

The logo features a stylized landscape with a yellow sky, green hills, a city skyline, and wind turbines. The text 'SA-TIED' is prominently displayed in white on a dark green background.

SA-TIED

Southern Africa – Towards Inclusive Economic Development

Terms of Reference

Master's thesis research projects using tax data

Background

The United Nations University World Institute for Development Economics Research (UNU-WIDER), together with the National Treasury of South Africa (NT) is seeking postgraduate students to apply for a funded MSc research project using tax data at the National Treasury Secure Data Facility (NT-SDF). The aim is to offer young graduates the opportunity to conduct Master thesis research project using the National Treasury Secure Data Facility (NT-SDF). This collaboration is part of the second phase of the Southern Africa – Towards Inclusive Economic Development (SA-TIED).

Offer and expectations:

Under this call, we invite applications from South African-based Masters students to apply for access to the NT-SDF to use tax data to conduct a Master's thesis project. In this respect, the student is expected to spend at least two months at National Treasury tax data lab (NTSDF) working on his/her research project. The candidate will be facilitated by the UNU-WIDER data and research team. This will include meeting with the Data Team to understand the various datasets available, cleaning, exploring, and analyzing datasets in areas including but not limited to:

1. Excise levy data
2. Customs data
3. Common Report Standards data
4. Value Added Tax (VAT) data
5. Personal Income Tax (PIT) data
6. Corporate Income Tax (CIT) data

For more information on the use of administrative data:

- Please see [this paper](#) for an introduction to the tax data firm-level panel.
- Please see [this paper](#) for a further guide on the tax data firm-level panel.
- Please see [this paper](#) for an example paper on the impact of Agricultural minimum wage on workers in SA
- Please see [here](#) for more information about using administrative tax data for research.

UNU-WIDER will cover reasonable and necessary expenses incurred during the work on the research project at the National Treasury in Pretoria. Additionally, modest honorariums will be provided after the student shares a copy of the final version of his/her MSc project.

What is expected of the student?

1. Be based in South Africa. It is not required for the applicant to be a South African citizen.
2. Be enrolled in a Master's degree in Economics, Econometrics, Agricultural/ Environmental Economics, or Finance.
3. Be able to travel to Pretoria periodically to work in the National Treasury at the NTSDf.
4. Have good knowledge of micro-data, including data cleaning and generation of baseline statistics, and have experience working with microdata and using STATA or R.
5. Have completed an advanced Econometrics course.
6. Ready to use NTSDf towards the completion of their MSc thesis project.
7. Ready to sign agreements and abide by all restrictions imposed by NT and other government agencies with respect to disclosure of confidential firm- and individual-specific information.
8. If applicable, to present work in progress and final outputs as required by the programme.
9. Ready to share the final copy of his MSc thesis to be a Working paper on the Website of SA-TIED.

Dates

24 May 2024: launch of request for applications for the SA-TIED student exchange

14 June 2024: deadline on questions on the application process

25 June 2024: application submission deadline

5 July 2024: target date for informing on decisions

Evaluation process and criteria

Each application will be assessed based on relevant experience and personal motivation. Only the final decision on whether an application is accepted or not will be communicated to applying researchers.

Application submission procedure

Applications should include:

- A CV (maximum 2 pages)
- Academic transcripts
- Proof of registration

- One page of the MSc research proposal containing the research question and types of data the candidate would like to use.
- Personal motivation statement of no more than 300 words. The motivation statement should clearly state the motivation for applying to use NTSDF in conducting an MSc thesis under the SA-TIED programme and include a narrative of previous relevant experience and future career goals.
- A supporting letter from the Academic Supervisor.

Submission of applications is done electronically by using the online form on the announcement page. Please familiarize yourself with the form in advance.

Any questions on the proposal process should be sent to aino@wider.unu.edu.