



The Forum for Agricultural Research in Africa VACANCY Announcements

Post-Doctoral Fellow (Innovation Systems): *Ref: FARA/adv./05/Postdoc/2014*

FARA is the Forum for Agricultural Research in Africa, an umbrella organization bringing together and forming coalitions of major stakeholders in agricultural research and development in Africa. FARA complements the innovative activities of national, international and sub-regional research institutions to deliver more responsive and effective services to its stakeholders. It plays advocacy and coordination roles for agricultural research for development, while the national agricultural research systems (NARS), advanced research institutions (ARIs) and international agricultural research centres (IARCs) develop and promote the adoption of improved technologies and policies along the research-to-development continuum in their respective countries and jurisdictions. Since it was established in 2002 FARA has been able to develop several African-wide initiatives through consultation with stakeholders.

Wageningen University and Research Centre (WUR) is a research institution that works across the globe in the field of agriculture, food, and natural resource management. It combines top quality fundamental research with an applied orientation geared towards improving quality of life. It fosters close collaboration between the natural and the social sciences in order to understand and achieve responsible innovation and development.

FARA and WUR invite applications for the position of Post-Doctoral Fellow, researching e-Agriculture for development in the context of Humidtropics R4D platforms in East Africa. Following the rapid development in ICT and the internet in East Africa, a new field of e-Agriculture is emerging which holds the promise of empowerment of local farmers, new possibilities for democratisation of everyday practices through participation, and increased accountability and legitimacy. The aim of the research is to better understand the potential of mobile technology for improving downward accountability and upward legitimacy related to communication and innovation processes in Research for Development (R4D) platforms. The expectation is that mobile phones can enhance inclusive agricultural innovation and development in East Africa if we better understand the nature of the use of mobile phones by various stakeholder groups. The research would cover the questions such as: What hinders the take-off of mobile applications for communication between R4D platform representatives and the stakeholder groups they represent (including attention for different level of resources, age, literacy, and gender)? How are mobile phones and their use shaping communication and innovation processes in East Africa? What social implications – access, power, inclusion, and exclusion – of mobile phones can be identified in local practices? What limiting and enabling conditions of ICT-mediated communication exist in the light of varying socio-cultural, technical and institutional contexts? What can we realistically expect from e-Agriculture in terms accountability and legitimacy of innovation system performance; and in what form can mobile technology enhance development processes in R4D platforms in East Africa?

Purpose

The Post-doctoral fellow (Research) will conduct the study within the context of R4D platforms in the Humidtropics Program. Humidtropics is a CGIAR Research Program on Integrated Systems for the Humid Tropics. This global program targets systems that affect up to 1.5 billion rural people, most of whom operate within smallholder farming systems in which livestock and production are intimately linked. Through R4D platforms, the program aims to enhance the exchange and integration of knowledge and

perspectives between various rural actors and scientists, to identify new exciting options for agricultural development, strengthening the capacity of poor and vulnerable people to improve their livelihoods and living environment. Innovations should focus on aspects of sustainable intensification of agriculture, enhancement of the natural resource status, and improving income to smallholder farmers.

The successful candidate will conduct the research in the East and Central African Action Areas of the Humidtropics. S/he will work in close collaboration with other institutes engaged in this research programme and be supervised by the Strategic Priority 1 Leader at FARA plus the chair of the Knowledge, Technology and Innovation group at Wageningen University

Duties and responsibilities

The postdoc shall perform inter-alia the following duties and responsibilities:

- Preparing a research proposal
- Conduct a literature review on communication and innovation processes in agricultural systems as well as the role of e-Agriculture (including mobile technology) in these processes in the African context.
- Performing field research on the use of mobile phones by various groups of stakeholders (farmers, policy makers, private sector), and the role the mobile phones play in enhancing knowledge exchange, negotiation and down-ward accountability and legitimacy of R4D platforms in the East and Central Africa Action Area of the Humidtropics program
- Organizing regular exchanges on the research progress and insights for further theoretical and practical reflection with actors who facilitate R&D platforms within the Humidtropics program
- Write scientific articles for publication in high quality scientific journals.
- Contribute to technical reporting on the project, proposal development and any other duties within the scope of work.
- Communicating research findings to various audiences (policymakers, scientists, practitioners, private sector, etc.)

Education and Experience

Interested Applicants must have a minimum of PhD in social sciences, agricultural extension and rural sociology, anthropology, political sciences, communication studies or any other field related to African agriculture development. The candidate should have an excellent record of scientific publications in high quality scientific journals. Proven experience in the use of both qualitative and quantitative tools and methods to understand agricultural innovation processes and African livelihood and farming systems. Furthermore, knowledge of multi-stakeholder processes is important. Excellent English speaking and writing skills with French working knowledge will be an added advantage. Readiness to stay longer periods in the Netherlands and East Africa for theoretical study, field research and writing of scientific publications and other reports. Working independently and using own initiatives to execute the responsibilities of the position. Good interpersonal skills and experience working in multi-cultural and multi-disciplinary teams are essential.

Duty Station: Kigali (Rwanda) or Bujumbura (Burundi) with regular visits to WUR

General information: This position is for one year, with extension option based on availability of funds.

Compensation:

FARA offers a competitive remuneration package, according to experience and qualifications.

Applications

Qualified candidates are invited to submit via email comprehensive Curriculum Vitae together with a motivation letter and names/contact details of three referees to: Dr. Yemi Akinbami, Executive Director, FARA, PMB CT 173, Cantonments, Accra, Ghana. Email: recruitment@fara-africa.org. Applications will be accepted up to 15th **June 2014**.

Please use the job title and reference in the subject line of your email. **Due to anticipated high volume of applicants, only shortlisted candidates will be contacted. Applications which do not meet the stated criteria will be rejected.**

FARA Affirmative Action Statement on Employment

There is no discrimination on the basis of gender race, religion, ethnic orientation, disability or health status. FARA is an equal opportunity employer and particularly welcomes applications from women.