THE PASET AFRICA REGIONAL SCHOLARSHIP AND INNOVATION FUND

CALL
FOR AWARDING RESEARCH GRANTS TO FACULTY INVOLVED IN THE RSIF PHD SCHOLARSHIP PROGRAM

(*RSIF Research Award- RSIF RA)*

Opening Date: October 5, 2019

Closing Date: January 6, 2020 Mid night East Africa Time

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).

2. About RSIF Research and Innovation Grants

RSIF will provide competitive grants that compliment the PhD training offered to scholars. The grants will 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)*

The PASET Regional Scholarship and Innovation Fund

An Africa-led initiative to bridge the skills gap in Applied Sciences, Engineering, & Technology

PASET
Partnership for Skills
in Applied Sciences,
Engineering & Technology

icipe@50
1970 – 2020
Insects for Life

ii. <u>Innovation grants:</u> Grants will be awarded to support strengthening of innovation environment at RSIF 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 Research Awards (RSIF RA).

3. Subject of the RSIF RA call

The *RSIF Research Award* (*RSIF RA)* aims to support faculty at the RSIF Host Universities actively involved in supervising RSIF PhD scholars in SSA countries to establish research programs that respond to key development challenges. Faculty are expected to work with their international partners (if possible, scientists from African Scientific Diaspora working in research institutions globally) to propose areas of joint research collaboration to develop scientific collaborative projects expected to generate novel results. The scope of the proposed research should be wide enough to support RSIF PhD student's research projects as part of the grant. Applicants who receive funding from other RSIF grants are not eligible to apply for this grant.

The RSIF *RA* supports research excellence by allowing faculty researchers not only to support their own research activities but also to provide funding for research activities of their RSIF Ph.D. students. The primary goal is to enable faculty members at RSIF host universities to advance their research excellence and to help them and their Ph.D. students to generate excellent research results and novel ideas that respond to local challenges and could be published in top scientific international journals. These will contribute towards advancement of their research careers. If applicable, generated research results could be also considered for intellectual property (IP) protection and commercialization by the private sector.

The objective of the RSIF *RA* is to give an opportunity to outstanding researchers from SSA countries participating as faculty and mentors in the Ph.D. program at RSIF host universities to develop responsive research projects involving participating Ph.D. students with help of their international collaborators. The grant gives an incentive for African scientists at RSIF Host Universities in SSA countries to develop their research, managerial and other skills and for establishing networks, especially in cooperation with international partners. The successful applicants should demonstrate potential for research excellence and commitment in science and technology as future research and development leaders.

The awardee should be based at an RSIF host University. **Proposed projects can only be supported up to a maximum of 3 years from the time of award.**

4. Eligibility criteria

Who can apply? Outstanding faculty members from RSIF Host Universities participating as teachers and mentors in the Ph.D. program for doctoral students. Faculty members from RSIF Host Universities will be the **Lead Applicant** supported by their collaborators and international partners participating in

the project. The eligible lead applicant must demonstrate her/his excellence in research and elaborate on how this project will advance her/his mentoring role in development of graduate students into young investigators. The applicant cannot be a project leader on any other project supported by the RSIF Fund. Qualified female faculty are encouraged to apply. Priority will be given to excellent proposals submitted by research teams that integrate female faculty. Research teams must show gender balance and inclusiveness. Each research team should not exceed Four members including the International partner collaborators.

Which scientific areas are eligible? Only proposed projects aligned with PASET priority sectors will be eligible. The **PASET priority thematic areas** are: ICTs including big data and artificial intelligence; food security and agribusiness; minerals, mining and materials engineering; energy including renewables; and climate change.

Proposed project should clearly demonstrate benefit for advancement of SSA countries scientific output, research excellence that will contribute towards advancement of economy, environment and create an impact on life of SSA societies.

What is necessary institutional support? The support will be awarded to an administering organization (RSIF Host University as the legal entity) that will host the Lead Applicant and the project. The project proposal should contain a separate commitment of the administering organization to host and administer the proposed project that includes administration of funds, support of the applicant's engagement on the proposed project, and providing other support according to proposed plan.

The RSIF Host University as the administering organization should accept all responsibilities originating from and in connection to the proposed project. The Lead Applicant is responsible for proposing and agreeing on suitable arrangements with the administering organization. Responsible person of the RSIF Host University (Chancellor or Vice Chancellor) is required to provide a letter of support for the proposed project. For every long-term stay (longer than 6 months) planned abroad, the hosting organization should provide a separate letter of commitment from the Department Head that clearly states the personal and professional development plan of the applicant.

How should the proposal be structured? The proposal should have the following sections: Introduction, problem statement, objectives, expected outcomes and outputs, methodology, description of activities, gender considerations, environmental and social management plan, ethical considerations, alignment to country strategies and overall socio-economic impact, 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.

How many proposals can an applicant submit? 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.

What are the budget requirements? Proposal should provide a guarantee for matching funding of the project from other sources, e.g. RSIF Host University, foreign partner organization, foreign or private fund or sponsor. The matching funding should be at least 20% of the amount requested from the RSIF Fund for the project. Of the matching funding at least 5% of the amount shall be in form of financial

contributions (cash contributions). Other matching funding may be in form of in-kind contributions (goods or services) needed for the proposed research. **The total Project budget requested from RSIF for a project over the period cannot be higher than $90,000.**

What are the allowable project costs? Activities that can be financed include**;**

a. **Direct project research costs such as;** research costs (research equipment and consumables) including research costs for PhD students; equipment costs, faculty participation in short course or/and training; fee for conference or workshop; intellectual property (IP protection), knowledge transfer and dissemination.
b. The administrative organization **overhead** if charged to the project should not exceed 10% of direct project costs. Host Universities may provide overheads as part of in-kind support to the project.
c. A budget template and guidelines has been provided for more details. (insert link)

Please note the grant may include application of the instruments described in the RSIF *Research and Innovations Grant Manual and Procedures 2019.*

5. Evaluation process and criteria

The administrative check of the received applications for the Call 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 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 of which at least two members 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:

The scientific/technological excellence and innovation of the proposal, alignment with PASET priorities and the research leadership and mentoring potential of the Lead applicant candidate are prerequisites for awarding the grant. The contribution to the Fund's goals, international competitiveness, and potential to provide benefit to advancement of RSIF University and SSA countries is a cornerstone of the assessment.

The specific assessment areas for this grant are described below. The relative importance of each criterion is under the authority of the RSIF GITC.

Criteria for selection and evaluation scores

No.	Criteria	Max Score
1	**Scientific/technological quality of the project assessed by all the following:** ▪ Scientific/technological significance and originality of the proposed project; ▪ Clarity and measurability of the goals and prospect for achieving them; ▪ Feasibility of the project and suitability of the methods – including work plan and budget; ▪ Potential contribution to country strategies/ goals -science and technology, economy, environment and societal impact. ▪ Gender considerations including likely impact on men and women including gender balance in research team.	**50**
2	**Mentoring potential of the applicant assessed by all the following:** ▪ Excellence of accompanying publications and other scientific publications; ▪ Proof of previous successes with mentoring and overall career development of Ph.D. students; ▪ Personal letters of recommendations (references); ▪ Potential for professional development and future excellence of the applicant and her/his Ph.D. graduate student	**30**
3	**Partnering international collaborators** ▪ Quality of partnering institution(s) ▪ Scientific quality of partnering researcher based on number of papers, citations in Web science or	**20**

![The PASET Regional Scholarship and Innovation Fund — An Africa-led initiative to bridge the skills gap in Applied Sciences, Engineering, & Technology]

![PASET — Partnership for Skills in Applied Sciences, Engineering & Technology]

![icipe@50 — 1970–2020 Insects for Life]

	any other similar international base, number of competitive research grants received. ▪ Potential for professional mentoring	
4	**Total Score**	**100**

6. 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.

7. 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.

8. Application Guidelines

   i. Complete the online application and submit together with the required supporting documents via https://www.rsif-paset.org/apply/
   ii. Reference the Proposal guidelines for guidance https://www.rsif-paset.org in completing your proposal application. Should there be any challenges navigating the online application system, please contact rsifgrants@icipe.org
   iii. 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. The list of approved RSIF host universities and the respective approved thematic areas can be accessed at https://www.rsif-paset.org
   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 **January 6, 2020, by Mid-night, East Africa Time.**
   vii. The table below provides a summary of the documents required for completion of the application:

Documents required for RSIF -RA application (https://www.rsif-paset.org	
1.	Project Proposal signed by the Chancellor or Vice Chancellor of the RSIF Host University
2.	Project Budget using the budget template
3.	Curriculum vitae of key research team members, max 4 CVs
4.	Letter of support and financial commitment from host university
5.	Letter of support from collaborating international partner
6.	Completed environmental and social screening tools

9. 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 of further negotiations and final approval by the PASET EB. 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 PASET Executive Board are final and are not subject to further claims or revisions, with exception of administrative mistakes.

10. Contact Information and Support

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