Instructions for Employer’s Letter of Release for Studies - Liberia

An employee of your organization is applying for a scholarship sponsored by the Borlaug Higher Education for Agricultural Research and Development (BHEARD) project. You are requested to write a letter indicating whether your organization will release the applicant for study if he/she is selected as a finalist for this program.

Project Description: BHEARD is an agricultural research capacity-building project supported by the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) under its Feed the Future program. The main purpose is to strengthen research capacities of agricultural research units and universities in participating countries.

Degree Training Program Description: The scholarship opportunity provided by BHEARD is for graduate study in the United States or other selected countries. Studies will begin in August, 2016.

Eligibility is limited to current staff (or faculty) members from the following institutions:
- Ministry of Agriculture
- Central Agricultural Research Institute (CARI)
- Private Sector

Private sector applicants must demonstrate experience and leadership in strengthening linkages between Liberian research organizations and the private sector where they are employed. It is to be noted though that priority will be given to candidates directly employed by MoA and CARI.

Priority will be given to applicants who desire training in the following subject areas:
- Ministry of Agriculture: agricultural economics, agribusiness/agribusiness management, and the general area of data analysis, planning, statistics, and policy development; social impact analysis as it pertains to these areas; agro-processing/value addition; livestock/animal science; (emerging concepts in) food security and nutrition
- Central Agricultural Research Institute: development of rice and cassava; fisheries and aquaculture; agribusiness/agribusiness management, agro-processing/value addition; food science; livestock/animal science
- Private Sector: agribusiness/agribusiness management, agro-processing/value addition.

Format and Content of Letter: In the letter, please state clearly that your organization will release the applicant for study if the applicant is selected as a finalist.

Please provide the following information in your letter:
- Will your institution grant study leave to this candidate if he/she is awarded a scholarship?
- If yes, will their salary be maintained? If yes, how much per month?
- Are there other financial benefits besides salary? If yes, which in particular?
- What is the duration of study leave provided by your institution?
- Does your institution ensure the candidate their job on returning from their training?
• Does your institution facilitate access to your laboratories and infrastructure for the candidate during his/her research in Liberia?

Please print your letter on the letterhead of your organization and sign the letter with your handwritten signature. Your name and position should appear clearly below the signature. Do not give the letter to the applicant; instead, please email (from your own email account) a scanned copy of the signed letter directly to BHEARD (BHEARD@isp.msu.edu) by 31 July 2015.

Contact Information: Queries may be made via email (BHEARD@isp.msu.edu).