

## THE PASET AFRICA REGIONAL SCHOLARSHIP AND INNOVATION FUND

### CALL FOR PROPOSALS

#### FOR AWARDING GRANTS TO SUPPORT DEVELOPMENT OF AN INNOVATION –ENABLING ENVIRONMENT IN RSIF AFRICAN HOST UNIVERSITIES

#### *RSIF Institutional Innovation Capacity Building Program (ICBP) Grants*

### 1. Introduction

The [Partnership for skills in Applied Sciences, Engineering and Technology](#) (PASET) is an African-led initiative to strengthen skills in the Applied Science, engineering and Technology to 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 and post-doctoral students to address the human resource gap in the fields of applied sciences, engineering, and technology (ASET) and to contribute to improving research and innovation capacities in those fields in sub-Saharan Africa. RSIF supports PhD students, post-doctoral scientists and universities in SSA to establish a high-quality training, research and innovation environment and to develop their institutional capacity for the benefit of the whole region.

RSIF is currently funded by contributions from African governments, the World Bank and the Government of Korea; and implemented by the [International Centre of Insect Physiology and Ecology](#) (*icipe*), Nairobi, Kenya, as the RSIF Regional Coordinating Unit (RCU). The project will be implemented through competitively selected African Host Universities in SSA which will host students in various PhD programs aligned to PASET priority thematic areas.

### 2. About RSIF Research and Innovation Grants

RSIF will provide competitive grants that complement the Ph.D. training offered to scholars by supporting 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 African 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 environment at RSIF African Host university also referred to as *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 Program*.

This document describes the objectives and requirements for award of the RSIF Institutional Innovation Capacity Building Program (*RSIF ICBP*)

### **3. Subject of the RSIF ICPB Call**

The **RSIF Institutional Capacity Building Grants (RSIF- ICBP)** aims to support RSIF African Host Universities in SSA countries to develop innovation- enabling environments and to provide support in capacity building for innovation and entrepreneurship development, transfer of knowledge, protection of intellectual property (IP) and establishment of overall platform for successful university-industry partnerships.

The **RSIF-ICBP** will support the capacity building of the universities while impacting on future growth of businesses in PASET priority sectors by facilitating networking and team formation between universities and small and large businesses in priority sectors, sharing and transferring information and best practices through joint projects.

RSIF- ICBP will support the development of an institutional framework to enhance the innovation ecosystem within the university and with strategies for reaching faculty across disciplines within the institution. RSIF African Host Universities will be supported in development of the innovation strategies, intellectual property (IP) policy and other important policy documents related to innovation and technology transfer; in establishment of the Technology Transfer Offices (TTO) in the cases where they do not presently exist; capacity building of TTO staff in specific areas of expertise for the benefit of the University faculty and researchers. The Grant will not support physical infrastructure development. Activities encompassed in the framework may include on-line courses, organization of workshops and guest lectures on topics related to innovation and commercialization of research results, development of innovation related curriculum and on-line education programs or training workshops supported by the international partner for enabling participants in gaining important knowledge for innovation development.

**The RSIF ICBP Grants Program aims to achieve the following:**

- i. Developing and /or strengthening the innovation potential and overall innovation ecosystem at the RSIF African Host Universities.
- ii. Supporting RSIF African Host University in development of strategic policy documents related to innovation and commercialization of knowledge (University Innovation Strategy, IP Policy and other relevant documents)
- iii. Supporting RSIF African Host University in organization of capacity building workshops and guest lectures about the importance of IP and its protection and technology transfer related activities for University's researchers, faculty staff and students
- iv. Strengthening human resources and skills development of researchers, creating innovative research initiatives at the state-of-the-art level for the benefit of the societies.
- v. Supporting RSIF African Host University in establishment of active collaboration with business incubators, accelerators, technology hubs, private companies in PASET priority sectors
- vi. Supporting the University in establishment of Technology Transfer Office (TTO) and its capacity building. In the case when the RSIF University already has TTO the proposal should include capacity building of the existing office staff.
- vii. Supporting internationalization of RSIF Host Universities and building their research and innovation-oriented capacities through collaboration with experienced international partners.

#### Specific objectives are as follows:

- i. Strengthening the innovative potential of RSIF African Host Universities, faculty and students at SSA universities in their contribution towards development of novel ideas, services, products, collaboration and joint projects with private sector, etc.
- ii. Stimulating development of technological innovations and encouraging commercialization, i.e. the application of innovative ideas and technologies on the market;
- iii. Increasing the investment of private sector into R&D projects of selected universities;
- iv. Raising the level of commercial readiness through the funding of additional development of inventions / innovations;
- v. Increasing the number of intellectual property (IP) protected results (preferably patents) that have the potential to be applied in practice for the benefits of SSA societies
- vi. Stimulating cooperation of the RSIF African Host Universities and private sector in order to create the conditions for development of novel technologies, novel services, novel methods, etc.
- vii. Encouraging the transfer of knowledge and technology in cooperation with domestic and international partners from the scientific-research and economic sector.

#### 4. Eligibility criteria

- i. The Call is open to RSIF African Host Universities in SSA region of Africa in collaboration with their partners from private sector (legal entities registered in African countries), business incubators, or accelerators or technology hubs in SSA region and international partners preferably with experience in innovation capacity development and commercialization of knowledge. Those could be scientific research institutions, higher education institutions and business entities (innovative-entrepreneurial center, business incubator, accelerator, technology hub, company, or part of a company).
- ii. **The lead applicant shall be a qualified person from the RSIF African Host University.** The application is jointly made with at least one business entity legally registered in SSA, or a business incubator, accelerator or technology hub in SSA and at least one international partner in line with the conditions of the Call. International partners may be involved only on the basis of expert services and are encouraged to provide in kind contribution towards project activities. However, their direct costs related to travel expenses and accommodation cost while working in Africa may be covered by the grant.
- iii. **Project Co- Applicants from business sector in SSA will need to meet the following requirements:**
  - Being registered in the Central Register of Business Entities in any of African countries. *(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;
  - Companies would need to have positive business results in the last two financial years;

- Companies fulfilling the obligations to pay contributions and taxes regularly; and
  - Not having used financial assistance from the public national and international source of funding, or donor programmes for the same activities covered by the project application.
- iv. The proposal should contain the following sections: background, development objectives, expected outcomes and outputs, methodology, description of activities, ethical considerations, gender considerations, environmental and social management plan, alignment to country strategies and overall socio-economic impact, partnerships, budget, matching support and references. The proposal should not exceed 15 pages including references. It should be written in Times New Romans font, size 12, single spacing with normal margins. The applicants should describe how they intend to work with other team members at the University to successfully implement the project.
- v. Each RSIF African Host University shall submit only one application.

## 5. Proposed Activities

The expected number of activities during grant support in the priority order is as follows:

| Proposed Activity   | Expected outcome   |
|---|--|
| <b>1. Development of University policy documents related to innovation development, IP protection and technology transfer</b> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- University Innovation Strategy (should be aligned with the overall University Development Strategy)</li> <li>- Development of the University IP policy</li> <li>- Development of all other related documents (Material transfer agreements, Non-disclosure agreements, etc.)</li> </ul> |
| <b>2. Organization of internal training workshops on IP protection and Technology Transfer process</b>                        | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Total of at least 6 workshops are expected to be organized during grant's period for faculty and students</li> </ul>  |
| <b>3. Development of short on-line course on innovation development and commercialization of research results</b>             | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- One course should be developed and promoted to University staff and students (graduate students should be especially targeted).</li> </ul>  |
| <b>4. Organization of guest lecture series on innovation and technology transfer</b>  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- At least 6 lectures are expected to be organized during grants period</li> </ul>  |

|   |   |
|---|---|
| <p><b>5. Establishment and capacity building of the TTO office staff</b></p>  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Each University should provide in kind contribution and allocate an office space and salary for at least one staff member serving as the TTO Officer. In the case the RSIF host University already has TTO established they will choose activity for capacity building from the option list provided. In both cases the Grant will fund the capacity building.</li> </ul>  |
| <p><b>6A. Sign Partnership agreement for collaboration with business incubator, or business accelerator or technology hub.</b></p> <p><b>6B. Sign partnership with at least one company from private sector (in selected priority sectors) that will serve as an advisor to RSIF University</b></p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- 6A. At the time of the application submission the lead applicant will need to submit at least one agreement with the institution of choice</li> <li>- The agreements should clearly define types of planned joint activities</li> <li>- 6B. At the time of the application submission the lead applicant will need to have signed agreement with one private sector company that will serve in advisory capacity in course development on innovation and entrepreneurship by the RSIF University.</li> </ul> |
| <p><b>7. Develop University course on innovation and entrepreneurship</b></p>   | <p>Develop one University level course on innovation and entrepreneurship</p>   |

## 6. Budget Guidelines

The RSIF shall award a grant in the amount up to **\$50,000** per approved project for the max period of two years.

The Applicant is obliged to provide the remaining amount of funds from their own / other sources, as well as to provide in kind contribution which may include providing office space for the TTO office, providing full salary for at least one TTO staff member, providing administrative support for procurement and accounting activities related to the project, providing availability of University facilities for project implementation, etc)

The applicant may not, as part of their own financial participation in the project implementation, use the funds allocated to him by any public national or international source of funding (national budget, relevant international fund providers etc.), to realize the same activities proposed in the Application for an *RSIF ICBP* Call.

## 7. Establishment of Consortium and Partnerships

For the RSIF-ICBP application, RSIF African Host Universities as lead applicants are expected to establish partnerships with local business incubators, accelerators and technology hubs in SSA countries or a private sector company in the PASET priority thematic area and with international partners experienced in innovation development, technology transfer and commercialization of knowledge. The Consortium will jointly apply for the RSIF- ICBP funding. Letters of support from the collaborating partners will be provided at the time of the proposal submission. However, if the grant

is awarded, collaborating agreements will be developed and signed prior to receiving grants funding. If awarded the University would need to establish additional partnerships to expand its linkage with private sector.

**Industry partners (private companies from priority sectors) incubators, tech hubs, or accelerators)** will be required to help in design of workshops and education courses, to participate in teaching and guest lectures and in receiving RSIF Host University faculty and students to spend time working in the private sector company or technology hub, incubator or accelerator.

**Experienced international partners** will be providing in-kind or financial contribution to the project activities through advising the Consortium in project activities and participating in design of education courses, guest lectures, providing help and capacity building in technology transfer and commercialization of knowledge. Financial contribution in cash to support the realization of the project objectives is also highly encouraged.

The *RSIF-ICBP* is expected to establish necessary platform at RSIF African Host Universities that will encourage future public-private partnerships through funding of cooperative research and development conducted jointly by private sector companies and universities. This platform will enable other future activities, important for public-private cooperation, specifically systematic application of knowledge towards the production of useful materials, devices, systems or methods. Ultimately, The RSIF –ICBP is likely to contribute to fostering regional economic and workforce development by spurring cooperation between RSIF universities and high-tech small business growth and “lab to marketplace” development.

## **8. Evaluation process and criteria**

The administrative check of the received applications shall be conducted by the RSIF Regional Coordinating Unit (RCU)/ All project applications that meet the required conditions shall be submitted for further evaluation as described below.

The evaluation process shall be carried out by independent international experts in two phases:

- i. **The first phase:** All proposals are evaluated against the fixed set of criteria stated bellow. The proposal should address the points stated in these criteria with measurable and provable information. RSIF RCU will nominate three anonymous, 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.
- ii. **Second phase:** Project applications that are positively evaluated in the first phase of the evaluation will be subjected to the experts of the second phase of the evaluation. The second phase of evaluation shall be implemented by the RSIF Grants Independent Technical Committee (RSIF GITC) consisting of international experts appointed by the RSIF RCU. At least two members of GITC shall be innovation and commercialization experts.
- 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 and Innovations Grant Manual and Procedures 2019*.
- iv. The list of the projects selected for co-financing shall be published on the RSIF website.

The proposal evaluation will be guided by the following criteria:

| Evaluation Phase                          | Criteria  | Score allocated |
|---|---|-----------------|
| 1 <sup>st</sup> and 2 <sup>nd</sup> phase | Potential for establishment of innovation-enabling environment and successful implementation of the technology transfer process and commercialization | 40              |
|   | Quality of the proposed activity plan and of the project budget and contributions to overall country strategic objectives and societal impact.        | 30              |
|   | Capacity of the Applicant, partners and members of the project team   | 30              |
|   | Total Score   | 100             |

## 9. 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.

## 10. 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 impact screening tools provided here ([link](#))

## 11. Application Guidelines

- i. Complete the online application and submit together with the required supporting documents via the online system at [https://app.rsif-paset.org/rcu/forms/rsif\\_icbpb\\_2019.php](https://app.rsif-paset.org/rcu/forms/rsif_icbpb_2019.php)
- 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.
- iii. Reference the Proposal Guidelines document ([link](#)) for guidance in completing your application. Should there be any challenges navigating the application system, please contact [rsifgrants@icipe.org](mailto:rsifgrants@icipe.org)
- iv. The list of approved RSIF African Host Universities and the respective approved thematic areas can be accessed at <https://www.rsif-paset.org/calls/host-institutions/>
- v. The proposal must be written in English or French and must be signed by the project applicant and the responsible persons officially representing RSIF Host University as the legal entity involved.
- vi. Applications for the Call should be submitted no later than **Midnight September 30, 2019 EAT**.
- vii. The table below provides a summary of the documents required for completion of the application:



| <b>Documents required for RSIF -ICPB application (<a href="https://www.rsif-paset.org/calls/icbp-grants">https://www.rsif-paset.org/calls/icbp-grants</a> )</b> |  |
|---|--|
| 1.  | Project Proposal   |
| 2.  | Project Budget using the budget template   |
| 3.  | Curriculum vitae of key research team members, max 3 CVs   |
| 4.  | Letter of support and financial commitment from host university to support the implementation of the project from own sources; (in kind contribution is acceptable)  |
| 5.  | Statement as a proof of not using the funds allocated to University 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.   |
| 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. |
| 7.  | Support letter from the private company indicating their commitment and support for the project  |
| 8.  | Completed environmental and social impact pre- screening forms   |
| <b>Documents to be submitted by a business entity or incubators, accelerators or technology hub</b>   |  |
| 1.  | A photocopy of a Certificate from the Central Register of Business Entities  |
| 2.  | Annual financial statements for the past two years   |
| 3.  | Proof of settled tax obligations or relevant document on the reprogram of the tax debt   |
| 4.  | A Confirmation or Certificate that no bankruptcy or liquidation proceedings have been launched or conducted against the organization   |

## **12. 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.

## **13. Contact Information and Support**

Further enquiries can be sent to [rsifgrants@icipe.org](mailto:rsifgrants@icipe.org)

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