**PRESS RELEASE**

***icipe*, *Agropolis Fondation*, GearBox and University of Abomey-Calavi announce 9 third-party proposals selected for funding**

**27 January 2022 – Nairobi, Kenya:** [The International Centre of Insect Physiology and Ecology](http://www.icipe.org) (*icipe)* based in Nairobi, Kenya; [*Agropolis* *fondation*](https://www.agropolis-fondation.fr/)(AF) based in Montpellier, France; [Gearbox Pan African Network](https://www.gearbox.co.ke/) (GB), based in Nairobi, Kenya and [Université d’Abomey-Calavi](https://cours.uac.bj/) (UAC) based in Cotonou, Benin have formed a consortium to implement a project called *Accelerating Inclusive Green Growth through Agri-based Digital Innovation in West Africa (AGriDI)*. The AGriDI project is sponsored by the 11th European Development Fund (EDF) of the European Union through the Organization of African, Caribbean and Pacific States (OACPS) under the ACP Innovation Fund, a component of the [OACPS](https://oacps-ri.eu/) Research and Innovation Programme.

The AGriDI project aims at strengthening innovation systems and fostering adoption of Agri-based digital technologies in West Africa (ECOWAS countries). Digital technologies offer potential to make it easier and more efficient for farmers and small business owners, especially women and youth, to produce and market their goods and services, leading to greater profits. AGriDI will increase identification, adaptation, and use of Agri-based digital technologies by farmers and SMEs (especially women and youth). This will in turn enhance agricultural production and marketing through strengthened linkages between research communities, industry, policy actors, and improved policy environment.

The consortium is pleased to announce that nine third-party proposals (see below list) have so far been selected for funding after a thorough technical review and a due diligence check. The third-party projects will start from March 1, 2022, for a duration of two years.

*icipe*, AF, GB and UAC congratulate and wish the consortia responsible for implementing the selected projects success in delivering the expected outcomes and impact of the AGriDI project and look forward to working with them towards this goal. We also register our strong appreciation to the 122 applicants who responded to the AGriDI project call with proposals. See [list](https://www.rsif-paset.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/01/List-of-9-projects-selected-for-funding-by-AGriDI-.pdf) of nine projects selected for funding by AGriDI

**For additional information and interviews, contact:** [agridigrants@icipe.org](mailto:agridigrants@icipe.org)

**Notes for Editors**

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The **International Centre of Insect Physiology and Ecology** ([www.*icipe*.org](http://www.icipe.org/)), headquartered in Nairobi, Kenya, is the only research institution in Africa working primarily on insects and other arthropods. *icipe*’s mission is to ensure better food security, health and livelihoods in Africa, by producing world-class knowledge and then developing solutions that are environmentally friendly, accessible, affordable and easy-to-use by communities. These objectives are delivered through four thematic areas – human health, animal health, plant health and environmental health, resulting in a unique framework to tackle the interlinked problems of poverty, poor health, low agricultural productivity and environmental degradation in a comprehensive manner.

In July 2018, *icipe*was competitively selected and appointed by the World Bank and PASET as the Regional Coordination Unit (RCU) of RSIF. Its mandate includes overall coordination, planning, management and monitoring and evaluation of RSIF activities. Specifically, *icipe* is coordinating capacity strengthening of selected African universities and partnering institutions in PhD training, research, and innovation in PASET priority sectors. In addition, *icipe* facilitates the creation of partnerships with governments, universities, and national and international research organizations, for example, through sandwich training and collaboration with centres of research excellence. Furthermore, *icipe* introduces African governments and other potential strategic partners to PASET, with the aim of growing RSIF and ensuring continued continent-wide reach and support.

The [**Partnership for skills in Applied Science, Engineering and Technology (PASET)**](https://www.worldbank.org/en/programs/paset)was launched in 2013 by the governments of Senegal, Ethiopia and Rwanda with facilitation by the World Bank. It aims to address systemic gaps in skills and knowledge in sub-Saharan Africa’s priority ASET fields, and to build the capacity of African education and training institutions to train high-quality technicians, engineers and scientists to meet the demands of the economy. Since 2013, more than 20 African countries, as well as representatives of Brazil, China, India, Singapore and Korea have participated in PASET’s various activities. PASET is currently led by the education and higher education ministries of Benin, Burkina Faso, Ethiopia, Ghana, Kenya, Mozambique, Rwanda, Senegal and Tanzania, along with Korea and the World Bank. The PASET governance bodies, comprising the PASET Governing Council (GC) and the PASET Executive Board (EB) provide strategic direction for implementation of the RSIF project by the Regional Coordination Unit (RCU). The GC is responsible for the overall strategic direction and vision of the RSIF, while the EB interacts with the RCU more regularly, monitoring the regular progress of activities and providing overall guidance. The PASET Consultative Advisory Group provides guidance to the GC and EB on regional priorities, goals and technical aspects of the RSIF.

[**The Regional Scholarship and Innovation Fund (RSIF)**](https://www.rsif-paset.org/) is the flagship program of PASET, an initiative by African governments to address systemic gaps in skills and knowledge necessary for long-term, sustained economic growth in sub-Saharan Africa (SSA).  RSIF aims to support PhD training, research and innovation in African universities that are selected as centres of excellence in fields identified by PASET as priority economic sectors for growth and development: ICTs including big data and artificial intelligence; food security and agribusiness; minerals, mining and materials engineering; energy including renewables; and climate change.  A competitive grants scheme, RSIF has two components: (i) the general fund, which supports PhD training, research and innovation projects annually and (ii) the permanent fund, with proceeds going to the general fund. Students from SSA countries, primarily faculty of SSA universities lacking PhD degrees, are eligible for RSIF scholarships.  RSIF builds capacity in the region to sustainably support those PhD scientists beyond their training as they go into academia, industry, or become entrepreneurs. The RSIF operates through three windows: Window 1 offers scholarships for PhD students and capacity building for RSIF African Host universities; Window 2 offers research grants and Window 3 offers innovation grants. RSIF focuses on transformative technologies that have a far-reaching positive impact on society.