

## THE PASET REGIONAL SCHOLARSHIP AND INNOVATION FUND

### Call for Proposals.

#### FOR AWARDING RESEARCH GRANTS FOR EARLY CAREER SCIENTISTS

#### *(Rsif Junior Investigator Research Award- Rsif JIRA)*

**Opening Date: December 19,2022**

**Updated: November 1, 2023**

**Closing Date: Open**

#### Summary

Purpose of the Call	To support Rsif PhD graduates to advance their research career after completing a Ph.D. degree by allowing them to lead research projects and unlock their research potential
Eligible applicants	RSIF doctoral graduates with a post-doctoral position in an academic institution or research centre in SSA
Grant budget per project	USD 50,000- 80,000
Period of grant	1-2 Years
Number of grants available for award	7
Submission Deadline	Proposals will be reviewed on a rolling basis until March 29,2024 or upon award of all remaining 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 a 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 Ph.D. 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 continent.

RSIF is currently funded by contributions from African governments, the World Bank, The European Union, The Carnegie Corporation of New York 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. The RSIF JIRA call

The **RSIF JIRA** supports Rsif post-doctoral scientists to establish their research careers. JIRA enhances research excellence within the organization by unlocking the research and innovation potential of newly

graduated Rsif PhD scholars. It also increases the institution’s research capacity when new PhD graduates who are staff gain experience in leading research projects and commercializing research results.

**Beneficiaries of JIRA** acquire research leadership and managerial skills and helps the emerging scientists to settle down at their home institutions to establish research careers, building on existing and new networks with local and international partners.

### 3. Call Guidelines

Who can apply?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ The Call for JIRA is open to recent (i.e., not more than 2 years) graduates from the RSIF PhD program who get a staff appointment <sup>1</sup>either a permanent, temporary or post-doctoral position in a university or research centre in Sub Saharan Africa.</li> <li>▪ The applicants should have completed their PhD study or demonstrate that they have met <u>all</u> the university’s academic requirements for the award of the PhD degree and will be issued with a certificate.</li> <li>▪ The applicant must demonstrate her/his interest in JIRA and potential to be a future research leader through their research work, and other activities during their PhD studies.</li> </ul>
What is the team composition	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ The Rsif graduate shall be the Lead Applicant. He/She should have at least one local or international collaborating partner i.e academic and research institutions. Partnerships with industry is highly encouraged. Partners involved in the project are required to provide subject matter expert support, usage of advanced research facilities and capacity building/mentorship. This support may also be in cash or in-kind contributions to the project.</li> </ul>
Which scientific areas are eligible?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Proposed projects should be aligned with PASET priority sectors, which are: ICTs including big data and artificial intelligence; food security and agribusiness; minerals, mining, and materials engineering; energy including renewables; and climate change.</li> <li>▪ Projects should be relevant to the priorities and developmental needs of SSA countries.</li> </ul>
How will the award be administered?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ The award will be administered by the organization (university or research centre in SSA as the legal entity that employs the Rsif graduate.</li> <li>▪ The applicant should provide a letter of support from the host organization. The letter should indicate commitment by the organization to administer the project including administration of funds, <b>and</b> support for the applicant to successful implement the project.</li> </ul>
How many proposals can an applicant submit?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ An applicant may submit only one proposal where he/she is the project leader but may also be a collaborating partner in only one other proposal submitted.</li> </ul>

<sup>1</sup> We understand as staff appointment to be either permanent, temporary, part-time at the university or research institution in Africa.

<p>What are the budget requirements?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ The total project funding requested from Rsif shall be between USD 50,000-80,000 for a period of up to 2 years from the time of award. The host organization may provide additional funds or other in-kind support.</li> </ul>
<p>What are the allowable project costs?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Direct project activities that can be financed include: (a) expenses associated with short tenr trainings at international partners and attending relevant short courses; (b) software, hardware and research equipment; (c) inputs including research materials and tests; (d) minor constructions and remodeling of laboratories; (e) knowledge transfer and dissemination; (f) cost of protection of knowledge (patents and similar copy rights instruments); (g) membership fees to professional bodies or research networks, (g) personnel/renumeration costs for the lead applicant and (h) direct project co-ordination costs.</li> <li>▪ This grant will not support overhead costs to the administering organization; however, the host institution may charge some direct administration costs proportionality. All costs should be budgeted using the budget template provided.</li> <li>▪ Please note the grant may include application of the instruments described in the Rsif Research and Innovation Grants Manual and Procedures available <a href="#">here</a>.</li> </ul>
<p>How should the proposal be structured?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ 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, overall socio-economic impact and commercial relevance, partnerships, budget, and references. The proposal should not exceed 15 pages including references. It should be written in Times New Romans font, size 12, single spacing, normal margins. Please refer to the proposal guidelines and template provided.</li> </ul>

**4. Evaluation process and criteria**

**a. Evaluation Process**

- All proposals will be screened to ensure that they meet the minimum eligibility requirements outlined in the Call for Proposal.
- All eligible proposals shall be evaluated by at least 3 internationally recognized independent experts.
- Evaluated proposals shall be submitted to the RSIF Grants Independent Technical Committee (GITC) for final selection and recommendations to PASET Executive Board (EB) for funding.
- The PASET EB shall make the final decision on projects to be funded in line with the recommendations of the RSIF GITC. The decision of the PASET EB shall be final and binding on all applicants.
- The list of the projects selected for co-financing shall be published on the RSIF website.

**b. Evaluation Criteria (Table 1)**

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

**Table 1- Evaluation Criteria**

No.	Criteria	Max Score
1	<b>Scientific/technological quality of the project:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Scientific/technological significance and originality of the proposed project.</li> <li>▪ Clarity of the goals and objectives of the project;</li> <li>▪ Suitability of the methods to be used– including feasibility of the work plan and budget.</li> <li>▪ Socio-economic benefits and commercial relevance/potential of the project to SSA countries;</li> </ul>	<b>50</b>
2	<b>Leadership potential of the applicant:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Research excellence demonstrated by quality of publications.</li> <li>▪ Strength of the letters of recommendations (referees);</li> <li>▪ Well-articulated vision for career growth as outline in the personal statement.</li> </ul>	<b>30</b>
3	<b>International collaborators</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Commitment from the international collaborators expressed in the letter of support.</li> <li>▪ Scientific capacity of the collaborator based on publications, citations (Web of Science) or patents or number of competitive research grants received.</li> <li>▪ Clarity of role(s) of the international partner(s) in the project</li> </ul>	<b>20</b>
4	<b>Total Score</b>	<b>100</b>

## 5. 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.

## 6. Risk Analysis

The applicant should provide a risk analysis and contingency plan. This should include the potential physical, environmental, political, economic and social risks expected from the conduct of the research and mitigation strategies. The proposal should be submitted along with the completed environmental and social screening templated that is provided).

## 7. How to submit your proposal

- i. Complete the online application and submit together with the required supporting documents via the online system using this [link](#)
- ii. Refer to the Proposal Template (for guidance in completing your application. Should there be any challenges navigating the application system, contact [rsifgrants@icipe.org](mailto: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 proposal must be written in English or French
- v. Applicants must provide an official signed letter of support from the host institution as commitment to administer the grant.

- vi. There is no deadline for receiving proposals, however proposals will be evaluated every two months until all the available grants have been successfully awarded.
- vii. The table below provides a summary of the documents required for completion of the application:

<b>Documents required for RSIF -JIRA application</b>	
1.	Project Proposal using the template provided
2.	Project Budget using the budget template provided
3.	Curriculum vitae of key research team members, max 4 CVs
4.	Letter of support from host university or research centre
5.	Letter of support from collaborating international partner
6.	Personal career vision statement
7.	Letter from AHU on graduation / confirmation of meeting requirements for graduation or a copy of the PhD degree certificate if available.

### 8. Additional Information

- a. Letters rejecting or accepting proposals, with statements of opinion, will be sent to all applicants within three months after the application deadline.
- b. The summaries of successful proposals will be published on the RSIF website.
- c. Please, note that the submission of project proposal does not establish any form of legal claim or responsibility of RSIF nor *icipe* as the RCU. All decisions of the PASET EB are final and are not subject to further claims or revisions, with the exception of administrative mistakes.
- d. All selected applicants will be required to sign a Project Grant Agreement with *icipe*. The Agreement provides general and specific terms and condition for the efficient and effective management of the grant. All applicants are encouraged to review the Project Grant Agreement and the RSIF Research and Innovation Grants Manual which can be found [here](#).

### 9. Contact Information and Support

A webinar session to provide clarifications on the call will organized. For more information about this Call please contact RSIF RCU on this email [rsifgrants@icipe.org](mailto:rsifgrants@icipe.org)

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