



Sustainable Healthy Diets
Through Food Systems
Transformation



RESEARCH CENTER FOR INCLUSIVE
DEVELOPMENT IN AFRICA

Call for Competitive Small Grant Proposals for MSc Student Research

Background

SHiFT, the Sustainable Healthy Diets through Food Systems Transformation initiative, is focused on addressing the challenges and opportunities within global food systems to achieve sustainable and healthy diets for all. SHiFT confronts issues like poor diet quality worldwide, which is a major factor in various forms of malnutrition and associated with a significant number of premature adult deaths. SHiFT's response is to address the demand-side of food systems and environments, aiming to stimulate the demand for and supply of nutritious, safe, affordable, and sustainably produced foods, thereby improving livelihoods, gender equity, and social inclusiveness. The initiative plans to generate new evidence on the drivers of food consumption, identify and test scalable innovations and policies, support transformative policy development, and strengthen the capacity of stakeholders in guiding food systems transformation.

Objective

In collaboration with the Research center for Inclusive Development in Africa (RIDA), a non-profit research organization registered in Ethiopia, the initiative aims to support Masters Students through a small MSc research grant. This grant aims to support **up to six (6) Masters Research projects** on topics related to food systems and food environment as depicted in the conceptual framework in **Figure 1**.

Research Topics

Qualitative, quantitative, or mixed methods research studies clearly linking diet quality and food systems will be considered for funding. Examples of research topics being targeted include

The small research grant will give priority to funding research focusing on:

- characterizing food consumption, dietary patterns, and the nutritional and health status of consumers
- Characterizing food environments of marginalized populations
- how food environments shape dietary patterns, and how consumers shape food environments
- generating evidence on the state and key drivers of — and inequalities in — consumption of sustainable healthy diets and nutrition and health
- developing measurement tools and analytical methods of assessing food consumption and, or the food environment

More specifically, the small research grant will be interested in funding studies that aim to address questions like the following (not exhaustive):

Research questions objective 1:

- What are the food consumption and dietary patterns and the nutrition and health status of marginalized households and individuals?

- How, where, and why do they procure food?
- Which individual and household factors shape these outcomes?

Research questions objective 2:

- What are the key characteristics of food environments with which marginalized populations interact?
- How do food environments shape household dietary patterns? What is the relative importance of different food environments characteristics in shaping demand?
- How do consumer preferences and characteristics shape food environments?

Research questions objective 3:

- How can existing national food environment - and consumer-focused policies, innovations, and dietary guidelines be strengthened to better support sustainable healthy diets?
- What is the impact of existing and new policies, innovations, and guidelines on sustainable healthy diets? Which of these are most scalable?

Grant award amount

The maximum grant award per student is 6,500 USD and should be used to cover only direct costs related to the research project. The project's value for money will be seriously considered. *For example, if project A is budgeted as 4000 USD and project B is budgeted at 6500 USD, and both projects provide same or equivalent value, project A will be selected. However, applicants should also ensure that the budget requested is realistic and allows them to execute the work proposed.*

Application procedure

Eligibility- Applicants must be enrolled in a graduate program leading to a Master's degree. Applicants should have completed all course-work and are eligible to start their MSc thesis.

Proposal content

The proposal should be a maximum of 5 pages (excluding references) and should include:

Title (a), objectives (b) and relevance of the project to the concept of food systems and healthier diets (c) - (max. 1 page)

- Title of the project that summarizes the core subject of the proposal;
- Objectives and rationale that describes the goals and purpose of the project;
- An indication of how this research will be relevant to policy and/or practice;

Methodology (d) and outcomes of the research (e)-(max. 2 pages)

- Methodology describing how the research will be conducted and what methods will be used;
- Statement on who this research will impact and how the research results may be linked to ultimate users of the information;

Timeline (f) and budget (g)-(max. 2 pages)

- Timeline of the project;
- Budget in relation to travel for data collection, materials, and supplies, etc.
- References- (max 15 references)

Submission

The grant application should be submitted by email to executivedirector@ridadev.org. The deadline for submitting the application is **February 15, 2024 at 23:59 East African time (GMT+3)**. Please indicate "grant proposal on food environment research-Ethiopia" in the subject

line. The proposal must be signed by the head of the applicant's department and the applicant's supervisor and should be sent as a PDF

Document. The applicants' CV (max 4 pages) and reflecting the applicant's full name in the file name should also be sent. Only complete applications will be accepted. Late proposals will not be accepted.

Evaluation

Proposals will be reviewed and evaluated by an advisory group made up of researchers involved in the food systems' research.

Key criteria considered will include the following:

1. The proposal has a clear focus on food systems and diet quality
2. Objectives, outputs, and outcomes are clearly articulated
3. Appropriate research methodology/methodologies are proposed and clearly articulated
4. A realistic research work plan indicating when deliverable milestones would be expected and should including a manuscript for publication submission.
5. Best value for money
6. Evidence of support from the applicant's home institution and that the topic will contribute to their mission/objectives. The proposal must be signed off by the head of the department of the applicant's institution, and the student's supervisor in addition to a senior finance manager acknowledging their support of the applicant applying for the small grants award.

Announcement of awardees

Only those applicants selected for the award will be contacted. Awards will be announced by March 2024.

