THE PASET REGIONAL SCHOLARSHIP AND INNOVATION FUND

CALL FOR INNOVATIVE PROJECTS IN APPLIED SCIENCES, ENGINEERING AND TECHNOLOGY
(RSIF Cooperability Grants)

Opening Date: October 23, 2019

Closing Date: January 20, 2020

1. Introduction

The Partnership for skills in Applied Sciences, Engineering and Technology (PASET) is an African-led initiative to strengthen skills in applied sciences, engineering and technology (ASET) and further socio-economic transformation in sub-Saharan Africa (SSA). The Regional Scholarship and Innovation Fund (RSIF) is the flagship program of PASET. The primary objective of RSIF is to train high quality PhD students and post-doctoral scientists in response to the human resource gap in the fields of ASET and to contribute to improving research and innovation capacities in those fields in SSA. RSIF also supports universities in SSA to establish a high-quality training, research and innovation and to develop their institutional capacity for the benefit of the whole region.

RSIF is funded by contributions from African governments, the World Bank and the Government of Korea; and coordinated by the International Centre of Insect Physiology and Ecology (icipe), Nairobi, Kenya, as the Regional Coordinating Unit (RCU).

2. About RSIF Research and Innovation Grants

In addition to PhD scholarships, RSIF makes use of competitive grants to support knowledge generation, scientific excellence and use of knowledge for development impact.

The following types of grants will be provided:

i. Research Grants: Grants are awarded competitively to faculty engaged in PhD training in Host Universities in SSA also referred to as RSIF-Research Awards (RSIF-RA) and grants to RSIF graduates who obtain a post-doctoral or permanent position in an academic institution or research centre in SSA also referred to as RSIF Junior Investigator Research Awards (RSIF JIRA)

ii. Innovation grants: Grants will be awarded to support strengthening of innovation environments at RSIF African Host Universities as part of the RSIF Institutional Innovation Capacity Building Program (RSIF ICBP) and to support public private partnerships that promote commercialization of research also referred to as RSIF Cooperability Grants.

This document describes the objectives and requirements for award of the RSIF Cooperability Grants.
3. **Subject of the RSIF Cooperability Grant Call**

The *RSIF Cooperability Grant call* aims to award innovative projects fostering cooperation between researchers from RSIF African Host Universities, the private sector and international partners with established experience in commercialization of research results. The Call recognizes the importance of working with international partners with established experience in commercialization of research results to support growth of similar practices and innovation in Africa.

**RSIF Cooperability Grants** encourage public-private partnerships by funding cooperative research and development conducted jointly by researchers from RSIF African Host Universities, private companies and relevant international partners. RSIF African Host University researchers, as lead applicants, will seek partnership of a private sector entity focused on RSIF thematic priorities and an international partner(s) with established knowledge in technology transfer and commercialization of research results. The Grant will fund the research activities focused on development of systematic application of new knowledge towards the production of useful materials, devices, systems and/or methods and novel technologies. Besides funding innovative projects at RSIF African Host University, the RSIF Cooperability Grant will foster capacity building of both senior and young researchers (faculty and participating graduate students in proposed research) in innovation development and commercialization of knowledge. The Grant will provide an opportunity to University faculty and researchers to develop technologies, to protect intellectual property (IP) and to commercialize research results. Project results are ultimately expected to contribute towards regional economic and workforce development by spurring high-tech small business growth and “lab to marketplace” development.

RSIF African Host Universities will need to provide effective institutional support for their researchers applying for this Grant by providing an innovation-enabling environment. In their applications researchers will be required to describe the existing institutional context that is important for innovation development and obtain a **letter of support from the respective RSIF African Host University** confirming that the researcher and his team will get appropriate and sufficient institutional support. The RSIF African Host University should also provide support to researchers to connect with local and international businesses to create a critical mass of entrepreneurial expertise and culture. The University should enable researchers involved in the project to participate in additional education, training, and mentoring related to innovation development and commercialization (e.g., in areas such as patents, startups, business plans, venture capital and angel investors).

**Industry partners and International partners** will be required to co-finance project activities by providing in-kind or financial contribution to the outlined project activities.

**The RSIF Cooperability Grants aims to achieve the following:**

i. Strengthen the innovation capacity of the RSIF African Host Universities through collaboration with experienced international partners;

ii. Enhance the competitiveness of partnering private companies who will contribute towards project activities;

iii. Support the transfer of innovative ideas and knowledge through cooperation with partners from the private sector or through opening new companies and/or spin-off companies with support of participating RSIF African Host Universities;
iv. Strengthen human resources and skills of researchers on how to create innovative and responsive research initiatives that benefit society;

v. Stimulate technological innovations and encouraging commercialization, i.e. the application of innovative ideas and technologies on the market;

4. **Eligibility criteria**

i. The Call is open to researchers and faculty involved in RSIF in the selected Africa Host Universities and their partners from private sector (registered legal entities) and international partners preferably with experience in innovation development and commercialization of knowledge. These could be scientific research institutions, higher education institutions and business entities (including business incubators and private companies). The project proposal must be linked with the RSIF PhD program in the African Host University.

ii. The submitted projects should be in line with the PASET thematic priorities which are; ICTs including big data and artificial intelligence; food security and agribusiness; minerals, mining and materials engineering; energy including renewables; and climate change.

iii. **An applicant cannot apply to the Call independently**, but only in partnership with at least one legally registered business entity and one international partner in line with the conditions of the Call. The Project, whose lead must be faculty at an RSIF AHU, must also involve researchers and/or RSIF scholars within the priority areas at the RSIF African Host University. The Consortium will be required to develop a consortium agreement that should be finalized and signed prior to receiving funding.

iv. The only exception to the above requirement of a collaborating partner is when it is envisaged and it is clear that the proposed project aims to establish a new company / spin-off in SSA region by researchers from a scientific research institution or through a public-private partnership. In such a case, the applicant should provide a clear plan and written evidence of future seat of the new company in the business incubator, business accelerator or technology hub located in one of the SSA countries.

v. International partners may be engaged only on the basis of expert services or consultancy agreements providing their in-kind or financial (cash) contribution towards project activities. However, direct costs related their travel expenses and accommodation cost while working in Africa may be covered by the grant.

vi. The application should contain the following sections: Introduction, description of the innovative idea/technology, objectives, expected outputs, methods to be used, description of activities, gender considerations, environmental and social management plan, ethical considerations, alignment to country strategies and overall socio-economic impact, intellectual property management, partnerships, budget, matching support, and references. The proposal should be no more than 15 pages including references. It should be written in Times New Romans font, size 12, single spacing, normal margins.

vii. The applicant may submit only one proposal where he/she is the project leader and may also be a co-leader/applicant in only one other proposal submitted. The applicant should not appear in more than two proposals submitted.
viii. As the member of Consortium and project Co- Applicant, a business entity must meet the following requirements:

- Being registered in the relevant national central register of business entities. Project partners are obliged to submit a copy of the operating license or certificate from the Central Register of Business Entities (depending on the type of legal entity).
- Doing business for at least two years before the expiry of the deadline for applications;
- Having positive business results in the last two financial years; *(In the case that company does not have positive business results as required detailed explanation should be provided at the time of application)* and;
- Fulfilling the obligations to pay contributions and taxes regularly

5. **Budget Guidelines**

The *RSIF Cooperability Grants* shall award a grant in the amount of up to $50,000 per approved project for a maximum period of two years from the time of award.

Activities that can be financed include:

a. **Direct project costs such as** the cost of field work, travel, meetings, research equipment and supplies;

b. The administrative organization *overhead* if charged to the project should not exceed 10% of direct project costs. African Host Universities may provide overhead costs as part of in-kind support to the project.

c. A budget template and guidelines provided for more details.

Private companies participating in the project are expected to make financial or in-kind contribution of between 15% and 30% of the amount of funds allocated from the RSIF budget to the project consortium. This contribution should be over and above the funds provided by the RSIF to the project consortium. International partner(s) will provide in-kind or cash contribution to the outlined project activities.

**The Applicant** may not, as part of their own financial contribution in the project implementation, use the funds allocated to him/her by any public national or international source of funding (national budget, relevant international fund providers etc.), for the purpose of realizing the same activities proposed in the Application for an innovative project under this Call.

6. **Evaluation process and criteria**

The administrative check of the received applications for the Call shall be conducted by *icipe*. All project applications that meet the required conditions shall be submitted for further evaluation as described below.

i. All proposals are evaluated against the fixed set of criteria stated below. The proposal should address the points stated in these criteria with measurable and provable information. *icipe* will identify internationally recognized and independent experts to evaluate every eligible proposal. The RSIF RCU will ensure that the proposal evaluators are in neither direct nor indirect conflict of interest. The evaluation will ensure that projects have potential for further commercialization.
ii. Project applications that are positively evaluated will be submitted to the RSIF appointed Grants Independent Technical Committee (RSIF GITC) for the final review and recommendations to PASET Executive Board.

iii. The PASET Executive Board will make the final decision on the selected projects to be awarded in line with the recommendations of the RSIF GITC. The evaluation procedure is described in detail in the enclosed RSIF Research Grant Manual and Procedures 2019.

iv. The list of the projects selected for co-financing shall be published on the RSIF website.

Advantage in the selection process shall be given to the applicants that:

i. Have young researchers and innovators up to 40 years of age and/or scientists or entrepreneurs from African Diaspora in their project team;

ii. Will clearly show on how their project will contribute towards creation of new jobs; and

iii. Propose projects with potential for future applications within international funding programmes.

**Prioritization will be given to proposals that depict the advantages highlighted above if there is a tie in the number of points.**

**The proposal evaluation will be guided by the following criteria:**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Criteria</th>
<th>Max. Score Allocated</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Originality and innovativeness of the project idea</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Scientific and technical quality of the proposal</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Potential for commercialization-market application and sustainability</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Budget, financial structure</td>
<td>10</td>
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<tr>
<td>Capacity of the project team, team composition</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>100</td>
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7. **Ethical issues**

In the process of preparing the project application, the Applicant is obliged to observe ethical principles and rules and describe how ethical issues in the application will be addressed. The applicant should indicate plans to obtain ethical approval from relevant bodies, if the project application involves human or animal subjects.

8. **Environmental and Social Safeguards**

The project proposal should clearly describe the potential environmental risks expected from the conduct of the research and mitigation strategies. The proposal should be submitted along with the completed environmental and social screening tools provided.
9. Application Guidelines

i. Complete the online application and submit together with the required supporting documents via the online system at [https://www.rsif-paset.org/calls/cooperability_grant/](https://www.rsif-paset.org/calls/cooperability_grant/).

ii. The online system will accept the following file types: doc, docx, pdf, rtf, zip, rar, jpg, jpeg, png, bmp, tif. The maximum file size accepted for any single file is 5 MB.


iv. for guidance in completing your application. Should there be any challenges navigating the application system, please contact rsifgrants@icipe.org.

v. The list of approved RSIF African Host Universities and the respective approved thematic areas can be accessed at [https://www.rsif-paset.org/about/](https://www.rsif-paset.org/about/).

vi. The proposal must be written in English or French and must be signed by the project applicant and the responsible persons officially representing RSIF African Host University as the legal entity involved.

vii. Applications for the Call should be submitted no later than Midnight January 20, 2020 East Africa Time.

viii. The table below provides a summary of the documents required for completion of the application:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Documents required for RSIF -Cooperability Grants Program application <a href="https://www.rsif-paset.org/calls/cooperability_grant/">https://www.rsif-paset.org/calls/cooperability_grant/</a></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Project Proposal</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Project Budget using the budget template</td>
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<tr>
<td>3. Curriculum vitae of key research team members, max 5 CVs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Support letter from the RSIF African Host University indicating institutional commitment to support project implementation (in kind support is acceptable)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Statement as a proof of not using the funds allocated to RSIF AHU from any public national or international source of funding (national budgets, relevant international fund providers etc.) for realization of the same activities proposed in the application for an innovative project under this Call</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Support letter from the Dean and/or Rector of the participating international university partner or Director of research institute; CEO of the international company focused on priority sector related to a project application or other appropriate institution with knowledge in development of innovation and commercialization.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. Completed environmental and social screening tools</td>
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**Documents to be submitted by a private company include:**

1. A photocopy of a Certificate from the Central Register of Business Entities

2. Support letter from the private company indicating their commitment and support for the project
10. Additional Information

Letters rejecting or accepting proposals, with statements of opinion, will be sent to all applicants within three months after the application deadline. The accepted proposals are subject to further negotiations and final approval by the Approval Committee, according to the RSIF Research and Innovations Grants Manual and Procedures 2019. The summaries of successful proposals will be published on the RSIF website.

Please note that the submission of project proposal does not establish any form of legal claim or responsibility of RSIF Fund nor icipe hosting the Fund. All decisions of the Approval Committees are final and are not subject to further claims or revisions, with exception of administrative mistakes.

11. Contact Information and Support

Further enquiries can be sent to:
The Manager, RSIF Regional Coordination Unit (RCU)
International Centre of Physiology and Ecology (icipe)
P.O. Box 30772-00100, Nairobi, Kenya
Telephone: +254 (20) 8632000
Email: rsifgrants@icipe.org