



MOUNTAINS OF THE MOON UNIVERSITY

DIRECTORATE OF GRADUATE STUDIES, RESEARCH & INNOVATION

RESEARCH AND INNOVATION FUND (MMU-RIF-4)

CALL FOR PROPOSALS 2026/2027

1.0 BACKGROUND AND CONTEXT

Mountains of the Moon University is implementing a five-year strategic plan 2025/26 – 2029/30 with a vision to be **A centre of excellence in teaching, research and community engagement for sustainable development**. The strategic objective 2 of the plan focuses on strengthening collaborations and partnerships in providing innovative and transformative education and research.

In addition, the University put in place a Research Agenda 2023-2028 concretizing the niche areas of action plan to provide a conducive environment to conduct transformative research and innovation. The incremental delivery of high-quality research with the funds allocated in the University budget is a crucial ingredient to attracting a wider internal and external donor support and partnerships base to accelerate research-led growth in the University, the region and beyond. Projects with clear action plan for translating the research results into community solutions are highly regarded in this call.

The Directorate of Graduate Studies, Research and Innovations (DGSRI) working closely with Faculties and administrative units is maintaining a research portfolio that entrenches a paradigm shift through four strategic directions:

- i. Creating synergies with peer and premier universities nationally and beyond at institutional and individual levels.
- ii. Recruitment, development and retention of outstanding researchers at all career stages.
- iii. Production, translation and transfer of knowledge and technologies.

- iv. Adoption of a 'systems approach' to managing the research and innovation function.

National and international development agenda instruments such as, National Development Plan IV (NDPIV), Vision 2040, Africa Agenda 2063, the Sustainable Development Goals 2030 strongly spell out the role of research as a driver to national development. In congruence, Universities play a central role in realization of transformative research and sustainable development.

The Government of Uganda (GoU) allocated special funding to MMU to support high impact research and innovations towards commercially viable products and services and community impact solutions. The overall result framework should lead to commercial products/services/community solutions geared towards contributing to MMU research agenda, NDPIV, and other development aspirations.

The University's direction is to maintain the innovation fund under the Directorate of Graduate Studies, Research and Innovation (DGSRI) and the faculties to manage basic research funds. The faculty in FY2026/27 will access research funds through two approaches: (1) under this Research and Innovation Fund (RIF) competitive call for proposals targeting innovative solutions to address society challenges, and (2) faculty funds to address basic research and theory that is necessary for laying essential ground for future technological and innovation breakthroughs. The emphasis for this call is on innovative ideas worked on by multidisciplinary teams across faculties and departments geared to delivering complete products that address the needs of society.

The DGSRI will provide guidance, and coordinate the research funds utilization across the entire university.

With this funding from the GoU, the MMU-RIF 2026/27 grant is expected to deliver the following outputs:

- i. Up to 10 innovations or startups rolled out to the community/commercialized by first quarter of 2027/2028
- ii. A minimum of 20 publications in peer reviewed Journals
- iii. Increased research capacity for staff and students

- iv. Increased number of graduates at higher degrees
- v. Increased visibility of MMU and linkage to industry and community

The DGSRI therefore, invites applications for the MMU Research and Innovation Fund Four (MMU-RIF IV) in any priority areas in the university research agenda for the year 2026/27.

The call for proposal is published on this day Tuesday July 07, 2026 and will expire on Friday 7th August 2026 at 11:59pm EAT.

The MMU-RIF grant is expected to deliver results within **6- 12 months** and will strictly support **high impact research and innovation projects**. Involving students at all levels of the innovation is pre-requisite for obtaining the funds. Core team members earmarked for each proposal MUST commit themselves at the time of submission.

2.0 OBJECTIVES AND SCOPE

2.1 Objectives

The objectives of the MMU-RIF4 programme include the following:

- a) To enhance staff capacity and skills to engage in research and academic writing
- b) To foster interdisciplinary/multidisciplinary research within the university research agenda thematic areas.
- c) To enhance the university's visibility through impactful innovative solutions.

2.2 Scope

The call will support projects focusing on the priority areas enlisted in section 3 of the MMU Research Agenda 2023-2028, and aligned to the University Strategic Plan 2025/2026 – 2029/2030, and National priorities as stipulated in NDP IV, in addition to crosscutting issues and novelty ideas.

3.0 Grant Categories

In the FY 2026/27, Ten (10) MMU-RIF projects will be awarded through a competitive selection process.

CATEGORIES	AMOUNT (UGX)	NUMBER OF PROJECTS	NOVELTY RESEARCH	INNOVATION DEVELOPMENT	TOTAL (UGX)
CAT 1*	30,000,000	10	0	10	300,000,000
Cat 2*	0	0	0	0	0
TOTAL		10	0	10	300,000,000

* Category 1 – Multidisciplinary/interdisciplinary transformative research and Innovations funded through this call

* Category 2 – Basic research is currently funded under Faculties

4.0 APPLICATION AND ELIGIBILITY

4.1 Application process

i. Research proposals must be submitted electronically (by email) to MMU.RIF2026@mmu.ac.ug by Saturday, 7th August 2026, 11:59PM East African time zone.

Note: A proposal sent directly to any of the directorate's staff if found out SHALL BE Ineligible for consideration as that will have potential to cause CONFLICT OF INTEREST during processing. The Research Grants Management Committee will not consider applications submitted by any other means. The Directorate advises applicants to prepare their submissions on time.

ii. The proposal shall be written in Times New Roman in font size 12, single spaced and normal margins.

iii. Proposals should not exceed 25 pages

4.2 Proposal sections

- i. **Title page** bearing a complete research study title of not more than 20 words, name(s) of Key Researchers and indicating the PI and Co-PI, department and faculty of the staff involved and project team members including one from industry, one from the community and one student.

ii. **Project summary.**

Please elucidate the problem and focus of the innovation idea, summarizing the main ideas and intended research gaps or challenges/opportunity to be addressed/exploited by the innovation and how it will be executed. Highlight the uniqueness of your idea that makes it outshine existing solutions or approaches while appreciating potential risks and their mitigation. What are the key benefits, and who are the potential beneficiaries taking into consideration national priorities and MMU's overall strategy? (Maximum 500 words)

iii. **Background and Context**

Describe the current context, defining the problem or a challenge your project aims to address and/or a new idea that has potential to drive growth or efficiency. The project idea should address the national priorities stipulated in NDP IV and MMU's strategic plan 2025/26 – 2029/30 (Max: 200 words)

iv. **A problem statement/development challenge** of not more than 3/4 a page

Explain the uniqueness and/or the innovativeness of your project idea and how this will lead to better outcomes for MMU's stakeholders, local communities and the nation. Specifically address any of the following outcomes:

- Outcome 1. MMU develop technologies and solutions that impact positively on society and improve university image. How might your project idea leverage on science and technology, tourism, wildlife and community heritage as opportunities to catalyze business, energy and minerals as drivers of national development.
- Output 2. MMU technologies commercialized
How will you translate your innovative idea into practical application, marketable products, and impactful solutions addressing both local community and national priority challenges? Who have you identified in

the private sector to be early adopters of your innovation and how do you expect your innovation adoption to spread in the private sector? How can we protect innovations at MMU? How might you secure private equity to fund commercialization?

- Outcome 3. MMU students well-grounded and graduate with market relevant skills suited for the changing international and local markets. How will the proposed idea lead to imparting technical or soft skills to students with in one or more of the programs offered at MMU?
- Outcome 4. MMU graduating students with entrepreneurial skills. Describe how your project will inculcate a culture of entrepreneurship to students early on in their programs. How does the project ideas lead to building the capacity of staff and students to experiment or innovate and offer solutions to community and industry problems?
- Outcome 5. MMU innovations and recommendations integrated into policy Frameworks. How will you demonstrate that your proposed idea is truly addressing a stakeholder-identified problem? What innovative way(s), including practical guidelines, can be followed in making sure that the right problem is being solved? Is the scope of your proposed idea/innovation practical within a 12-month timeline? How might you test your innovation, strengthening your understanding of the challenge and building your network? Consider non-traditional partners such as farmers, private-sector organizations, etc.

v. Objectives/research questions

State your project description, goal and objectives. (maximum 200 words)

Describe / present / discuss possible questions relevant to this area of innovation (with reference to MMU's research agenda and national priorities). (Maximum 400 words)

vi. Justification for the research

What is the justification for the innovation idea (how does it solve any one of the local community problems and/or MMU's strategic objectives and national strategic objectives as stipulated in NDP IV and Vision 2040)?

(Maximum 400 words)

vii. Research Scope

Briefly define the boundaries of innovation idea. Specifically, the scope should identify the specific problem to solve, target users and the necessary

resources. Is the scope aligned to the national goals as depicted by NDP IV?
(Maximum 300 words)

viii. Expected outputs

Motivation. Briefly explain the potential outputs of your innovation idea.
(Maximum 200 words)

ix. Methodology

Describe your innovation design, proposed activities and methods. (Maximum 300 words)

x. Implementation plan.

Define the milestones depicting a detailed action plan, risk assessment and contingency plan, and clear communication plan (Maximum 400 words)

xi. To include cross cutting issues. E.g., on gender, explain how your innovation idea addresses the different needs, expectations, experiences and perspectives by gender throughout the entire innovation process and dissemination, the sharing of benefits, reducing existing gender gaps, and preventing new forms bias and discrimination. How might you leverage on existing opportunities to incorporate in your idea actions that improve energy efficiency and reduce gas emissions, actions that impact positively on climate change effects and/or environmental sustainability and management.
(Maximum 400 words)

xii. Dissemination Plan. Explain your output dissemination strategy/knowledge management (maximum 200 words)

Identify the strategies for knowledge management and access. What are the proposed communication strategies for promoting the project and its findings? Show how they will be tailored to the needs of the various stakeholders and where relevant, include the measures for public/society engagement on issues related to the project.

xiii. Deliverables. Briefly describe the deliverables and the period of delivery.
(Maximum 200 words)

- xiv. **Project Team:** Interdisciplinary and inclusive project teams comprised of partners from academia, local communities, governments, non-governmental organizations, and industry are encouraged. Briefly describe the expertise and competencies of proposed team members and their roles. (Maximum 300 words)

Note: If successful, the applicant will be the team lead and participate online training workshops in Human centered design (HCD) principles. There will be opportunity to modify teams after the initial workshop featuring human-centered design training.

- xv. Relevant and up-to-date references using APA 7 edition.
- xvi. Detailed Budget with justifications

4.3 General Eligibility

- i. Lead applicants (PI) shall be full time academic staff of Mountains of the Moon University.
- ii. Individual researchers or research teams will be required to attach a letter of support from the Head of the academic unit under which the lead researcher is tenured.
- iii. Researchers from other institutions of higher learning are not eligible to apply as principal investigators (PI) or as co-PI but can be collaborators.
- iv. The PI shall be active in service (not on study or sabbatical leave).
- v. Elements of mentorship must be strongly reflected in the application so that young researchers will be seen to be brought on board in the University.
- vi. A researcher cannot be a PI on more than **ONE** application in each category. It is allowable for any person to be a team member on up to a maximum of three applications.
- vii. For each application, it is a requirement to indicate a co-Principal Investigator who will be co-signatory to the contract upon award and will be jointly responsible for the results; the requirements for one to be a co-PI are like those required of a PI.

4.4 Eligible Expenses

- i. Acceptable expenses are those normally associated with research: data collection, experimental work, analysis, report writing, computing costs; equipment; development of new research technology and dissemination (Piloting, exhibiting etc).
- ii. Multi-year projects should indicate so but should only submit a budget for one financial year.
- iii. Requests to fund article processing charges will be handled on case-by-case basis, however, this will only happen for manuscripts that are written and ready for publication, or in the publication pipeline (accepted or in press). The grant will only cater for publications in peer reviewed journals indexed by recognized publishing houses (Index by Scopus, web of science, google scholar, ResearchGate among others)
- iv. Under personnel costs, researchers should not budget for salaries for staff who are on government payroll because this will constitute double payment, however, a budget for key critical project staff (Graduate Fellows, Research Assistants, Project Coordinators) not under the government payroll can be included in the budget.
- v. Researchers should submit a clear work plan with clearly marked deliverables within the project lifespan. These will be used for the budget implementation and monitoring. A budget template is provided to guide in coming up with detailed breakdown.

4.5 APPLICANT'S CURRICULUM VITAE

Applicant to submit a recent CV indicating competencies and referees with particular reference to the proposed activity

4.6 DESIGN TEAM

	Name	Title	Affiliation	Address/Contact
Team Member 1				
Team Member 2				
Team Member 3				
Team Member 4				
Team Member 5				

- **At least one member is from industry** (both private and public sectors), one from community and one member is a student

5.0 SELECTION AND ASSESSMENT PROCESS

5.1 Selection

The selection will follow a two-stage process:

Stage I

All proposals will undergo an eligibility check by the assigned staff of the DGSRI, and the eligible proposals will undergo an independent evaluation system. The evaluation will involve technical blind peer-review process where each proposal will be assigned two external reviewers with expertise in the given field. The reports from the external reviewers will be reviewed and assessed by the Grants unit and select the best ten based on the set criteria in this call.

Stage II

The final shortlist of awardees will be presented to the Projects Preparation and Grants Development Committee (PP&GDC) for consideration. The RGMC reserves the right to determine/change the number and size of awards based on prevailing circumstances informed by demand, quality of applications, availability of funds and level of utilization of funds by grantees. The RGMC will ensure that there is equitable distribution of the research projects.

5.2 Assessment Criteria

A Summary of assessment and merit criteria for blind peer review is given as follows:

MERIT CRITERIA	MARKS	REMARKS
Contribution to Uganda's Development Priorities	10 Marks	- Detailed plan for contributing to one or more of the objectives and targets of Uganda's NDP IV and Vision 2040 – scientific output, employment creation and MMU's focus on Agriculture, Tourism and Environment (ATE) - Anticipated economic social and/or environmental benefits arising from the project, period
Research problem and questions	15 Marks	Is the problem well defined? Does the research/innovation problem have a clear link to the national development priorities? Is the problem aligned with the thematic priorities of the University Research Agenda? Is the innovation significantly different from

		ongoing solutions/approaches that are currently already in use to address the challenge? Please comment on the outcomes of the project idea and how these will lead to better outcomes for MMU's stakeholders, local communities and the nation. Specifically does the project outcomes contribute positively to <u>any</u> of the following expected <u>five</u> outcomes: • <u>Outcome 1.</u> MMU develop technologies and solutions that impact positively on society and improve university image. How might the project idea leverage on science and technology, tourism, wildlife and community heritage as opportunities to catalyze agriculture, business and energy as drivers of national development. • <u>Outcome 2.</u> MMU technologies commercialized: How is the innovative idea expected to translate into practical application, marketable products, and impactful solutions addressing both local community and national priority challenges; Whom has the team identified in the private sector to be early adopters of the innovation and how does the project team expect innovation adoption to spread in the private sector? Has the team put up a clear strategy on how to secure private equity to fund commercialization of the proposed innovation? • <u>Outcome 3.</u> MMU students well-grounded and graduate with market relevant skills suited international and local labour markets. Has the team described well how the proposed idea will lead to imparting students with technical or soft skills in one or more of the programs offered at MMU?
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		• <u>Outcome 4.</u> MMU graduating students with entrepreneurial skills. Has the team come clear on how the proposed project idea will inculcate a culture of entrepreneurship to students early on in their programs? How does the project ideas lead to building the capacity of staff and students to experiment or innovate and offer solutions to community and industry problems? • <u>Outcome 5.</u> MMU innovations and recommendations integrated into policy Frameworks. Has the team been able to demonstrate that the proposed idea is truly addressing a stakeholder-identified problem? What innovative way(s), including practical guidelines, can be followed in making sure that the right problem is being solved? Is the scope of the proposed idea/innovation practical within a 12-month timeline? How might the team test the innovation, strengthening their understanding of the challenge and building their network? Has the applicant put into consideration r non-traditional partners such as farmers, private-sector organizations, etc., in the proposed framework of integrating the recommendations into policy?
Objectives	10 Marks	• Please comment on the applicant's clarity on explaining the project's goal and objectives? Are the objectives linked to the problem stated? Are the objectives SMART? Does the applicant present and discuss any research questions? Comment on their relevance, consistency and originality. How pertinent are the objectives/questions in addressing MMU's priority objectives and thereby contributing positively to MMU's outcomes?

Methodology	15 Marks	Are the methods appropriate? Is the proposed research design and/or activities includes participant insights? In addition, does the proposed innovation consider the problem as a multi-faceted issue (i.e., a system)? If not, does the design and/or activities have the potential to include either aspect (i.e., gather end-user insights, analyze problems as systems)? Are the proposed methods rigorous and/or robust? Note: The call does not support purely basic research that is focused on research tools that do not eventually provide solutions to community challenges and/or development and testing of new ideas that that improve productivity and efficiency, and or strengthen resilience with a focus on improving the livelihood of the communities and university stakeholders including students
Application of human centered design principles	10 Marks	Are target users consulted and involved in the implementation of the project Plans for getting feedback, data and information expected to be generated by the innovation Risks anticipated and mitigation strategies
Addressing cross cutting issues	5 Marks	Has the applicant been able to address crosscutting issues such as impact of proposed innovation on gender disparity and preventing new forms of bias and discrimination, environmental sustainability and management and addressing negative effects of the innovation on climate change and green gas emissions?
Budget Justification	10 Marks	Please review the budget and comment on the applicant's ability to deliver on the proposed deliverables given the available resources: resource envelop, expertise, and time (12 months). Is the budget detail justified given the expected outcomes? Does the available funding match the actual demands of the study? Comment on the

		team's capacity to build collaboration and partnership arrangements that improve the project's credibility to attract resources for a larger impact and sustainability of the project by leveraging on resources (Cash and in-kind) from partners/industry. Does the innovation costs are estimated accurately, reducing the risk of underfunding that could halt the research midway. Do the expected innovation outcomes and impacts justify the financial investment?
Main deliverable(s) & Dissemination	15 Marks	Is there perceived change in the communities that can be attributed the innovation Will the project have a feasible output in terms of a journal manuscript/Utility model or patent?
Design Team	5 Marks	Is there clarity and rationality for the role of each team member. How inclusive and diverse is the design team (e.g., gender, field experience) such that an interdisciplinary innovation will be created to address a multi-faceted issue? Is there evidence of multiple different disciplines integrating diverse perspectives and expertise leading to enhanced innovations and better outcomes. Is the proposed collaboration likely to foster innovation and creativity
TOTAL Score	100 Marks	

To this call, the pass mark for blind peer review shall be 60%, however, grants will be awarded based on the availability of funds and on a competitive basis.

6.0 NOTIFICATION OF SUCCESSFUL APPLICANTS

Successful applicants will be informed by email from the DGSRI. Regrets will be sent to the unsuccessful candidates.

7.0 POST-AWARD PROCESS

Due to the urgent need of results from the grant, the DGSRI will conduct several post-award activities before the release of the funds to the grant beneficiaries:

- i. Awardees will attend an online training in financial grant management and accounting for research grant.
- ii. Since the funding is from the GoU, awardees will be required to develop a procurement plan for key project items.
- iii. All awardees will sign a contract with the Director DGSRI.
- iv. All projects will be required to provide a summary, objectives and team members to DICT for the creation of a weblink to the project.
- v. The release of project funds will be in phases subject to proper accountability and achievement of key project milestones and budget releases by GoU.
- vi. The Grants Management Unit will track project deliverables and accountability. Consistent failure to demonstrate deliverables or utilize funds might lead to the decision of issuance of unspent balances to other grantees or reserve/data bank projects.
- vii. Awardees to participate in online workshops to integrate Human Centered Design (HCD) in the research/innovation process

NOTE: The Directorate of Graduate Studies, Research and Innovation operates on open door policy. Comments for continuous improvement of the University Research and Innovation fund implementation for Inclusive, equitable, transparency, value for money, and accountability dimensions are always welcome.



Prof. Bagamba Fredrick

Graduate studies, Research and Innovation