Re-advertisement

Call for applications for PhD positions available under betterseed project

I. Background

The University of Rwanda, College of Agriculture, Forestry and Food Science (UR-CAFF) and the University of Liege (Belgium), are implementing the *BetterSeed* project in partnership with Northern (Université Libre de Bruxelles, Louvain Coopération au Développement) and Southern (Rwanda Agriculture and Animal Resources Development Board, Université Catholique de Bukavu) partners, with the funding from the Académie de Recherche et d'Enseignement Supérieur (ARES).

II. The Objectives

The objective of the BetterSeed Project is to strengthen the regional capacity to produce vegetatively propagated crops with a focus on cassava. It means increasing and securing yields as well as developing capacities to provide farmers with high-quality planting material. To develop affordable solutions for small scale farmers, it is also key to develop capacities in research to explore low input solutions that are locally adapted. Novel methods for high-quality seed multiplication need to be tested by local institutions and implemented in close collaboration with local farmers.

III. Funding

Parts of the BetterSeed funding will be devoted to offering PhD training at the University of Liège in partnership with the University of Rwanda. Studies will be conducted in the sandwich mode Rwanda/Belgium.

IV. Role and Description

In line with the project objectives, two PhD positions are open:

i. One PhD in Socioeconomics;
ii. One PhD in Soil Microbiology, Fertilization and Plant Physiology.

V. Application requirements

1. General requirements for applying for a PhD position:

i. Be a Rwandan;
ii. Permanent staff of UR will be given priority
iii. Having a relevant MSc degree from a reputable institution;
iv. Justifying proven experience in research preferably with publication in non-predatory journals;
v. Be ready to work in an interdisciplinary environment;
vi. Be ready to undertake doctoral studies (in the sandwich mode Belgium/Rwanda) at the University of Liège;

vii. Be prepared to return back to Rwanda immediately after receiving a letter confirming satisfactory completion of the degree to serve in Rwanda; this commitment must appear in the application letter;
viii. Be prepared to assume the responsibilities assigned to him/her by the BetterSeed project team during stays in Rwanda and report his progress, each semester, to the School of Agriculture and Food Sciences at the UR-CAFF;
ix. Proficiency in English;
x. Be not older than 40 years for males and 45 years for females;
xi. Female candidates are encouraged to apply.

VI. Specific requirements

1. Specific requirements for the PhD in Socioeconomics:

i. Familiarity with common software packages used in socioeconomics: Stata, SPSS, R, etc.
ii. Aptitude for designing and analyzing data in socioeconomics;
iii. Familiarity with the Rwandan agricultural landscape and policies;
iv. Familiarity with fieldwork in socioeconomics;
v. Having information on common agricultural experimental designs.

2. Specific requirements for the PhD in Soil Microbiology, Fertilization and Plant Physiology:

i. Proven experience in the soil laboratory, microbiology work or plant biology;
ii. Familiarity with crop production practices;
iii. Familiarity with software packages commonly used in plant biology;
iv. Aptitude to design plant production and performance studies;
v. Knowledge in plant molecular biology;
vi. Knowledge in plant physiology.

VII. Application mode

The application dossier must contain the following documents:

i. Application letter addressed to the Director of the UR Center for Postgraduate Studies (CPGS);
ii. Equivalence, if you did your previous studies abroad
iii. Motivation letter highlighting gained knowledge and skills relevant for the specified PhD position; it must also show reasons for interest in the program;
iv. Curriculum vitae (maximum of three pages);
v. Three recommendation letters from senior academic staffs who know the applicant's area; one of them must be issued by a previous academic supervisor;
vi. Academic transcripts for the Masters' and undergraduate studies;
vii. English proficiency certificate;
viii. Copy of national ID or passport.

VIII. How to apply and Key dates

The application documents, presented in a one pdf file attachment, must be submitted, not later than **November 10, 2026, at 4 pm** to the Scholarship Officer; at the following email address:

ur-cpgscholarship@ur.ac.rw (Tel: 0792988304) with a copy to ***v.p.bigirimana@ur.ac.rw,*** **and on Telephone number: 0783147949** ***and*** ***Herve.Vanderschuren@uliege.be***. The subject for the application email must be *Application for a PhD position in BetterSeed Project + Applicant's name.*

Shortlisted candidates will be contacted for interviews.

Done at Kigali, on 27/10/2026

UNIVERSITY OF RWANDA - UR

Assoc. Prof. KAYIHURA Muganga Didas
Acting Vice Chancellor