

Theme V- Institutions, Innovation Systems, and Economic Development Research Thematic Area

Development in Ethiopia is severely hampered by the inadequate transmission of both freshly created and existing knowledge, technology, and innovations. This is primarily related to shortcomings in linking research findings and/or results to socioeconomic outcomes. Poor human capacity development, a lack of the necessary critical mass of qualified innovators, and capacity development for technology and knowledge generation and dissemination are another bottleneck for socio-economic development. Inputs from the 10 year strategic plan of the nation, and the university, the East Hararghe Zonal offices, Harari Regional State, and Dire Dawa City administration, the National Thematic Area - MoE (MoSHE), the mandate area of the university's, Theme 5 records, inputs from the Theme level annual research review, benchmarking significant similar institutions, and other pertinent online searches were all taken into consideration in the overall development of the Theme 5 research priority. However, it's more significant that the priority areas were developed with the help of concerned college, school, and department officials. In order of relevance, the following priority research areas have been recommended for the 2022–23 call for proposal:

Sub-theme 1: Economic Development, Policy and Institutional Analysis

Human growth depends heavily on effective socioeconomic systems, the business environment, institutions, and policy frameworks. Institutions are required to follow the "rules of the game" as they evolve, and policies offer operational direction given the diversity of enterprises, socioeconomic systems, and decision-making units. However, synergy will continue to be key to overall success. In developing nations like Ethiopia, problems like challenges of inequality, persistent poverty, food insecurity, and the gradual deterioration of the environment to bear and serve the ever-increasing needs of humankind result from ineffective socio-economic systems and poorly suited development policies, coupled with the failure of the market and the failure of institutions to follow "the rules of the game." To address the link between socio-economic systems, the business environment, institutional responsibilities, and policy frameworks, integrated and multidisciplinary research methodologies are typically insufficient. For the 2022–23 call, the

following priority research areas have been suggested:

1.1 Climate Resilient Green Economy

- Livelihood, drought, conflict and recovery - Livelihood recovery and Diversification
- Livelihood trajectories and intervention options in drought affected situations.
- Generating strong evidence developed on delivery of basic services, social protection and livelihood recovery, Livelihood diversification Income generating activities in fragile and drought-affected situations.
- Early warning mechanisms, insurance and other relevant issue

1.2 The resilience of agri-food systems under the dynamics of environmental challenges. (RSC)

- Gender, youth, and food systems
- Inflation, Poverty and Food Insecurity: identifying Sources and Multidimensional Response Mechanism, differences in Effects of Inflation on Different parts of the Society/the link between Inflation and nutritional security of children, women, etc., relief to the Impacts of Inflation on Communities in Eastern Ethiopia
- Economic sabotage, good governance practices, corruption and inflation
- Large scale pond development for lowland area – rain shortage and its effect on rural livelihood

1.3 Returnee immigrants, and migration in rural and urban communities in Eastern Ethiopia, (explore, intervention, and impact assessment)

- Effective return and reintegration (economic reintegration, social participation)
- Return migration, entrepreneurship and development
- Enabling individuals to re-establish the economic, social and psychosocial relationships needed to maintain life, livelihood and dignity and inclusion in civic life.
- Urban – Rural Migration

1.4 Urbanization patterns and ecosystem services;

- Urban housing markets and (re)development.
- Urbanization patterns and its effect at household level

1.5 Performance, Risk and Resilience of agricultural firms

1.6 Taxation, tax administration, and illegal business

1.7 Agricultural finance, agribusiness management and marketing, and applied econometrics

- Access to modern finance, Alternative financing options and saving culture in rural areas
- Role of private financial institutions in manufacturing and agriculture

1.8 Competitive conditions of the food industry (quality and prices demanded by consumers).

- Product branding, promotions, and marketing of local products,
- Identification of cost barriers to commercialization;
- Creation of new markets, and the uptake of products.

Sub-theme 2.: Innovation Systems and Impact Evaluation Studies

Research in this sub-theme focus to identify and demonstrate innovative solutions to address priority challenges facing smallholder farmers, youth and industry in HU mandate areas. For example, small-scale irrigation technologies like drip irrigation, enhanced bee-hives and honeybee production and processing, improved poultry houses, etc. are just a few examples of technology and improved agricultural practices that aim to boost income and nutrition.

The performance of these technologies and advanced practices in comparison to conventional ones is the main objective of study in this sub-theme. Such action research projects require a multi/inter disciplinary team composed of relevant subject matter researchers (technologist(s) as well as extension/socio-economic researchers) for their development and execution. By identifying the root causes of innovation diffusion, research in this area also examines creative ways to scale up institutional innovations, practices, and technologies that are currently in use.

Research is devoted to the investigation of how technologies and improved practices diffuse across individuals and communities (in space and time) and their impact on selected outcome indicators. In relation to innovation diffusion, a research can aim to analyze, for instance, the barriers in the innovation diffusion-adoption process and ways to mitigate them.

In particular, barriers to adoption of climate smart technologies and practices are of particular priority. Research proposals related to impact evaluation are expected to be of high caliber/rigor,

combining both qualitative and quantitative methods of impact evaluation to evaluate short-/long-term causal effects. Therefore, the following priority research areas are suggested for the 2022–23 call,

2.1. Social networks, Innovation systems performance, and social resilience

- Social Innovation, Entrepreneurship, and youth development
- Social network for resilience and agricultural technology adoptions

2.2 Social, Economic and Environmental Impact of cement industries in Dire Dawa

- Mining excavation area
- Socio-economic aspects
- Environmental aspects