

## CONCEPT NOTE

# 2<sup>ND</sup> EAST AFRICA REGIONAL WORKSHOP ON MASTERING RESEARCH PROPOSALS: INTEGRATING TRANSDISCIPLINARY APPROACHES FOR IMPACTFUL RESEARCH

31 May – 3 June 2025

Nairobi, Kenya

### ORGANIZED BY:



**futureearth**  
Research, Innovation, Sustainability  
**Africa Hub**  
Leadership Centre



**ISTIC**  
INTERNATIONAL SCIENCE, TECHNOLOGY AND  
INNOVATION CENTRE FOR SOUTH-SOUTH  
COOPERATION UNDER THE AUSPICES OF UNESCO



**TECHNICAL UNIVERSITY OF KENYA**  
Education and Training for the Real World

### IN COLLABORATION WITH:



**National  
Research  
Foundation**

**futureearth**  
Research, Innovation, Sustainability.



**MASENO  
UNIVERSITY**  
Fountain of Excellence



**BELMONT  
FORUM**

### HOSTED BY:



**TECHNICAL UNIVERSITY OF KENYA**  
Education and Training for the Real World

## BACKGROUND

---

In conjunction with Sustainability Research and Innovation Congress (SRI) 2025, the International Science, Technology and Innovation Centre (ISTIC) under the auspices of UNESCO, the National Research Fund, Kenya, the Future Earth Africa Hub, and its Leadership Centre supported by the National Research Foundation South Africa, the Technical University of Kenya (TUK), together with the Maseno University, EPIC-Network and the Belmont Forum have joined forces in a collaboration dedicated to enhancing the sustainability of research ecosystem across countries in the global South, specifically in the region of eastern Africa.

This initiative aims to address the critical need to elevate research capacities and funding opportunities by organizing a specialized training workshop focused on "Mastering Research Proposals: Integrating Transdisciplinary Approaches for Impactful Research." The workshop will address two fundamental needs:

1. **Proposal Writing for Transdisciplinary Research:** The workshop is designed to equip researchers with the skills necessary to craft high-quality proposals for transdisciplinary research. This type of research integrates insights and methods from multiple disciplines to address complex sustainability challenges that cannot be solved from a single perspective. Effective proposal writing is crucial for securing funding and communicating the value and feasibility of these integrative research projects.
2. **Building Capacity for Impactful Research:** By focusing on transdisciplinary approaches, the training aims to enhance the ability of researchers to develop proposals that address pressing sustainability issues such as climate change, food and water security, and poverty. This capacity-building effort is essential for empowering researchers to produce impactful, cross-disciplinary solutions and for fostering collaboration across diverse fields and sectors.

The need for this training stems from the observation that many researchers in the global South face significant challenges in securing funding for innovative, cross-disciplinary research. The competitive nature of grant applications and the complexity of proposal requirements necessitate targeted support to overcome these barriers.

This workshop will provide early to mid-career researchers with practical skills in proposal writing, specifically tailored to the nuances of transdisciplinary research. By enhancing their ability to develop persuasive and well-structured proposals, the training aims to increase their access to funding and support impactful research initiatives that contribute to sustainable development.

This strategic initiative seeks to bridge the gap in research funding and capacity, ultimately fostering a culture of excellence and collaboration in sustainability research across the global South.

## OBJECTIVES

---

The key objectives of the training are to:

1. Develop participants' skills in crafting clear, persuasive, and compelling grant proposals.
2. Provide an understanding of the grant landscape by providing insights into the overall landscape of grant opportunities, various funding sources, and the expectations of different funding agencies.
3. Guide participants in understanding the essential components of a grant proposal, including project design, objectives, methodologies, and expected outcomes.
4. Share relevant case studies and best practices in grant writing proposal writing, offering real world examples that illustrate successful approaches.
5. Encourage collaboration among participants, fostering a supportive network for ongoing assistance and collaboration in the realm of grant seeking.

## TARGET GROUP

---

Early to middle-career researchers (EMCR).

## METHODOLOGY

---

The training will adopt a participatory approach, combining lectures, interactive discussions, practical exercises, and case study analysis. Participants will be encouraged to bring their own project ideas for hands-on application of the skills learned during the sessions.

## DURATION

---

The proposed training programme is a 4-day workshop, allowing for in-depth exploration of key concepts and providing ample time for practical exercises and discussions.

## VENUE

---

The Technical University of Kenya (TUK)

## EXPECTED OUTCOMES

---

1. Improved understanding of the process and skills in crafting clear, compelling, and well-structured proposals;
2. Enhanced skills in crafting persuasive and impactful project narratives;
3. Enhanced ability to navigate the grant application process, leading to increased success in securing funding for research projects;
4. Increased proposal quality by improving the understanding of key elements, such as project design, objectives, methodologies, and expected outcomes;
5. Increased ability to develop realistic and comprehensive project budgets;
6. Strengthened confidence in submitting successful grant proposals.

## ORGANIZERS AND COLLABORATORS

---

1. The International Science, Technology and Innovation Centre (ISTIC) under the auspices of UNESCO
2. National Research Fund, Kenya (NRF-Kenya)
3. The Technical University of Kenya (TUK)
4. Future Earth Africa Hub Leadership Centre (FEAHLIC)
5. National Research Foundation South Africa (NRF-SA)
6. Future Earth Africa Hub (FEAH)
7. Maseno University
8. The Belmont Forum

## ORGANIZING COMMITTEE

---

- |                           |   |
|---------------------------|---|
| 1. Prof. Chrispin Kowenje | Maseno University                         |
| 2. Dr. George Okwadha     | Technical University of Kenya (TUK)       |
| 3. Dr Daniel Nyanganyura  | Future Earth Africa Hub Leadership Centre |
| 4. Dr. Faten Attig-Bahar  | Future Earth Africa Hub Leadership Centre |
| 5. Mr Michael Nxumalo     | NRF South Africa                          |

## TRAINERS

---

1. Professor Dr. Manzoor H. Soomro, ISTIC Governing Board Member
2. Dr. Intan Sazrina Saimy, ISTIC
3. Dr. Gavin Luter, EPIC-N
4. Professor Maano Ramutsindela, University of Cape Town
5. Professor Oghenekaro Nelson Odume, Rhodes University
6. Dr. Peter Waweru Wangai, Kenyatta University

## PROVISIONAL AGENDA

---

All time are denoted at GMT+3 (East Africa Time)

<b>DAY 1 - 31 May 2025 (Saturday)</b> <b>Foundations of Transdisciplinary Approach in Research Projects</b>	
08:30 – 09:00	Registration and Welcome Coffee
09:00 - 09:15	<b>Opening Remarks and Introduction</b>
09:15 – 09:30	<b>Scene-setting:</b> Workshop Overview and Agenda for the 4 days
09:30 - 10:30	<b>Module 1.1: Introduction to Transdisciplinary Concepts</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Understanding the basics of transdisciplinary research.</li> <li>• Importance of transdisciplinary approaches in addressing complex societal issues.</li> </ul> Interactive Q&A session.
10:30 – 10:45	Morning Coffee Break
10:45 - 12:00	<b>Module 1.2: Systems Thinking</b> <b>Part 1 (45 minutes)</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Exploring the principles of systems thinking</li> <li>• How systems thinking serves as a foundational tool for transdisciplinary work</li> </ul> <b>Part 2 (30 minutes)</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Group activity: Applying systems thinking to a real-world problem.</li> </ul>
12:00 – 13:00	Lunch Break
13:00 – 14:30	<b>Module 1.3: Context of TD</b> <b>Part 1 (30 minutes)</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Context and relevance of TD.</li> <li>• Complexity of the TD approach.</li> <li>• Case study to demonstrate successful collaboration between academia, government and society.</li> </ul> <b>Part 2 (60 minutes)</b> Group activity: Develop a TD-based project to address a global ‘wicked problem’.

14:30 - 15:45	<b>Module 1.4: Workshop on Collaborative Problem-Solving</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Practical exercises in co-creating solutions with participants from various disciplines.</li> <li>• Tools and techniques for effective collaboration.</li> <li>• Group activity: Collaborative problem-solving exercise.</li> </ul>
15:45 – 16:00	Afternoon Coffee Break
16:00 – 17:00	<b>Interactive session: Mentor and Mentees</b> Challenges, opportunities and experience share in TD research
17:00 – 17:30	<b>Closing Remarks and Next Steps</b>
17:30	<b>End of Day 1</b>

<b>DAY 2 – 1 June 2025 (Sunday)</b> <b>Applying Transdisciplinary Methods in Research Projects</b>	
08:30 – 09:00	Registration and Welcome Coffee
09:00 – 09:30	<b>Key takeaways from Day 1 and Briefing for Day 2</b> A brief recap of the previous day's key points.
09:30 – 10:30	<b>Module 2.1: Impact of TD (epistemological complexity of TD)</b> Explore the range of a TD approach, including grassroots innovation and Citizen Science. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Analyzing successful and unsuccessful TD approaches and their outcomes.</li> <li>• When will TD fail? Lessons learned and best practices.</li> </ul> Interactive Q&A session.
10:30 – 10:45	Morning Coffee Break
10:45 – 12:00	<b>Module 2.2: Methodologies, Tools, and Integration</b> <b>Part 1 (45 minutes)</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Overview of methodologies and tools that facilitate transdisciplinary research.</li> <li>• How to integrate these methodologies and tools into research projects.</li> </ul> <b>Part 2 (30 minutes)</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Group activity: Applying methodologies and tools to a sample project.</li> </ul>
12:00 – 13:00	Lunch Break
13:00 – 13:45	<b>Module 2.3: Ethical Considerations</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Addressing ethical issues in proposal writing and transdisciplinary research conduct.</li> <li>• Case studies of ethical dilemmas and their resolutions.</li> </ul> Interactive Q&A session.
13:45 - 14:30	<b>Module 2.4: Communication and Dissemination</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Communicating science</li> <li>• Strategies for communicating transdisciplinary research findings to a broad audience.</li> </ul> Effective use of various communication channels
14:30 - 15:00	<b>Practical exercise</b> on developing a communication plan for a sample project.
15:00 – 15:45	Afternoon Coffee Break

15:45 - 16:45	<p><b>Module 2.5: Power Dynamics and Differentials in Transdisciplinary Research</b></p> <p><b>Part 1 (45 minutes)</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Critical exploration of issues of power in transdisciplinary research.</li> <li>• Strategies for navigating power dynamics and differentials.</li> </ul> <p><b>Part 2 (15 minutes)</b></p> <p>Group discussion: Sharing experiences and solutions.</p>
16:45 - 17:15	<p><b>Panel Discussion: Future Directions in Transdisciplinary Research</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Panel of experts discussing future trends and directions in transdisciplinary research.</li> </ul> <p>Open floor for questions and discussion.</p>
17:15 - 17:30	<p><b>Summary of Key Learnings &amp; Participant Reflections</b></p> <p><i>Facilitators summarize the day's modules, then open the floor to participants for reflections.</i></p>
17:30	<b>End of Day 2</b>

<b>DAY 3 – 2 June 2025 (Monday)</b> <b>Foundation of Research Proposal Writing</b>	
08:30 – 09:00	Registration and Welcome Coffee
09:00 – 09:30	<p><b>Key takeaways from Day 2 and Briefing for Day 3</b></p> <p>A brief recap of the previous day's key points.</p>
09:30 – 10:30	<p><b>Module 3.1: Introduction to Research Proposal Writing</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Why research and what is research?</li> <li>• What to research on? Identification of research topic</li> <li>• Understanding the basics of proposal writing.</li> <li>• Exploring the purpose and types of proposals.</li> </ul> <p>Interactive Q&amp;A session.</p>
10:30 – 10:45	Morning Coffee Break
10:45 – 12:00	<p><b>Module 3.2: Identifying Funding Opportunities</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Learning how to find and select appropriate grants, contracts, and identify other funding sources.</li> <li>• Tools and resources for identifying funding opportunities.</li> <li>• Group activity: Mapping potential funding sources for a sample project to be implemented in Africa.</li> </ul>
12:00 – 13:00	Lunch Break
13:00 - 14:30	<p><b>Module 3.3: Budgeting</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Preparing a budget and budget justification that aligns with the project plan.</li> <li>• Common pitfalls and best practices in budgeting.</li> <li>• Workshop: Creating a budget for a sample project</li> </ul>
14:30 – 15:45	<p><b>Module 3.4: Developing a Proposal Strategy</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Planning and outlining the proposal to align with funder's priorities.</li> <li>• Crafting a compelling narrative.</li> <li>• Case study: Analyzing a successful proposal.</li> </ul>

15:45 – 16:00	Afternoon Coffee Break
16:00 - 17:00	<b>Module 3.5: Project Management</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Incorporating project management principles to outline the project's scope and deliverables.</li> <li>• Tools and techniques for effective project management.</li> </ul> Interactive Q&A session.
17:00 - 17:30	<b>Summary of Key Learnings &amp; Participant Reflection</b>
17:30	<b>End of Day 3</b>

**DAY 4 – 3 June 2025 (Tuesday)**  
**Advanced Techniques for Research Proposal Writing**

08:30 – 09:00	Registration and Welcome Coffee
09:00 – 09:30	<b>Key takeaways from Day 3 and Briefing for Day 4</b> A brief recap of the previous day's key points.
09:30 – 10:30	<b>Module 4.1 Writing Persuasively</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Techniques for persuasive writing.</li> <li>• Crafting compelling arguments.</li> <li>• Using data and evidence effectively.</li> </ul>
10:30 – 10:45	Morning Coffee Break
10:45 – 12:00	<b>Module 4.2: Reviewing and Editing</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Importance of proofreading and editing.</li> <li>• Common mistakes to avoid.</li> <li>• Peer review exercises.</li> </ul>
12:00 – 13:00	Lunch Break
13:00 – 14:30	<b>Module 4.3: Practical Workshop</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Participants work on their own / basic proposals.</li> <li>• Hands-on guidance and feedback from facilitators.</li> </ul>
14:30 – 15:45	<b>Module 4.4: Presenting Your Proposal</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Tips for presenting proposals to funders/Stakeholders.</li> <li>• Practice presentations and feedback.</li> <li>• Handling questions and objections.</li> </ul>
15:45 – 16:00	Afternoon Coffee Break
16:00 – 16:30	<b>Summary of Workshop Highlights:</b> <i>Recap the key insights, learnings, and highlights from each day of the workshop.</i>
16:30 – 17:30	<b>Closing Session</b> <b>Certificate Presentation</b> <b>Closing Remarks by Organizers</b>
17:30	<b>End of Workshop</b> <i>Networking and informal discussions</i>

## CONTACT PERSONS

---

### **IN COUNTRY**

- |                           |   |
|---------------------------|---|
| 1. Prof. Chrispin Kowenje | Email: <a href="mailto:ckowenje@maseno.ac.ke">ckowenje@maseno.ac.ke</a>               |
| 2. Dr. George Okwadha     | Email: <a href="mailto:george.okwadha@tukenya.ac.ke">george.okwadha@tukenya.ac.ke</a> |

### **FEAHLIC**

- |                           |   |
|---------------------------|---|
| 1. Dr. Daniel Nyanganyura | Email: <a href="mailto:daniel.nyanganyura@ru.ac.za">daniel.nyanganyura@ru.ac.za</a> |
| 2. Dr. Faten Attig-Bahar  | Email: <a href="mailto:faten.bahar@gmail.com">faten.bahar@gmail.com</a>             |

### **ISTIC**

- |                              |   |
|------------------------------|---|
| 1. Mdm Sharizad Dahlan       | Email: <a href="mailto:sharizad@istic-unesco.org">sharizad@istic-unesco.org</a> |
| 2. Mdm Hannah Norazharuddin  | Email: <a href="mailto:hannah@istic-unesco.org">hannah@istic-unesco.org</a>     |
| 3. Mr. Hazman Al-Hafiz Hazal | Email: <a href="mailto:hazman@istic-unesco.org">hazman@istic-unesco.org</a>     |