

Announcement - MSc Thesis Research Grant under the MEED Project

The “Empowering Migrants for Sustainable Economic Development (MEED)” project, in collaboration with the Directorate of Research and Extension (DoREX), AFU, invites applications from eligible MSc students of Agriculture and Forestry University (AFU) for a thesis research grant. The Forum for Rural Welfare and Agricultural Reform for Development (FORWARD Nepal) has been implementing the MEED project, with financial support from the AWO International (BMZ - Social Structure Fund), at Ichchhakamana Rural Municipality, Chitwan District, Bagmati Province, Nepal. The MEED project aims to contribute to economic prosperity of people by ensuring safe migration, promoting informed migration-related decision-making, and strengthening the socio-economic reintegration of migrant families.

The thesis research grants will be for MSc students of the Department of Agricultural Economics and Agribusiness Management, Department of Agricultural Extension and Rural Sociology, and Department of Rural Sociology and Development Studies at Agriculture and Forestry University (AFU) to research defined topics/problems under the MEED project.

The selected MSc students will be awarded financial support and technical guidance to conduct research in alignment with one of the two below-mentioned areas, with findings to be published in a peer-reviewed journal. Students should conduct research at the MEED project site (Ichchhakamana Rural Municipality) around the topics mentioned as follows.

- 1. Study on Driving Factors of Internal/Seasonal Migration**
- 2. Study on Factors of Psychosocial Behavioral Change**

Research scope

Study 1

- Analyze the current trends, patterns, and dynamics of internal and seasonal migration within and from Ichchhakamana Rural Municipality.
- Identify and investigate the primary push and pull factors (e.g., lack of local employment, climate vulnerability, urban opportunities, wage differentials) driving internal and seasonal migration.
- Assess the level of awareness of and barriers to accessing social security services (subsidies, Social Security Fund - SSF, rights, and entitlements) among migrant families.
- Examine the socio-economic impact of seasonal/internal migration on left-behind families, particularly women, landless households, and vulnerable communities.
- Generate evidence-based insights and a way forward to promote local migrant retention, sustainable return, and socio-economic reintegration.

Study 2

- Analyze the psychosocial factors, community mindsets, and behavioral patterns influencing internal, seasonal, and international migration decisions within and from Ichchhakamana Rural Municipality.
- Identify and investigate the primary behavioral push and pull factors (e.g., social prestige, risk perception, local community pressures, and psychological motivations) affecting migration and local retention.
- Assess the psychological, behavioral, and informational barriers regarding access to social security services (subsidies, Social Security Fund (SSF), rights, and entitlements) among migrant families.
- Examine the psychosocial impact of migration on left-behind families, particularly

focusing on the mental well-being, coping mechanisms, and changing social dynamics of women, landless households, and vulnerable communities.

- Generate evidence-based insights and a clear, behaviorally informed way forward to promote local migrant retention, sustainable return, and smooth socio-economic reintegration.

Eligibility Criteria

- Must be enrolled in the MSc program at the relevant department of the AFU.
- Research interest must align with at least one of the two study topics.
- Must be willing to conduct field-based research in the project-implemented sites of the Ichchhakamana Rural Municipality.

Grant Details

- Number of grants: Two (one for each study topic)
- Maximum amount: NPR 125,000 per grant/student. This grant amount covers all expenses, including travel, accommodation, fieldwork, data collection, analysis, and reporting (inclusive of all applicable taxes).
- Grant will be paid on an installment basis.
- The proposed study should be completed within six months of signing the contract between the student and the MEED project.

Key Deliverables

- Research Proposal - including detailed methodology, data collection tools, including questionnaire, behavioral mapping framework, KII and FGD checklist, sampling framework, and a realistic implementation plan.
- Draft Research Report - presenting preliminary findings, behavioral driver analysis, and social security access mapping.
- Final Research Report - including an Executive summary, Psychosocial and Drivers Analysis, Social Security Access Analysis, Reintegration and Retention Way Forward, and Annexes with tools and datasets (including raw data from the household survey).
- Presentation - summarizing key findings and policy/programmatic recommendations for dissemination to FORWARD Nepal and project stakeholders.
- Peer-reviewed Journal Article - submission of a manuscript to a recognized peer-reviewed journal for publication.
- Finally, the student will prepare his/her MSc thesis to be submitted/presented at the respective department.

Required Documents

- Cover letter expressing motivation to apply for the grant.
- Research proposal relevant to one of the two study 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@forwardnepal.org"](mailto:vacancy@forwardnepal.org) and cc to ["vacancy.dorex@afu.edu.np"](mailto:vacancy.dorex@afu.edu.np) with the subject line: "Application for MEED MSc Thesis Research Grant."

Deadline for submission: August 18, 2026

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 MEED project area are highly encouraged to apply.

For information about how to write a proposal, visit the following online resource:

<https://www.scribbr.com/research-process/research-proposal/>