



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 Liège (Belgium) are implementing the *BetterSeed* project, in partnership with other partners, namely the Université Libre de Bruxelles, Louvain Coopération au Développement, Rwanda Agriculture and Animal Resources Development Board, and the Université Catholique de Bukavu, with funding from the Académie de Recherche et d'Enseignement Supérieur (ARES).

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.

II. Funding

Parts of the BetterSeed funding will be devoted to offering 2 fully funded PhD training positions at the University of Liège in partnership with the University of Rwanda. Studies will be conducted in sandwich mode in Rwanda and Belgium

III. Role and Description

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

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

IV. Application requirements

General requirements for applying for a PhD position

- Be a Rwandan;
- Have a relevant MSc degree from a reputable institution;
- Be a staff member of the University of Rwanda;
- Justifying proven experience in research, preferably with publication in non-predatory journals;
- Be ready to work in an interdisciplinary environment;
- Be ready to undertake doctoral studies (in the sandwich mode Belgium/Rwanda) at the University of Liège;



- Be prepared to assume the responsibilities assigned to him/her by the BetterSeed project team during stays in Rwanda and report his/her progress, each semester, to the School of Agriculture and Food Sciences of CAFF;
- Proficiency in English;
- Be not older than 40 years, for males, and 45 years, for females;
- Female candidates are encouraged to apply.

V. Specific requirements

1. Specific requirements for the PhD in socioeconomics

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

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

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

VI. Application mode

The application dossier must contain the following documents:

- Application letter addressed to the Director of the UR Center for Postgraduate Studies (CPGS);
- Motivation letter highlighting gained knowledge and skills relevant to the specified PhD position; it must also show reasons for interest in the program;
- Curriculum vitae (maximum of three pages);
- Three recommendation letters from knowledgeable people in the considered domain; one of them must be issued by a previous academic supervisor
- Academic transcripts for the Master's and undergraduate studies;
- English proficiency certificate;
- Copy of national ID or passport.
- A Concept note/Research Proposal



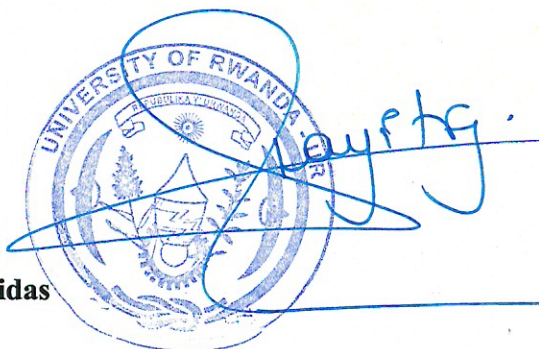


VII. How to apply and Key dates

The application documents, presented in a one pdf file attachment, must be submitted no later than September 17, 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 (Tel: 078 3147949) and Herve.Vanderschuren@uliege.be. The subject for the application email must be "Application for a PhD position in BetterSeed + Applicant's name."

Shortlisted candidates will be contacted for interviews.

Done at Kigali, 28 / 08, 2026



for
Assoc. Prof. KAYIHURA Muganga Didas
Acting Vice Chancellor