

Agriculture and Forestry University (AFU)
Directorate of Research and Extension (DoREX)

Announcement of the MSc Thesis Research Grant under the RUPANTAR Project

The Directorate of Research and Extension (DoREX) invites applications from eligible MSc students of Agriculture and Forestry University (AFU) for a thesis research grant under the RUPANTAR project - *"Transforming Smallholder Food Systems in the Eastern Gangetic Plain."* This project is financially supported by the Australian Centre for International Agricultural Research (ACIAR), led by the University of Adelaide, Australia. The International Maize and Wheat Improvement Center (CIMMYT) facilitates the implementation of the project in the Eastern Gangetic Plains (Koshi province in Nepal, West Bengal in India and Rangpur in Bangladesh) The DoREX/AFU is one of the technical partners of the project and supports the project interventions in the Koshi Province of Nepal.

The RUPANTAR project aims to support diversification for food system transformation in the Koshi Province of Nepal. The project in Nepal focuses on three thematic agricultural pathways: (a) Zero-tillage (ZT) maize, (b) Multi-layer farming, and (c) Improved dairy farming.

The DoREX announces this call for thesis research grants for MSc students of the Departments of Agricultural Economics and Agribusiness Management, Agronomy, Horticulture, Animal Science, Soil Science, Agroecology, and other relevant departments at Agriculture and Forestry University (AFU) to research defined topics/problems under the RUPANTAR project.

The selected MSc students will be awarded financial support and technical guidance to conduct research in alignment with one of the three above-mentioned pathways. Students should conduct research in the RUPANTAR project sites (Jhapa, Morang, and Sunsari) around the topics mentioned as follows:

The potential scope/topic of the research can be (but not limited to):

Zero-tillage (ZT) maize:

- Biological field research on ZT maize at the project site (Morang) and on-farm (AFU).

Multi-layer farming

- Trade-offs and synergies in different farming combinations of multi-layer farming.

Improved dairy farming

- Community-level silage preparation and its implications in milk productivity.

Eligibility Criteria

- Must be enrolled in the MSc program at the relevant departments of the AFU (Preferably First/second semester students at present).
- Research interest must align with at least one of the three project themes.
- Must be willing to conduct field-based research in the project-implemented sites of the Koshi Province.

Grant Details

- Number of grants: three (one for each thematic pathway)
- Maximum amount: NPR 120,000 per grant/student. This grant amount covers all expenses, including travel, accommodation, fieldwork, data collection, analysis, and reporting.
- Grant will be paid on an installment basis. The proposed study should be completed within nine months of signing the contract between the student and the DoREX/RUPANTAR project.

Required Documents

- Cover letter expressing motivation to apply for the grant.
- Research proposal relevant to one of the three project themes.
- Curriculum Vitae (CV)
- Support letter from the MSc thesis supervisor

Application Procedure

Interested students should email the required documents in a single PDF file to **["vacancy.dorex@afu.edu.np"](mailto:vacancy.dorex@afu.edu.np)** with the subject line: **"Application for Rupantar MSc Thesis Research Grant."**

Deadline for submission: June 8, 2025

Selection process

Shortlisted applicants will be invited to present their research proposals to the evaluation committee comprised of the project team and the thematic experts. The selection committee will finalize the research projects for the grants.

Women, applicants from marginalized communities, and students from the RUPANTAR project area are highly encouraged to apply.

Additional Information

For inquiries, please contact:

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For more details about the project, visit <https://www.rupantarfoodsystems.com/>