**SOROTI UNIVERSITY**

**DEPARTMENT OF GRADUATE STUDIES, RESEARCH AND INNOVATIONS**

**RESEARCH AND INNOVATIONS FUND (SUN-RIF)**

**REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS (RFP)**

**Round 2, 2025/2026**

*(Deadline for submitting proposals is Friday 29 August 2025 at 5.00 pm EAT)*

1. **Background**

In the Financial Year (FY) 2025/2026, Soroti University has received a special funding – *The Research and Innovations Fund (RIF)”*- from the Government of the Republic Uganda to support high impact applied/translational/development research that contributes to the socio-economic transformation agenda of the country. The Fund is reserved for research and innovations that lead or contribute to marketable and scaleable products, technologies or approaches to solve identified problems in our communities. In Quarter 1 of FY 2025/2026, Soroti University has allocated UGX200 million (Two hundred million Schilligs only) for research and research-supporting activities.

**Soroti University is therefore requesting proposals from all its eligible staff**. The proposals should clearly be linked to provisions in the fourth National (Uganda) Development Agenda (NDP IV), SDGs, and Soroti University Research and Innovations Agenda 2024/2025 – 2029/2030. The main objective of the RIF is to support research and innovations that contribute to better delivery of national development programs.

1. **Eligibility**

All teaching and non-teaching staff of Soroti University with **at least a Masters degree** are eligible to apply. Multi-disciplinary and engendered teams are encouraged. Only staff of Soroti University can apply as Principal Investigators (PIs). Employees of other Ugandan institutions (like universities, research organizations, local governments, NGOs, etc) can be co-opted into research teams as co-investigators. A member of staff cannot be a PI in more than one proposal. However, the PI can be a team member in a maximum of two other proposals. Non-PI staff can be members in a maximum of three proposals. All proposals should include at least one undergraduate student (where applicable). **Female staff and those who did not receive Grants in SUN-RIF Round One, are encouraged to apply**.

1. **Management of the Fund**

The RIF is managed by a Grants Management Committee (GMC) appointed by Soroti University Top Management. The GMC is responsible for sourcing, selecting and issuing grants to winning research teams. The grants shall be awarded in four categories as follows:

1. *Category 1* - **Applied Research**: In this category, the University looking for proposals that address specific and practical problems in our communities. The research should generate tangible benefits to the targeted communities by applying scientific principles to real-world contexts. **In this Category, the University proposes to fund 6 to 8 proposals, each with a budget ceiling of UGX50 million.**
2. *Category 2* - **Translational Research**. Though translational research can be viewed as a sub-set of Applied Research (Category 1), for the purpose of this RFP, The University is seeking proposals where researchers and innovators have already obtained requisite data as a proof-of-concept, and now require funding to validate their studies to a level of scientifically tested prototype(s) that can scaled at industrial level. The applicant should provide a summary of what was achieved in the prior research clearly justify and show the point at which the present proposal is continuing from. A letter of support from the previous funder (if possible) may be submitted. **In this category, the University proposes to fund 2 to 3 proposals, each with a budget ceiling of UGX50 million.**
3. *Category 3* - **Institutional Development Research**: In this Category, we are seeking proposals that lead to development of new tools/approaches/technologies/methods/models for better delivery of services in Higher Education Institutions. **In this category, The University proposes to fund 2 to 3 proposals, each with a budget ceiling of UGX20 million.**
4. *Category 4*: **Master’s Degrees Focused Research**. Soroti University does not currently have Masters degree programs. Yet supervision of graduate students (Masters, Ph.D) is a requirement for promotion of staff to the ranks of Associate and Professors. Currently, there are few Associate Professors and Professors in Soroti University, especially at the School of Health Sciences. In this Category, we therefore, propose to fund Masters degree students registered in a relevant graduate medical program in other public universities **on condition that the students are not already funded and qualified staff of Soroti University are accepted as their co-supervisors, and co-authors in all publications.** The research funds for students shall be managed by a staff of Soroti University who will be a co-supervisor. The funds shall be utilized to support only field data collection, field supervision, data analysis, thesis writing and preparation of manuscripts. **In this category, the University proposes to fund 2 to 3 Masters students, with a budget ceiling of UGX15 million per student.**

The GMC reserves the right to: i) Advise successful applicants to revise their budgets as deemed necessary based on the available funds; and ii) Revise the number of grants to be awarded per category. All awardees shall sign a contract and will receive guidelines and training on the use of the funds.

1. **Research Themes**

For this RFP, the priority themes are:

*Thematic Area 1:* Non–communicable Diseases, including lifestyle diseases, stroke, cancers, and mental health.

*Thematic Area 2:* Infectious Diseases.

*Thematic Area 3:* Pediatrics and Child Health.

*Thematic Area 4:* Renewable Energy.

*Thematic Area 5:* Artificial Intelligence, Block Chain, Intelligent Sensing and Cybersecurity.

*Thematic Area 6*: Municipal Solid Waste Management.

*Thematic Area 7*: Institutional Development.

*Thematic Area 8*: Green Accounting and Corporate Governance.

1. **Guiding Principles**

Like other RIFs supported by the Government of the Republic of Uganda in other public Universities, this Grant is guided by the following principles:

1. **A commitment to results and impact:** The expectation is that researchers will address the most pressing development issues and that the findings generated will be of use to policy makers, government program implementers or the private sector. Research teams ought to demonstrate attainment of tangible and useful deliverables within FY 2025/2026.
2. **Equity and inclusion:** Affirmative action will be taken to ensure that all Schools and all non-teaching Units of Soroti University will benefit from the Fund, provided they submit high quality proposals. The GMC will also ensure that women researchers and junior staff are well represented. However, equity will not mean equal allocation, because the nature, capacity and cost of research and innovation initiatives differs markedly across disciplines.
3. **Multi-disciplinarity:** The development challenges the Government of the Republic of Uganda is seeking to solve through this RIF require more than the effort of one sector. It is therefore important that applicants demonstrate a multi-disciplinary approach in their team composition.
4. **Accountability and utilization of funds:** To protect the University’s and the researchers’ reputation, accountability for the RIF will be of utmost importance. All funds disbursed should be accounted for in a timely way and to acceptable standards. The GMC will therefore regularly track all awardee performance. Researchers with substantial accountability arrears and those who do not utilize allocated funds, in the absence of an acceptable justification, shall be stopped from accessing these funds.
5. **Components of the Proposal**

Use the attached Grant Application Form (**Annex 1**) for preparing the proposals (except for Category 4). **Carefully read the brief guiding notes provided in the respective sections.** Applicants are encouraged to prepare proposals not exceeding 20 pages (excluding the cover page, workplan and budget).

For Category 4, the proposal or concept note shall follow the guidelines and formats of the University the student is enrolled in. However, the students shall submit their proposals or concept notes through a staff of Soroti University who will be a co-supervisor. The student should also provide a letter of support from his/her Head of Department or Program Coordinator or Dean stating that : a) he/she is a registered Masters degree student, b) he/she has successfully done the requisite coursework, c) the proposal or concept note has been presented and approved by the Department, c) their University accepts to co-opt a qualified staff of Soroti University as co-supervisor of the student(s), d) Soroti University shall be acknowledged in the thesis and all publications, and e) the student is not sponsored for similar activities. Additional collaborative frameworks (where necessary) shall be developed with the University where the student is registered.

1. **Budget**

Use the Budget Template given in Annex 2. Remember to fill in the budget justification to explain the rationale of computation of the different budget items. Because these are government funds, do not include institutional overheads in the budget. Budgets should not spread beyond FY 2025/2026.

The budget may include the following:

* Personnel costs
* Travel
* Supplies and services
* Equipment
* Program activity costs
* Dissemination

Under personnel costs, applicants should not budget for ‘Salaries’ for staff of Soroti University or another Government of Uganda institution (whether on permanent or contract terms) as this would constitute double payment from government funds. Such researchers can budget for ‘activity-based’ time input or ‘level-of-effort-based’ costs for their additional time input into the project. The latter should be justified by specifying the extra-time demands from the project for everyone involved.

Applicants can budget (if necessary) for salaries of critical project staff not paid by Soroti University or the Government of the Republic of Uganda e.g., Project Administrative Assistant etc. The total personnel costs should **not exceed 30 percent of the total budget.** Field research assistants (or data collectors), if needed, should not be included under ‘Personnel Costs’ but should instead be included under ‘Program Activity Costs’. All salaries and all repetitive allowances will be subject to mandatory statutory deductions at source, such as relevant taxes. The level of efficiency (value for money) in the budget will be a major evaluation criterion. Lumpsums will not be accepted.

1. **Workplan**

Use the Workplan Template given in Annex 3. In case your activities extend beyond the FY 2025/2026, ensure that you request for all the funds allocated to you by June 30, 2026.

1. **Evaluation of Proposals**

The proposals shall be evaluated in three steps as follows:

* *Step 1:* Will involve determination of eligibility and check for plagiarism. This will be conducted by the GMC Secretariat to select only those proposals that meet the eligibility criteria specified in Section 2.
* *Step 2:* Will involve a detailed technical review of each proposal by two credible reviewers; one internal and one external. The review process will take a cross-disciplinary approach in which in addition to a subject matter expert, a reviewer from another discipline relevant to the research idea proposed will be engaged. Reviewers will evaluate/score proposals using a standardized criteria given in Table 1. The reviewers shall be blinded on the name of the PI and the research team of the proposal being evaluated.
* *Step 3:* Presentation of best proposals from Step 2 to GMC. The GMC will then select the best scoring proposals. This will be strongly guided by the scores and recommendations from Step 2. However, the GMC may consider additional aspects like clear equity between the Units (Schools, Directorates, Departments), consideration of gender and junior staff, the budgets and the funds available. Where a member of the GMC is a PI or a member of a research team, he/she should declare a conflict of interest when such proposal is considered during GMC selection meeting.

**Table 1. Evaluation (grading) criteria for proposals**

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Category** | **Criterion** | **Score** |
| 1. The problem | * Is the problem clearly articulated
 | \_\_/5 |
| * Does the problem clearly align to a priority theme for this RFP?
 | \_\_/15 |
| 2. The proposed solution | * Is the proposed solution aligned to the problem? Is the proposed solution aligned to the research theme specified in this RFP?
 | \_\_/5 |
| * Is the idea innovative? Does it have the potential to improve the way things are done?
 | \_\_/10 |
| 3. Technical Approach/ Methodology | * Are the objectives clear and attainable?
 | \_\_/5 |
| * Is the methodology clearly articulated? Does the methodology have a sound scientific basis? Is the methodology appropriate to the research/innovation questions?
 | \_\_/20 |
| 4. Anticipated results/Impact | * Is there a clear articulation of results expected from the project?
 | \_\_/5 |
| * Are there clear deliverables to show within this FY 2025/2026?. Are the deliverables worth the funding – value-for-money?
 | \_\_/5 |
| 5. Team composition | * Does the research team have adequate technical capacity/expertise to execute the project including multi-disciplinarity where needed?
 | \_\_/3 |
| 6. Capacity building | * Empowerment: Are women researchers included on the team? Are young staff included on the team?
 | \_\_/2 |
| * Is there provision for capacity building through mentorship of students or young staff?
 | \_\_/3 |
| * Does the proposal describe ways in which the capacity of the Unit (Department, School or Directorate) will be strengthened?
 | \_\_/2 |
| 7. Dissemination plan and scalability | * Is there a clear articulation of a dissemination plan or a scaling plan or a commercialization plan
 | \_\_/5 |
| * Does the dissemination/scaling plan show anticipated impacts to policy or programs or to society beyond the project?
 | \_\_/5 |
| 8. Feasibility | * Is the project viable, implementable, with the potential to have significant milestones? Is it ethically and environmentally sound?
 | \_\_/5 |
| * Is the budget realistic and feasible? Are the budget items rational (i.e., not over-budgeted or under-budgeted?
 | \_\_/5 |
|  | **TOTAL SCORE** | \_\_/100 |
| 9. | *Is this work publishable in a refereed journal?* | Yes/No |
|  | *Can this work lead to a patent?*  | Yes/No |

1. **Intellectual Property**

Intellectual Property derived through research from this Grant will be managed as per Soroti University Intellectual Property Management Policy 2022.

##### ****Roadmap****

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| **Milestone** | **Date** |
| 1. Issuance of RFP through e-mail, Soroti University website, staff WhatsApp group, notice boards, etc
 | 14 August 2025 |
| 1. Q & A sessions via telephone, e-mail, WhatsApp chats. Supported by GMC Secretariat
 | 14 - 28 August 2025 |
| 1. **Closing date for receiving proposals through both e-email and hard copy (*early submission is encouraged)***
 | **29 August 2025** |
| 1. Screening of proposals for eligibility and plagiarism
 | 1 September 2025 |
| 1. Conference of internal and external evaluators
 | 12 September 2025 |
| 1. GMC meeting and selection of winning proposals
 | 19 September 2025 |
| 1. Award notification
 | 22 September 2025 |
| 1. Signing contracts
 | 23 – 26 September 2025 |
| 1. Induction of awardees
 | 29 September 2025 |

1. **Post Award Support**

The Department of Graduate Studies, Research and Innovations, and Office of the University Bursar provide technical support to awardees on the following areas:

1. Financial management and accounting procedures;
2. Procurement procedures;
3. Preparing manuscripts, patents and policy briefs; and
4. Any other areas voiced by awardees during the grant implementation period.
5. **Submission procedure**

Submit the following documents:

1. A Cover Letter addressed to the Chairperson, Grants Management Committee, Soroti University
2. Completed Grant Application Form
3. Budget
4. Workplan
5. CV of the PI only (Maximum 4 pages, use the template provided in Annex 4)

**THROUGH**

E-mail. francis.ejobi@sun.ac.ug. Copy to: wokello@sun.ac.ug. Save all documents in one file as pdf*.*

**AND**

A hard copy delivered to Room 222, Level 2, Multi-Purpose Block, Soroti University Please remember to sign the Hand-in Register.

The deadline for submitting proposals is **Friday 29 August 2025** at **5.00 pm East African Time.**

1. **Further Information**

For further information about this RFP, please call +256-772-492236, +256-782-835956 or send e-mail to: francis.ejobi@sun.ac.ug, wokello@sun.ac.ug