Practicum Project Proposal Guidelines

The purpose of this document is to aid Carnegie Mellon University (CMU) Africa Practicum Sponsoring Organizations in creating an appropriate proposal document that will highlight the main details and issues regarding the proposed practicum project. The proposal will be made available to the students and faculty involved in the Masters of Science in Information Technology Practicum course and will serve as the main information source prior to project selection. Thus, it is in the Sponsor’s best interest to present the project information clearly and completely.

Definitions

**Practicum** - An opportunity in the CMU curriculum for students to refine and reinforce the skills they have acquired during the first year of their master’s degree program. Short-term, real-world projects are sought that can thoroughly exercise these skills in a fixed amount of time. The practicum is 14 weeks in length.

**Sponsor / Sponsoring Organization** - The Sponsor is the organization that agrees to support a CMU practicum project. They provide the project definition and necessary resources to complete the project. The Sponsor designates an individual to be the project client for the team.

**Team** – A group of 3 to 4 CMU students, who together will work part-time (20 hours per week per student) on the Sponsor’s project. The student team is expected to perform as if they are a contract team that negotiates the scope and details of the project directly with the client.

**Client** - Sponsor’s designated individual who interacts directly with the team. For the initial weeks of the practicum, the client (or client’s desiginee), must be available at least twice a week (remotely is acceptable) to facilitate learning the new application domains, technologies, etc. Thereafter, the client should be regularly available at least once a week for the remainder of the project.
Proposal Elements

A Practicum proposal should contain the following in document or presentation format:

1. **Name of the Organization.**

2. **Client Contact Information.** (name, title, phone number, email address) including general availability in terms of time of day and day of week most appropriate for meeting and/or consultations.

3. **Title or Name of Project.** (An item often left out). Please include the name of the project.

4. **Organization Background.** A brief overview of the business for the Practicum Sponsor Organization and the specific department that will be responsible for the conduct of the project.

5. **Project Overview.** Describe the specific problem you are trying to solve, its strategic or operational relevance and the benefits to the organization and its customers including internal groups. Also, describe the scope of the project as you see it, including the core problem, its dependencies, and the role of the team in developing a solution or possibly a part of the larger solution given the time and resources available. The project should have discrete goals rather than simply additional workers on an ongoing project.

6. **Key project outcomes and deliverables.** Please specify the desired outcomes and deliverables of the project.

7. **Technology skills** and competencies required by the Practicum Student team. Please identify any known technical skills and competencies you believe are required to deliver the desired results and deliverables.

8. **Challenges and Risks.** Briefly outline any serious challenges that you believe exist and as well the risks these challenges can present, e.g. technical, organizational, scheduling, or communication.

9. **Preliminary Work Plan.** Please provide a brief overview of the sequence of the various key tasks and desired outcomes. This will assist the student team to develop the SOW.
**Practicum Dates and Deadlines**

**Review date:** July 7th - if you submit several Practicum ideas on or before this date you will receive feedback from our faculty to help you select the best Practicum proposal or assistance in structuring your Practicum proposal.

**Due date:** July 15th – all Partners interested must submit their Practicum proposals by this date for consideration

**Responses to Partners:** July 30th – CMU will provide you feedback by this date on if your Practicum proposal has been accepted and will provide you with documentation for your organization to review and sign

**Partners approved and accepted:** Aug 15th – this is the deadline by which Practicum Partners must have executed agreements with CMU for inclusion in the program

**Student project bidding:** Aug 21st – this is the date when students will be selecting which Practicum proposals they are most interested in

**First meeting with students:** Aug 27th – this is the kickoff between student teams and CMU faculty to brief students on the Practicum process

**Student kickoff with sponsors:** on or before Sept 3rd – this the deadline for the first official meeting to kickoff the Practicum with Partners and student teams

**Ongoing development and collaboration:** from Sept 3rd through December – this is the students and Practicum sponsors working on the scope outlined in the Practicum proposal

**Submission and Contact Details**

You may submit your proposal in presentation or document format by emailing to the address below.

Thank you for your interest in becoming a Practicum Project Sponsor.

Should you have any questions, please email Professor David L. Ross, dlross@andrew.cmu.edu