CALL FOR CONCEPT NOTES FOR
MUST INTERNAL COLLABORATIVE RESEARCH PROJECTS

Call identification number:	MUST/001/2026
Opening date of the call:	Monday, November, 16th, 2026.
Closing date for receipt of concept note:	Thursday, December, 31st, 2026.
Language:	English

1.0 BACKGROUND

Malawi University of Science and Technology (MUST) through the Directorate of Research and Outreach has set aside modest resources to support research projects to be undertaken collaboratively by the MUST family (Staff and students). This initiative is aimed at increasing the capacity of staff and students in research processes as well as to increase research outputs at MUST. The projects that will produce outputs which will contribute to the Intellectual Property landscape activities such as Patentable Inventions and Innovations; and also publications in the MUST White listed databases and journals will be given high priority. It is expected that through this initiative, the university will be able to generate data and information for several purposes including decision making by relevant stakeholders.

This call for research concept notes is aimed at establishing joint projects between Schools and other institutions in Malawi. The research projects should be led by a MUST member of staff. The research is to address the following thematic areas:

- Development of appropriate technologies/practices/frameworks with a focus on advancing Science, Technology, Innovation and Entrepreneurial Education
- Development of appropriate technologies in the food, health and environment sector
- Policy and legal framework analysis (Malawi context) of any sector in relation to science and technology with emphasis on economic efficiency, ecological effectiveness, gender transformation, implications and legitimacy.
- Development or testing of technologies that transform biodegradable waste for energy generation
- Improving indigenous based technologies for improved livelihoods
- Assessing the impacts of climate change on health and designing appropriate technologies or intervention to enhance resilience.
- Projects that integrate AI, and or IoT and ICT will be given high priority

Deliverables from the research grants shall include:

- The generation of research outputs addressing the thematic areas of MUST related questions. Typically, this will take the form of publications in high quality peer-reviewed academic publications and usable technology development.
- The effective dissemination of research findings to managers, key policy and decision makers, which will be indicated by examples of engagement with policy-making processes.
- Strengthening capacity of upcoming researchers to lead and manage research.

2.0 ELIGIBILITY

The call is open to MUST members of staff and students. Concept notes for collaborative research projects within MUST and with collaborating institutions in Malawi and abroad should be demand-driven and aim at enhancing research activities related to capacity building at MUST and Malawi for transformative development in the higher education sector.

3.0 FORMAT FOR DEVELOPING CONCEPT NOTES

A concept note is a brief outline of a proposed research. The concept note should:

- Outline the background and describe the research problem, objectives, methodology, expected outputs, location where the work is expected to be carried out, and give an indicative budget and timeframe;
- Identify the team/ or consortium (Principal Investigator and other researchers) to be involved in the project, their qualifications, specific roles and their research track records; and
- Not exceed 10 pages, excluding the attachments - with single spaced paragraphs and font size 12 Times New Roman in Microsoft Word.

If the concept note is accepted, the proposing principal investigator will be invited to prepare a full proposal. However, one may be asked to clarify certain issues before proceeding to the full proposal stage. In some cases, related concept notes may be advised to prepare a joint research proposal. The acceptance of the concept note will not guarantee that one's proposal will ultimately be accepted for funding.

The concept note should follow the structure outlined in Table 1.

Table 1. Organization and narrative summary of the concept note

1. Research Title 15 - 20 words maximum	The title should capture readers' attention on the essential theme (s) of the proposed research. - Show clearly what is being investigated. - Be concise and focused. - Be short, preferably not more than one line. - Avoid unnecessary punctuation (commas, colons, semi-colons). -Should not repeat keywords.

2. Selected Thematic Area	Select one or a combination of the thematic areas and state the major research goal that is intended to be accomplished in the project
3. Research Problem	A short summary of the research problem. What does the investigator want to find out? What will be known after doing this research? What are the research questions? Use a clear and logical style in writing.
4. Background	A concise review of the main research work and current issues in the specific subject area. What is already known about this specific subject? A full literature review is not required for a concept note.
5. Objectives	Should clearly state the overall and specific objectives as well as hypotheses being tested.
6. Methodology	Outline clearly the methods and approaches of data collection and analysis.
7. Expected outputs and outcomes of the proposed project	Clearly outline the outputs and outcomes that the project is expected to generate
8. Location	Indicate where the research will take place and justify the choice of the site (s).
9. Researchers	The principal investigator should be identified. The name (s) and full contact details of collaborators should be provided. State briefly the qualifications, research experience of all researchers and their roles in the project implementation. Interdisciplinary and multi-institutional collaboration is highly encouraged. Attach short CVs (maximum three pages each).
10. Budget	Provide indicative budget with key cost budget lines
11. Project Timeframe	Show the duration of the project and the timeline for major activities that will be accomplished before the expiry of the research period (24-30 months).

It is permissible for potential applicants who have queries concerning the compliance stipulations, other requirements and technical details of this call to contact the Directorate of Research and Outreach for clarification. All queries should be submitted by email addressed to research@must.ac.mw; with copies to Professor Alfred Maluwa aomaluwa@must.ac.mw; Dr. Tabitha Nindi Chigwe (tnindi@must .ac mw).

4. INVOLVEMENT OF POSTGRADUATE STUDENTS IN RESEARCH PROJECTS

Research projects may attach Masters Students. Such postgraduate students will come into the project with additional funds provided separately by the university or securing funding from other sources. The students will be coming into projects to provide additional human resource for implementation of the respective approved research project activities and as part of the capacity building.

5. FUNDING CEILING FOR EACH GRANT

The size of the budget for each grant will be based on the scope and focus of research proposals. The maximum budget for any proposal supported from this initiative in this call shall not exceed **US$10,000**. However, additional funding from other sources can be sought by the research team. The final proposal must be accompanied by a detailed budget.

6. SUBMISSION OF THE CONCEPT NOTE

Submission should be in a form of hard and electronic copy. The deadline for submission of both hard and electronic copy is **31st December, 2026 at 16:30 Malawi Time .** Concept notes received after the deadline will not be included in the evaluation.

When the Concept note is duly completed save the document as 'last name of principle investigator-MUST Call for Concept note 2026' (e.g. Name – MUST call for Concept note 2026). The electronic copy should be in word format. Women scientists are encouraged to apply as Principal Investigators. The hard copies should be submitted together with a covering letter to the DiRO using the following address: Room 102, MUST Administration Building, Ndata Campus, MUST, Thyolo, Malawi.

Note: Any Concept Note that is not compliant with these guidelines will be not be evaluated.