

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: October 6, 2025
Closing Date: November 30, 2025

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, research centre or industrial (private sector company) in SSA
Grant budget per project	USD 25,000
Period of grant	12 Months
Number of grants available for award	15
Submission Deadline	The Call will close on November 30, 2025.

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. PASET Rsif aims 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. About this Call

With funding from the Carnegie Foundation of New York, under the Doctoral and Postdoctoral Training in Applied Science, Engineering, and Technology in Africa (DOCTAS II). Rsif will award fifteen Junior Investigator Research Award Grants (Rsif JIRA). 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 help 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?	▪ 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 appointment¹ either a permanent, temporary or post-doctoral position in a university, research centre or industry (private sector company) institution in Sub Saharan Africa. ▪ The applicants should have completed their PhD study and graduated or fully met the requirements for graduation. ▪ The applicant must demonstrate her/his interest in JIRA and potential to be a future research leader through their research work, and other activities complementing their PhD studies. ▪ Rsif alumni who have previously benefited from a JIRA Grant are not eligible to apply as lead applicants, but can be part of a project research team
What is the team composition	▪ 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.
Which scientific areas are eligible?	▪ Proposed projects should align 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. ▪ Projects should be relevant to the priorities and developmental needs of SSA countries.

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

	- Applicants choose their own research topic of research and host institution; the proposed projects should be short-term to be completed in the proposed grant duration. - Proposed projects may focus on advancing the scholarly research or dissemination of the work carried out by the applicant during their PhD study.
What are the budget requirements?	- The total project funding requested from Rsif shall be up to a maximum of USD 25,000 for a period of not more than 12 months from the time of award. - The host organization and partners may provide additional funds or other in-kind support.
What are the allowable project costs?	- Direct project activities that can be financed include: (a) expenses associated with short term trainings at international partners and attending relevant short courses ; (b) minor software, hardware and research equipment; (c) inputs including research materials and tests; (d) knowledge transfer and dissemination e.g participation in conferences, seminars, community dissemination workshops and publication costs ; (e) cost of protection of knowledge (patents and similar copy rights instruments); f) membership fees to professional bodies or research networks, (g) personnel/ remuneration costs for the lead applicant and (h) direct project co-ordination costs. - 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. - Please note the grant may include application of the instruments described in the Rsif Research and Innovation Grants Manual and Procedures available here.
How will the award be administered?	- The award will be administered by <i>icipe</i>, in close collaboration with the host organization (university, research centre or private company in SSA as the legal entity that employs/hosts the Rsif graduate. - The applicant should provide a letter of support from the host organization. The letter should indicate commitment by the organization to host the applicant including administration of funds, and support for the applicant to successfully implement the project.
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, overall socio-economic impact and commercial relevance, partnerships, budget, and references. The proposal should not exceed 10 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.

How many proposals can an applicant submit?

- 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.

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 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	Scientific/technological quality of the project: - Scientific/technological significance and originality of the proposed project. - Clarity of the goals and objectives of the project. - Suitability of the methods to be used- including feasibility of the proposed activities, work plan and budget. - Socio-economic benefits and commercial relevance/potential of the project to SSA countries.	50
2	Leadership potential of the applicant: - Research excellence demonstrated by quality of publications. - Strength of the letters of recommendations (referees). - Well-articulated vision for career growth as outlined in the personal statement.	30
3	International collaborators - Commitment from the international collaborators expressed in the letter of support. - Scientific capacity of the collaborator based on publications, citations (Web of Science) or patents or number of competitive research grants received. - Clarity of role(s) of the international partner(s) in the project	20
4	Total Score	100

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
- iii. The online system will accept the following types of files: pdf, .xlsx. 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. Proposals will be received up to **November 30, 2025**
- vii. The table below provides a summary of the documents required for completion of the application:

Documents required for RSIF -JIRA application	
1.	Project Proposal using the template provided
2.	Project Budget using the budget template provided
3.	Project Result matrix and workplan using the template provided
4.	Curriculum vitae of key research team members, max 3 CVs
5.	Curriculum vitae of international partner
6.	Letter of support from host university or research centre
7.	Letter of support from collaborating international partner
8.	Personal career vision statement
9.	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

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