

Welcome

Structural Transformation of African and Asian
Agriculture and Rural Spaces (STAAARS+)
and
Structural Transformation of African Agriculture and
Rural Spaces (STAARS)

RFP Information Session



What is the difference?

STAARS is for...

- Young, individual Ph.D.s (or last year ABDs) who are African (preferably at a Sub-Saharan African institution)
- Want to work with a mentor at Cornell or Sussex

STAAARS+ is for...

- Teams of 2 to 3 MS/PhDs at a Sub-Saharan African, South Asian, or Southeast Asian institution(s)
- Want to work with a mentor at Cornell, IFPRI or Michigan State

USAID Feed the Future Innovation Lab for Food Security Policy Research, Capacity, and Influence (PRCI)

- Objective is to enhance institutional capacity to:
 - Do applied research on issues related to food security and nutrition
 - Bring the results of this research to bear on policy debate and policy decisions
- Three broad components
 - Facilitating institutional strategic planning around goals of doing better research with more policy impact, then funding activities in pursuit of this goal
 - Building research capacity through mentoring and technical training
 - Building capacity to integrate policy impact strategies into research
- Two approaches to building research capacity
 - Long-term relationships with particular research centers and the researches in them
 - Competitive awards to ***institutionally affiliated*** researchers from any center in a low- or lower-middle income country (STAAARS+)

STAAARS+ | Program Overview

- The STAAARS+ Fellows program advances rigorous, policy-oriented food security research on topics of inclusive agricultural- and rural transformation, development of healthy food systems, and enhanced resilience at individual, household, national and regional levels in Africa and Asia.
- STAAARS+ teams are selected through a competitive process and paired with mentors at Cornell, IFPRI or MSU, with whom they will jointly author a paper on a topic of mutual interest that fits within the PRCI research priorities within an 18-month fellowship period.
- The STAAARS+ Training Program is built on the idea that investing in individuals' and small teams' research capacity in a way that aligns with institution-level policy research and capacity building priorities will increase the effectiveness of institutional capacity development efforts under PRCI.



STAAARS+ | Application Requirements

1. All proposals must be submitted in English.
2. A **team of 2 or 3 researchers** from one or more eligible policy research institution(s).
3. Completed 2022 STAAARS+ Fellowship Applicant Biodata Information (in online application)
4. Title page (not included in the 2500-word limit):
5. Concept Proposal (2500-word limit): motivates the selected research issue(s) and objectives, outlines data sources and proposed analytical methodology
6. Bibliographic references (not included in the 2500-word limit)
7. CVs of each individual team member (not included in the 2500-word limit)
8. Letter of support from the leadership of each team member's home policy research institution(s), explicitly committing to provide team members with adequate paid time to undertake the research

STAARS | Program Overview

- The STAARS fellowship program is a multi-institution collaboration managed by Cornell University in collaboration with the University of Sussex and the African Economic Research Consortium (AERC).
- The STAARS program advances rigorous, policy-oriented research on the causal determinants of productivity and income growth, asset accumulation, rural employment and risk management in African agriculture and rural spaces.
- STAARS fellows are selected through a competitive process and paired with mentors at Cornell or the University of Sussex, with whom they will jointly author a paper on a topic of mutual interest within an 18-month fellowship period.



STAARS | Application Requirements

1. All proposals must be submitted in English.
2. An **individual** researcher.
3. Completed 2022 STAARS Fellowship Applicant Biodata Information (in online application)
4. Concept Proposal (2500-word limit): motivates the selected research issue(s) and objectives, outlines data sources and proposed analytical methodology
5. Bibliographic references (not included in the 2500-word limit)
6. CV of applicant (not included in the 2500-word limit)
7. Letter of support from applicant's home policy research institution, explicitly committing to provide applicant with adequate paid time to undertake the research
8. Photocopy of the passport biodata page and, if applicable, any current US or UK visa

STAARS and STAAARS+ | Program Details

Both STAARS and STAAARS+ programs are comprised of **four main components**:

- Research Project
- Virtual Launch Activities
- Professional Development Trainings
- Feedback Workshops

STAAARS+ has an **additional component**:

- Research to Policy (R2P)

Should I apply for STAARS or STAAARS+?

Apply to STAARS if...

- You're an individual,
- You reside at a Sub-Saharan African institution, and
- You've completed your Ph.D. no earlier than 2017 (or be last year ABD)
- You have strong analytical knowledge and statistical software skills (tested at finalist stage)

Apply to STAAARS+ if...

- You're a team of 2 to 3 members,
- All team members reside at a Sub-Saharan African, South Asian, or Southeast Asian institution(s)
- All team members hold an M.S. or Ph.D. in a relevant field (preference for Ph.D.), and
- At least one member of the team has strong analytical knowledge and statistical software skills (tested at finalist stage)

STAARS and STAAARS+ | Application Process

- The application review process is managed by Cornell University.
- Applicants should submit their completed proposals via the online applications (separate forms for [STAARS](#) and [STAAARS+](#))
- An application worksheet is available on the first page of each respective application as tool to help you collect responses before submitting
- Any applicants using data that are not publicly available are required to submit documentation from data stewards indicating they have access to the data proposed for analysis and are free to produce publishable research using those data.
- Deadline to submit a proposal: **March 15, 2022**

STAARS and STAAARS+ | Review and Selection Process

- Proposals peer reviewed by multiple experts from Cornell, MSU, IFPRI and/or University of Sussex.
- Finalists based on peer review are presented to a pool of senior mentors for matching.
- Finalists are tested to ensure adequate competence in statistical analysis software (Stata or R) prior to final selection (at least one member in STAAARS+ teams).
- Fellows/teams are matched with mentors and co/peer-mentors.
- Plan to notify accepted applicants by early May 2022.

STAARS and STAAARS+ | Timeline

- **March 15, 2022:** Application deadline
- **~ May 1, 2022:** Cohort selected
- **May – December 2022:** Cohort launch of meetings, workshops, seminars and trainings
- **September 2022:** 3 week visit to Cornell, Sussex (STAARS), IFPRI (STAAARS+), or MSU, (STAAARS+) – Travel restrictions permitting
- **June 2023:** Deliver/present final research output

Thank you for your interest!

Please write your questions in the Q&A tool; we will answer live or write responses.

STAARS questions: STAARS@cornell.edu

STAAARS+ questions: STAAARS_plus@cornell.edu

