OPPORTUNITIES FOR RESEARCHERS UNDER THE TERTIARY EDUCATION TRUST FUND

BY

Professor Mahmood Yakubu,
Executive Secretary,
Tertiary Education Trust Fund

Being a Paper presented at a 2-day Workshop on Writing Fundable/Bankable Research Proposal Organised by National Office for Technology Acquisition and Promotion (NOTAP) in collaboration with Modibbo Adama University of Technology, Yola held at MAUTECH, Yola on 26 – 27 October 2011
OPPORTUNITIES FOR RESEARCHERS UNDER THE TERTIARY EDUCATION TRUST FUND

Introduction
1. Let me begin by thanking the organizers of this workshop, for inviting me to Yola to be part of this epoch making event aimed at sharing our experience in funding research. We are indeed grateful for the honor done to us and for the recognition accorded the Tertiary Education Trust Fund (TETFund) by the invitation.
The topic “Opportunities for Researchers under the TETFund” for which I have been requested to present a paper is no doubt topical but also relevant as nations all over the world have recognize that national growth and competitiveness (in the context of a globalized economy) depends very much on continuous technological improvement and innovation, driven by a well organized vibrant research and development system which integrates the research and training capacities of higher education with the needs of industry and larger society. Tertiary Institutions all over the world are usually the key drivers of Research and Development activities. In Nigeria, basically due to the declining quality of our research infrastructure, i.e. the absence of modern scientific laboratories where cutting edge research can be conducted, declining quality of the academia, the lack of incentive for publications, and dearth of funding, research activities have been at a very low level in many of our tertiary Institutions.
OPPORTUNITIES FOR RESEARCHERS UNDER THE TERTIARY EDUCATION TRUST FUND

1.3 At this juncture, permit me to give you an insight into the operations of the TETFund and the Research Fund. In doing so, we shall be looking at the mandate and functions of the TETFund, and present an overview into the establishment and modus operandi of the Research Fund.
The Establishment and Mandate of Tertiary Education Trust Fund

2.1 The Tertiary Education Trust Fund (TETFund) was originally established as Education Trust Fund (ETF) by the Education Tax Act No 7 of 1993 as amended by Act No 40 of 1998 (now repealed and replaced with Tertiary Education Trust Act 2011). It is an intervention agency set up to provide supplementary support to all levels of public tertiary institutions with the main objective of using funding alongside project management for the rehabilitation, restoration and consolidation of tertiary education in Nigeria.
Source of Income to TETFund

The main source of income available to the Fund is the two percent education tax paid from the assessable profit of companies registered in Nigeria. The Federal Inland Revenue Service (FIRS) assesses and collects the tax on behalf of the Fund.
Disbursement of Funds

The funds are disbursed for the general improvement of education in Federal and States tertiary educational institutions specifically for the provision or maintenance of:

- Essential physical infrastructure for teaching and learning;
- Instructional material and equipment;
- Research and publication;
- Academic staff training and development; and
- Any other need which, in the opinion of the Board of Trustees, is critical and essential for the improvement and maintenance of standards in the higher educational institutions.
3.0 The National Research Fund

In pursuance of its mandate, the Board of Trustees of the Fund decided to introduce new innovations intended to transform the educational sector and facilitate the emergence of Centres of Excellence. The result of such foresightedness was the introduction of the following initiatives:

- The National Research Fund;
- National Book Development Fund;
- Zonal Central Teaching and Research Laboratories;
- Special High Impact Project;
- Academic Publishing Centres;
- Academic Staff Training and Development.
3.2 The National Research Fund

The Research Fund is one of the special intervention areas introduced in order to help in the realization of the objective of addressing critical need for high quality manpower to drive the nation’s economy towards attaining the nation’s 20:2020 Vision. It is against this background and in line with the Federal Governments resolve to transform the educational system, that TETFund set up a Research Fund of N3b as a complement to address the paucity of funds to conduct tertiary education research activities. These funds are central and competitive. The funds are expected to facilitate research at cutting-edge level on activities that will impact positively on the competitiveness of the country on the global scientific milieu, and build up the research capacity of Nigerian researchers to contribute to the national development efforts as well as tackle global challenges.
The National Research Fund

3.3 The Research Fund has the **vision** to deliberately promote the evolution of a knowledge-based, globally competitive, R&D driven socio-economic development process in Nigeria.

3.4 While its **mission** is to use the tools of research to catalyze the generation, acquisition, adaptation, assimilation, dissemination and utilization of new and globally available knowledge and skills to drive the socio-economic development of Nigeria in a sustainable and socially responsible manner.

3.5 The overall **objectives** of the Research Fund is;
To facilitate research on issues that will impact positively on the competitiveness of Nigeria and her citizens in the global scientific milieu;
To build up the research capacity of the Nigerian researchers to contribute to national development efforts.
The National Research Fund

While, the specific objectives of the programme are to:
Support and promote problem solving research activities in priority areas of national development.
Create research leadership and competence in institutions of higher learning by deploying the tools of science, technology and innovation in a socially responsible manner.
Sustainably promote integrated capacity building (human, infrastructural, and institutional) activities in order to encourage Public-Private, domestic-international partnership.
The National Research Fund

Aggressively promote collaborative R&D activities (partnerships) across the tripod of technology (government – academia – industry) to enhance commercialization of R&D outputs and thus ensure sustainable job creation and wealth generation as well as increased local content in industrial production activities.

Encourage basic research geared towards strengthening the applied science milieu of interest to our nation’s economy.

Promote multi-disciplinary research and multi-stakeholder collaboration in the national interest.
The TETFund research fund has three major areas of intervention which are subdivided into ten thematic areas and 201 research focus areas which are key to the socio economic growth as well as technological advancement of the nation. The areas are: Science, Technology and Innovation; Humanities & Social Science; and Cross cutting topics.
The National Research Fund

Research Fund Management Committees
The research fund has basically two-layered management Committees; the Committee of the Board of Trustees responsible for the administrative secretariat; and the Screening and Monitoring Committees of experts drawn from the academia, industry and professional associations.

Committee of the Board of Trustees
The Committee is chaired by a member of the Board of Trustees and has the main function of implementing the Board’s policy and guidelines for administering the fund.

Screening and Monitoring Sub-Committee
There are 3 Screening and Monitoring Sub-Committee for the different research category areas ie Science, Technology & Innovation, Humanities & Social Sciences, and Cross cutting areas.
The National Research Fund
Duties of Screening Committee

Research proposals received are subjected to appraisal by the Committee. The assessment is to determine whether proposals submitted adequately address the objective of the programme, and whether research partnership agreements involving the academic communities, are likely to emerge, and that relevant research protocols are in place.

On completion of preliminary review of the proposals, the Committee will then recommend peers in the respective disciplines who will undertake an in-depth study of the proposals. Upon receipt of the input of the peer review, the Committee will then recommend to the Board of Trustee for the appropriate awards to be given.

The Screening and Monitoring Committee will assess applications in accordance with the assessment criteria in the Appendix below. The Committee will also undertake periodic review of progress in the execution of the research project by mapping out a monitoring and evaluation plan to confirm the achievement of verifiable performance indicators.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>S/N</th>
<th>Parameter</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Title</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Executive Summary</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Project Team</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Project Profile</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>i. Description of Project/Problem Statement</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>ii. Objectives of the Project</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Justification for Project</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>i. New Knowledge or Innovation Profile</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>ii. Expected Benefits/Impact of the Project</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Strategies for Implementation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>i. Research location</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>ii. Project Collaboration Profile</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>iii. Methodology</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>iv. Sustainability Considerations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Time Frame (Phases/Time Lines)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Resource Implications</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>---</td>
<td>--------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>A. Human/Institutional</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>B. Research Team (Leaders &amp; Others)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>C. Cognate Experience</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>D. Equipment/Materials</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>E. Available on the ground and functioning</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>F. Accessibility to other facilities within the vicinity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>G. Gaps to be filled</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>H. Technical</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>I. Support Facilities Available</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>J. Additional Facilities Required</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>K. Financial</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>L. Cost Sharing/Contribution from individuals /Institutions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>M. Budget</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Approval by Researchers' Institutions Ethical Committee (if applicable)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Miscellaneous Issues (specify)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>TOTAL</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
The National Research Fund
Implementation Strategies

The Research Fund is aimed at contribution to resolving the following problems of national priority as highlighted below:
Provide basic needs of the citizenry to ensure the sustainability of democracy: education, food security, clothing, housing, potable water, healthcare, electricity supply (including solar, wind, bio-fuel etc), security of life etc.
Make the land and water bodies (natural resources) more productive in a value-adding, sustainable and environment-friendly manner.
Infrastructural development research critical to national development, using phased multi-disciplinary and incremental approach.
Multidisciplinary problem-solving research proposals
Any other innovation-driven proposals (i.e. new problem-solving ideas that can be brought into use) across the technology, management, sociological and economic divides are encouraged, while the use of ICTs to provide solutions to developmental problems is of added advantage.
The National Research Fund
Modalities for Management of the Fund

a) The Principal Researcher
The person(s) indicated as the principal researcher(s) would be expected to be personally and actively responsible for the conduct of the research and should normally be considered eligible by the Screening and Monitoring Committee. The principal researcher must be public institution-based.

b) Application Procedure & Timing
The TETFund would advertise for the submission of research fund applications. All applicants for the research grants are required to use a standardized format for the completion of their proposals. The research fund applications would be received twice annually.

c) Term
The Fund will support researches for a maximum duration of two years in the first instance and may be renewed based on satisfactory performance.
The National Research Fund
Release of Funds & Mode of Disbursement

Release of Funds
On the recommendation of the Screening and Monitoring Committee, the Board of Trustee will approve for the appropriate awards to be given. Subsequently funds will be made available by the Administrative Secretariat.

Mode of Disbursement
Disbursement of funds will be made in three installments of 60%, 30% and 10% respectively or as may be modified by the Screening and Monitoring Committee (depending on the type of Research) and approved by the TETFund Board of Trustees.

The management of the research fund shall be domiciled in the Research Management Office of the Principal Researcher’s institution. The said office will have an oversight function but should not unduly delay the release of such approved funds to avoid TETFund sanctions against the institution. 5% provision of the approved Research Fund is to be used as host institution’s operational costs.
The National Research Fund Notification

The Principal Researcher will be advised in writing of the duration and amount of the research grant awarded and will be provided with a budget that reflects acceptable types and amounts of expenditures for each grant year. Payment for subsequent years is dependent upon;

The level of work done (progress report) ascertained by the Screening and Monitoring Committee;
Submission of acceptable expenditure returns.
PowerPoint presentation to group of experts to determine progress achieved.
Figure 2: Overview of Process to access TETFund Research Fund is as represented below:

Applicants

• Complete ‘ETF Research Fund ‘Application form in line with set guidelines
• Recommend peers in the respective disciplines for preliminary review of proposals
• Assess applications in accordance with the assessment criteria in Appendix I
• Upon receipt of the input of the peer review, recommends to the Board of Trustee for the appropriate awards to be given
• Carry out periodic review of progress in the execution of the research project in line with set criteria

Admin Secretariat

Award Award Award

60:’30:10

Screening & Monitoring Committee

Peers/Subject Matter Experts

ETF Board of Trustees

Proposals

Internal to ETF

• Undertake preliminary review of the proposals
• Make recommendations to Screening and Monitoring Committee
• Develop and approve criteria for review of progress in the execution of the Research project
• Issue appropriate award to successful proposal
• Release funds upon approval by the ETF Board of Trustees.

External to ETF

• Complete ‘ETF Research Fund ‘Application form in line with set guidelines
• Recommend peers in the respective disciplines for preliminary review of proposals
• Assess applications in accordance with the assessment criteria in Appendix I
• Upon receipt of the input of the peer review, recommends to the Board of Trustee for the appropriate awards to be given
• Carry out periodic review of progress in the execution of the research project in line with set criteria
4.0 Accounting Procedures
General Categories of Expenditures

4.1 General Categories of Expenditures
The following general categories of expenditures are provided for under the TETFund research fund:
Stipends for professional and non-professional personnel;
Cost of training of personnel including Masters and PhD degrees.
Permanent equipment;
Consumable supplies;
Travels;
Other expenditures not included under the above categories, and indirect costs.
Costs of prototype production.
(Details of expenditure categories are available in the Guidelines for accessing TETFund Research Fund)
Accounting Procedures

Annual/ Final Financial Report

**Annual Financial Reports**
A brief account of the expenses made for each research grant should be made quarterly during the term of a grant. Any unexpected funds remaining at the end of each year may be carried over to the following grant year.

**Final Financial Report**
A full account of all expenses made for a research project is due within 30 days of the termination of the grant. Unexpended funds remaining at the end of the grant must be returned to the Fund if renewal request is not successful. If renewal request is successful remaining funds from the previous grant will be applied to the first payment of the renewal grant.
Accounting Procedures
Annual/ Final Financial Report

As soon as a manuscript is accepted for publication, a copy of it, with the name of the journal and the expected date of publication, should be sent to the Chairman of the Research Fund Committee. Manuscripts will be respected as privileged communications. As soon as a reprint of a published article is available, two copies should be sent to the Chairman of the Committee.

The TETFund Research Fund must be acknowledged in all dissemination materials (e.g. publications, scientific exhibits, scientific presentations, press releases, etc) related to research supported in full or in part by the Research Fund. The following acknowledgement, or its equivalent, should be used:

“This Research was funded by the TETFund Research Fund”
5.0 Post-Research Activities

The Fund shall create a robust Database of TETFund funded researches to encapsulate research findings, innovations, patents, prototypes, among others. In order to obtain optimum benefits from the research activities, the Fund will organize TETFund Researchers’/Industry Annual Forum/Exhibition to showcase important results, patents, prototypes etc.
6.0 Research Methodology Capacity Building Workshop

To ensure that researchers avail themselves of the opportunity offered by the Fund in accessing the research grant, the Fund in April – May 2010 organized a series of Research Methodology capacity-building workshops for lecturers of tertiary institutions in the country. A total of about 872 lecturers from the nation’s tertiary institutions benefitted from the workshops.

The main aim of the workshops was to expose young academicians in various disciplines to research methodologies in their respective areas so that they do not only learn from their retiring and experienced seniors, but also take over from them at the appropriate time. The workshops were also meant to prepare them so that they could compete favorably for grants from TETFund Research Fund and other similar funds internationally.

The workshops covered six thematic areas – Agriculture and Life Sciences, Education, Engineering and Technology, Humanities, Medical and Health Sciences, and Social Sciences. The course manuals delivered at the workshops are being fine-tuned and improved upon, to be published and distributed to all institutions nation-wide as TETFund’s contribution to enhancement of research activities.
Advocacy/Enlightenment to Tertiary Institutions

6.1 In order to create the needed awareness of the existence/availability of the Research Fund to potential researchers and other end users, TETFund is making arrangements to undertake advocacy to tertiary institutions to conduct an open forum with a view to reaching and sensitizing the critical mass of researchers to access the facilities.
Establishment /Capacity Building for Staff of Research Management Offices

Another area the Fund is providing opportunity to researchers is in research management at the level of institutions. Research management typically involves the establishment of research management offices (RMOs) staffed by trained academics and/or professionals who do not only scan the local and international sources for research funds, but, also, help researchers to package research proposals to attract funding, as well as manage the conduct of funded research to ensure compliance with the stipulations by the funding agencies. The Fund intends to conduct capacity building workshop for staff of research management offices in institutions with a view to improving the institutional framework for the management of researches and innovation.
Research is known to provide the base for the development of human resource and science and technology capacity in all countries of the world. The scientific feats recorded across the ages in all human societies were all engendered by investment in Research and Development (R & D).

There is no doubt that TETFund Research Fund will contribute maximally to the evolving paradigm shift of our national development especially within the context of the transformation Agenda of the present administration.
Thank you.

Professor Mahmood Yakubu
Executive Secretary
Tertiary Education Trust Fund, Abuja.
26 Oct 2011