data and then interpreting them to draw meaningful conclusions (20-50 words).

8. OVERALL METHODOLOGICAL APPROACHES OF THE TRP

Provide an overview of the general methodology to indicate the actions of the research components fit together. Briefly describe the study approach and design, the sampling methods applied, the data collection methods employed (include a description of where and how data will be collected, quality assurance measures, length of data collection process and problems encountered in conducting the study), what methods will be used to analyze the data (max. 2 pages).

9. SUB-PROJECTS-OVERVIEW AND MAIN FOCUS

- Minimum three maximum six sub projects are required in a TRP
- Please give attention to the following points while writing the sub-projects
 - Title of the sub-project
 - Aim of the sub-project and how it aligns with the overarching goal of the TRP
 - The link with other sub-projects in the TRP
 - Methodological approaches, operational steps and key deliverables of the sub-project (Min 3, max. 6 pages).

10. STAKEHOLDER ANALYSIS

Identify key stakeholders relevant to your study, describe how they are interested, influence and benefit from the proposed TRP. In addition, elaborate how the identified stakeholders can engage in the proposed study (stakeholders' engagement strategy). Describe how the TRP is co-created with stakeholders and what steps you would take to create conditions for uptake of the resulting new knowledge, services or applications (max. 2 pages).

Stakeholder analysis: describe and analyse the **key** stakeholders that will be involved in, or will benefit from the project. These include both internal (inside WSU but external to the TRP team) and external (outside WSU) stakeholders, and direct and indirect beneficiaries.

Stakeholder	Interest/influence	How will the stakeholder be involved in the project (stakeholder engagement strategy)

11. IMPLEMENTATION PLAN OF THE TRP

Describes documented steps needed to successfully complete the work packages (activities) including, target dates, responsibilities, budget and assumptions. Craft your implementation plan in such a way that it:

- gives awareness of what tasks need to be accomplished in the project
- convinces the reviewers/funder that you have a logical and well-thought-out plan to carry out reasonable project activities that will lead to the desired outcome (i.e., your methods are sound & most suitable to address the problem)
- describes the status of the project at any given time

Please use the following template to summarize your TRP implementation plan:

TRP TITLE									
Sub-projects/objectives/activities	Timelines				Target group	Resources needed	Budget	Lead Responsibility	Assumptions (Based on possible risks)
	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4					
Sub-project 1 (SP1)									
Objective 1.1									
Activity 1									
Activity 2									
Activity 3									
Objective 1.2									
Activity 1									
Activity 2									
Activity 3									
Objective 1.3									
Activity 1									
Activity 2									
Activity 3									
Sub-project 2 (SP2)									
Objective 2.1									
Activity 1									
Activity 2									
Activity 3									
Objective 2.2									
Activity 1									
Activity 2									
Activity 3									
Objective 2.3									
Activity 1									
Activity 2									
Activity 3									

Sub-project 3 (SP3)									
Objective 3.1									
Activity 1									
Activity 2									
Activity 3									
Objective 3.2									
Activity 1									
Activity 2									
Activity 3									
Objective 3.3									
Activity 1									
Activity 2									
Activity 3									

12. MONITORING, EVALUTION, ACCOUNTABILITY AND LEARNING (MEAL)

Monitoring, Evaluation, Accountability, and Learning (MEAL) are used to assess the progress, impact, and effectiveness of the TRP project. It involves systematically tracking progress, evaluating outcomes, ensuring accountability, and using findings to learn and improve. MEAL is crucial for demonstrating the impact of interventions, making adjustments, and fostering continuous improvement within organizations and systems (1 page).

13. RISK IDENTIFICATION AND MITIGATION/MANAGEMENT

A risk is any uncertain event or condition (internal or external) that could affect the achievement of the project objectives (it is something that can happen and if it does, it will force to change the way the project coordinator and the team work on the project. Risk identification involves proactively identifying potential issues, threats, and challenges that could impact the project's success, ensuring the research is feasible and effective. This process helps in developing strategies to mitigate or avoid these risks. Risk mitigation involves proactively addressing potential issues that could affect the project's success. This includes identifying risks, evaluating their likelihood and impact, and developing strategies to minimize their negative consequences (max 1 page).

14. SUSTAINABILITY

Sustainability is the ability of a project to continue delivering benefits after the funding is over (the project impact should continue). WSU want to see how the project and its impact will outlive their direct involvement in the project. **Example:** A project trains 50 new mothers on infant nutrition. After the training, these mothers will then share their knowledge with other mothers, children, and neighbor's in their communities (max 1 page).

15. QUALITY ASSURANCE MECHANISMS

Involves implementing strategies to ensure data integrity, quality, and reliability throughout the research process. This includes preventing errors, establishing procedures, and ensuring adherence to ethical and compliance standards (max. 1 page).

16. ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS

Protecting participants' rights and well-being, ensuring transparency, and maintaining research integrity. Key elements include informed consent, confidentiality and anonymity, minimizing harm, and responsible data use. Researchers must also be mindful of their role and potential biases, ensuring a reflexive approach to data collection and analysis. Ethical clearance must be obtained from the WSU Institutional Research Review Board (IRRB) and the relevant concerned institution in the case of human and animal involvement, as well as the use of genetic materials from plants and animals. The proposal must describe the risks involved, the levels of damages to which the research subjects are exposed to and the assurance of mitigations. In addition, studies involving documentation of indigenous knowledge must assure access and benefit sharing to the owners of the knowledge (max. 1 page).

17. THEORY OF CHANGE (ToC)

Draw a model that outlines how the TRP is expected to lead to desired outcomes. Map the the causal relationships between activities, outputs, outcomes, and impacts, explaining the logic of how the TRP will contribute to change. Essentially, a ToC helps visualize and understand the project's intended impact and the steps needed to achieve it (max. 1 ½ page).

18. DISSEMINATION PLAN

The dissemination plan should outline how findings of the TRP will be shared with relevant stakeholders, including academic peers, policymakers, and the public. It should include methods like publishing in mainstream scientific journals, presenting at conferences, creating online resources, and engaging with stakeholders through events and media (max 1 page).

19. WORK PLAN

Describe detailed indicative operational plan (IOP) of your TRP using Gantt chart (max 1 page).

20. BUDGET

Winning research proposal will be granted with Seed Money from the 2018 E.C. fiscal year government recurrent budget. Researchers are encouraged to solicit other funding possibilities to compliment the limited budget from government treasury.

Applicants are encouraged to propose a feasible and realistic budget as per the fixed budget ceiling in Section 3 of this guideline. All **line items must list the unit cost and quantity of that item**. A notes column for each line item must explain how both the unit cost and quantity are being estimated. Show **the proposed total budget** with breakdown. **The budget will be released in three phases: *Phase 1*: 25% of the 1st year budget shall be released within a few days of signing of contractual agreement for winning proposals. *Phase 2*: A further release of 50% of the overall budget shall be executed at the end of the second quarter of the fiscal after mid-term evaluation of the project progress. *Phase 3*: the remaining 25% shall be released before final validation workshop at the end of third quarter of the fiscal year** (max 1.5 pages).

A. EQUIPMENT AND CONSUMABLE

No	Item	Unit	Number/ Amount	Unit price in	Total price in
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			Total	Birr	Birr
1					
2					
	Sub-Total				

B. PERSONNEL COSTS

Please use government per-diem rates for your specific study areas for researchers, field technicians, and driver(s). Please also use government daily rates for laborers and local field assistants.

No	Type of activity	Unit	Total Number/ Amount Total	Unit price in Birr	Total price in Birr
1					
2					
	Sub-Total				

C. FUEL COST

While estimating fuel cost, please consider how much fuel the currently available vehicles under the VPRTT office consume per kilometer.

No	Budget line	Unit	Quantity	Expenditure	
				Unit cost	Total cost
1					
2					
	Sub total				

D. BUDGET SUMMARY

No.	Budget Item Description	Total cost
1		
2		
	Sub total	
	Contingency (5%)	
	GRAND TOTAL COST (In Birr)	

For projects with more than one year duration, please book the estimated budget summary annually for each budget line using the table below.

BUDGET SUMMARY FOR PROJECTS WITH MORE THAN 1 YEAR DURATION

No.	Budget line	Year I	Year II	Year III	Year IV	Total
1	Equipment and consumables					
2	Personnel cost					
3.	Fuel cost					
	Total					

21. REFERENCES

All materials used in the compilation of the proposal should be referenced (max. 3 pages). Please use American Psychological Association (APA) citation and referencing formats consistently.