



PASET Regional Scholarship and Innovation Fund (Rsif) PhD Scholarships

PhD Scholarships available to support 3-4 Year Doctoral Training in PASET Rsif
Priority Thematic Areas

Sixth Rsif PhD Scholarships Call is now open.
Deadline for submission: 16th September 2024

Summary

- PhD Scholarships available for study at Rsif African Host Universities in the PASET Priority Thematic Areas: (1) ICTs including big data and artificial intelligence, (2) Food security and agribusiness, (3) Minerals, mining and materials engineering, (4) Energy including renewables, and (5) Climate change.
- Available scholarships for this Call are 20. Of these 16 will be awarded to Kenyan nationals, and 4 to nationals of other countries in sub-Saharan Africa.
- Eligible applicants: Citizens of any country in sub-Saharan Africa. Priority will be given to women and young academic faculty who do not have a PhD. Those with PhDs, or currently enrolled in any PhD Program and those holding another PhD scholarship are not eligible to apply.
- Scholarship period: 3 to 4 years
- Sandwich opportunity: Selected scholars will participate in a 6-12-month sandwich placement at an international partner university, research institute or private company.
- Final selection and notification of awards: **18 December 2024**.

Background

The [Partnership for skills in Applied Sciences, Engineering and Technology \(PASET\)](#) is an African-led initiative that aims to close the skills gap in the applied sciences, engineering and technology (ASET) necessary for socio-economic transformation in sub-Saharan Africa (SSA). The [Regional Scholarship and Innovation Fund \(Rsif\)](#) is the flagship program of PASET. Rsif supports PhD students, post-doctoral scientists and universities in SSA to establish high-quality training, research and innovation environments and to develop institutional capacity for the benefit of the whole region. Rsif is funded by African governments, the World Bank and the Government of Korea. It is managed by the [International Centre of Insect Physiology and Ecology \(icipe\)](#) in Nairobi, Kenya, as the Rsif Regional Coordinating Unit (RCU).

The specific objectives of Rsif are to:

- a. Create a stock of highly skilled scientists, professionals and innovators in ASET areas.
- b. Nurture young talented Africans who wish to further their studies in ASET fields.
- c. Address imbalances in the number of women and disadvantaged groups in ASET fields in Africa.
- d. Build African university capacity to provide relevant ASET training and workforce development.

Priority thematic areas

PASET has five priority thematic areas namely:

- i. **ICTs including big data and artificial intelligence:** This involves the use of information and communication technologies in a wide range of economic sectors, and includes big data analytics and artificial intelligence, computer programming, software development and their applications in manufacturing and service delivery.

- ii. **Food security and agribusiness:** This includes sustainable food production systems, pest and disease control strategies, management of post-harvest losses of crops and new opportunities for agribusiness development. Other areas include new ways to improve soil fertility, conserve water for food and agricultural production, and enhancing nutrition for humans and livestock.
- iii. **Minerals, mining and materials engineering:** This includes mineral processing and beneficiation, mining and materials engineering. Other important areas include new materials for construction, transportation, consumer goods, health care delivery and production equipment. Work involving nanomaterials and exploring novel biomaterials and related climate-smart materials would be of much interest as well.
- iv. **Energy including renewables:** This involves new forms of energy as well as more efficient ways of using energy. Developing renewable energy sources, e.g. biomass, wind, solar, and geothermal are highly encouraged.
- v. **Climate change:** This involves developing strategies for mitigating or adapting to climate change, including, for example, early warning systems for natural disasters and strategies for disaster management, modelling for climate change, and building climate smart or resilient systems for urban and rural communities and disaster-prone populations in Africa.

Available Scholarships

The scholarships available for this call are 20. Of these, 16 will be awarded to Kenyan nationals based on PASET's 80/20 rule for contributing countries, and 4 will be awarded to nationals of other countries in sub-Saharan Africa.

Duration

The duration of the PhD Scholarship is 3 to 4 years, within which time, the scholar undertakes a 6-12 months 'sandwich' placement at an international partner institute (IPI), research institute or private company. Annex 1 is a table showing the current IPIs where Rsif scholars go for their sandwich. The IPIs can also be viewed at this link: <https://www.rsif-paset.org/partners/#partner-institutions>.

Eligibility

Eligible applicants must:

- Be a citizen of any country in sub-Saharan Africa.
- Have a relevant master's degree related to the Rsif fields of study.
- Meet the specific admission requirements of the Rsif AHU that hosts the PhD program (*see links to the AHU PhD programs in Table 1*)
- Be 35 years of age and below at the date of application.
- Be willing to enrol full-time in a PhD program at an Rsif AHU in the 2024-2025 academic year.
- Should not be holding another PhD scholarship when applying to the Rsif PhD scholarship.
- Be willing to spend 6-12 months in a 'sandwich' training at an international partner university, research institute or private company.
- Be willing to work on a research topic that aligns with and contributes to national or regional development in Africa.
- Priority for the scholarships will be given to women and existing young academic faculty who do not have a PhD.

What the scholarship¹ covers:

- University tuition fee and research costs
- A monthly allowance to cover living expenses such as accommodation and meals while at the Rsif AHU and while on a sandwich placement at an International Partner Institute.

¹ The Rsif PhD Scholarship benefits are subject to change based on the discretion of the PASET Executive Board

- Return travel from home country to the Rsif AHU
- Return travel from the Rsif AHU to the International Partner Institute
- Visas and student permits
- Annual medical and personal accident insurance

The PASET Rsif PhD scholarship **does not cover**:

- Extra support for family members/ dependents, including children and spouses.
- Additional return tickets to the home country for personal reasons.
- Application costs to AHUs including certifying and equating of certificates

Rsif AHUs PhD Programs

The following AHUs (Table 1) were competitively selected to offer Rsif PhD programs. The AHUs admit, train and offers doctoral degrees to successful Rsif PhD scholars. This AHUs can also be viewed at this link: <https://www.rsif-paset.org/partners/#host-institutions>.

Table 1. Rsif African Host Universities

Rsif African Host University ²	Name of PhD Program	Link to University PhD Program	PASET Priority Thematic Area
University of Gaston Berger, St. Louis, Senegal <i>Africa Centre of Excellence in Mathematics, Computer Science, and ICT (MITIC)</i>	Computer Science	http://www.ceamitic.sn/en/phd-in-computer-science/	ICTs including big data and artificial intelligence
University of Rwanda, Kigali, Rwanda <i>Africa Center of Excellence in Internet of Things (ACEIoT)</i>	Internet of Things: Embedded Computing Systems	https://aceiot.ur.ac.rw/?q=content/phd-studies	
Université d'Abomey-Calavi, Abomey-Calavi, Benin <i>Centre d'Excellence des Sciences Mathématiques, Informatique et Applications (SMIA)</i>	Technologies de l'Information et de la Communication de l'Institut de Mathématiques et de Sciences Physiques	http://www.imsp-benin.com/home/	
Sokoine University of Agriculture, Morogoro, Tanzania <i>Africa Centre of Excellence for Infectious Diseases of Humans & Animals in Southern & Eastern Africa (SACIDS)</i>	Food Security and Agribusiness	http://www.sacids.org/	Food Security and Agribusiness
University of Ghana, Accra, Ghana	Applied Agricultural	https://www.ug.edu.gh/aea/	

² The PhD Program is offered through the Africa Centre of Excellence (ACE) at these universities

Rsif African Host University ²	Name of PhD Program	Link to University PhD Program	PASET Priority Thematic Area
	Economics and Policy/Agribusiness		
Makerere University , Kampala, Uganda <i>Makerere University Regional Centre for Crop Improvement (MaRCCI)</i>	Plant Breeding and Biotechnology	https://www.mak.ac.ug/marcci	
Nelson Mandela African Institution of Science and Technology (NM-AIST) , Arusha, Tanzania <i>Africa Centre of Excellence: Water Infrastructure and Sustainable Energy Futures (WISE - Futures)</i>	Materials Science and Engineering	https://www.nm-aist.ac.tz/index.php/mewes	Minerals, mining and materials engineering
Kenyatta University , Nairobi, Kenya	Materials Science	http://spas.ku.ac.ke/index.php/departments/department-of-physics	
African University of Science and Technology , Abuja Nigeria <i>Africa Centre of Excellence: The Pan Materials Institute (PAMI)</i>	Mining and Materials Processing Engineering	https://pami.aust.edu.ng/	
University of Port Harcourt , Port Harcourt, Nigeria <i>Africa Centre of Excellence in Oilfield Chemicals Research (ACE-CEFOR)</i>	Petroleum and Gas Engineering / Energy Economics	https://aceceforuniport.edu.ng/	Energy including renewables
University of Nairobi , Nairobi, Kenya	Physics	https://physics.uonbi.ac.ke/	
Institut International d'Ingénierie de l'Eau et de l'Environnement (2iE) , Ouagadougou, Burkina Faso <i>Centre d'Excellence pour la Formation et la Recherche en Sciences et Technologies de l'Eau et l'Environnement en Afrique de l'Ouest et du Centre (CEA-IMPACT 2iE)</i>	Sciences et Technologies de l'Eau, l'Energie et l'Environnement	www.2ie-edu.org	
University Felix Houphouët-Boigny , Abidjan, Côte d'Ivoire	Climate Change and Biodiversity	http://univ-fhb.edu.ci/	Climate change

Rsif African Host University ²	Name of PhD Program	Link to University PhD Program	PASET Priority Thematic Area
Africa Centre of Excellence for Climate Change, Biodiversity and Agriculture (CEA-CCBAD)			
Bayero University, Kano, Nigeria Africa Centre of Excellence in Dryland Agriculture (CDA)	Natural Resources Management and Climate Change	http://www.cda-buk.edu.ng/	
Haramaya University, Dire Dawa, Ethiopia Africa Center of Excellence for Climate Smart Agriculture and Biodiversity Conservation (ACE Climate SABC)	Climate Smart Agriculture and Biodiversity Conservation	http://climatesabc.haramaya.edu.et/teaching/program-overview/phd-courses/	

Rsif International Partner Institutions

Rsif International Partner Institutions (IPI) are approved universities, research institutes/centres or companies (public or private) that offer sandwich opportunities for Rsif PhD Scholars from Africa. Rsif PhD Scholars may spend between 6 and 12 months at an IPI for a strategic research placement as part of their PhD program.

How to apply:

- i. Applications are accepted through the online application platform: <https://apply.rsif-paset.org/>. See **Annex 2** for a description of the application form.
- ii. The form should be submitted together with the required supporting documents (Table 2, below).
- iii. The online platform will accept the following file types: doc, docx, pdf, jpg, jpeg, png. The maximum file size accepted for any single file is 32 MB.
- iv. The application must be completed in English, French or Portuguese.
- v. Applications must be submitted no later than **16th September 2024 at 5:00 pm (East Africa Time; UTC+3)**.

Table 2. Required supporting documents.

1	Certified ³ copies of bachelor's and master's degree certificates
2	Certified ³ copies of university transcripts for bachelor's and master's degrees
3	Rsif Standard CV Template (<i>Download and fill form</i>)
4	Personal statement/ motivation letter (<i>character limit, including spaces: 4,500</i>)
5	PhD Concept Note (<i>Download and use provided template</i>)
6	Two signed, official letters of recommendation from your employer (if currently employed) or university where master's degree was undertaken. The letters must be on official letterhead.
7	Copy of a recognized form of identification (e.g. passport biodata page or national ID)

³ See **ANNEX 3** for instructions on how to certify your documents.

Please, note that:

- a. **Only complete applications submitted online will be accepted.** Applications submitted by email or hardcopy will not be considered.
- b. **Applications will be screened for plagiarism. Evidence of plagiarism will invalidate the application.**

Conditions for application

- a. The applicant agrees to comply with all rules for participating in this call.
- b. *icipe* reserves the right to reject applications that fail to meet the eligibility and selection requirements.
- c. All decisions made by *icipe* with approval by the PASET Executive Board (EB) are final.

Rsif PhD Scholarship Selection Process and Criteria

General principle

The Rsif student selection process adheres to the principles of scientific excellence, accountability, and transparency. In this respect, the selection of candidates will be based on merit, and the potential of the candidate and his or her PhD to make significant scientific and technological contribution that positively impacts on the development of SSA. The selection of candidates is also dependent on availability of funding.

Key Criteria

Applicants will be evaluated on the following key criteria:

- a. Leadership potential: Demonstrated leadership in areas such as community service and outreach activities.
- b. Intellectual ability: Demonstrated through the applicant's academic track record, quality of the application, personal statement of motivation, and PhD project idea. Additionally, the applicant's creative thinking and innovative approach to problem solving will be considered.
- c. Research capability: Demonstrated through the applicant's research experience and quality of the application.
- d. Demonstrated commitment to pursue a PhD degree: Judged by the applicant's CV, personal statement of motivation.

Evaluation and Selection Process

- i. *icipe* receives applications online and screens them for completeness and eligibility against the criteria stated above.
- ii. Each AHU will evaluate the applications using their own admission criteria and identify qualifying candidates that meet the university admission requirements.
- iii. Independent review of Rsif PhD Scholarship applications: *icipe* will appoint internationally recognized expert reviewers to form the Independent Review Committee (IRC) to conduct an evaluation of university-shortlisted applications. Each expert reviewer will evaluate and score the applicants in their field of expertise against an established criterion.
- iv. An Independent Evaluation Committee (IEC) consisting of a multidisciplinary team of international experts will evaluate the final ranked list and make recommendations for the scholarship awards.
- v. The IEC will then share their recommendations with the PASET Executive Board (EB) for their endorsement of the award of scholarships.
- vi. Once scholarships are awarded, successful candidates will be instructed to register with their selected AHU. Further details will be provided at this time.

Further information

Contact information and support:

Email: rsifscholarships@icipe.org

The Manager

Regional Coordination Unit (RCU)

International Centre of Insect Physiology and Ecology (*icipe*)

P.O. Box 30772-00100, Nairobi, Kenya Telephone: +254 (20) 632 000

Annex 1: List of Rsif IPIs

#	International Partner Institution (IPI)	Country
1	The International Cooperation Group of Brazilian Universities (GCUB)	Brazil
2	Ben Gurion University of the Negev (BGU)	Israel
3	Ghent University (UGent)	Belgium
4	Global Research and Development Business Centre (GRC) in Seoul National University (SNU)	Korea
5	Hanyang University, Erica Campus	Korea
6	Hereon University	Germany
7	International Crops Research Institute for the Semi-Arid Tropics (ICRISAT)	India
8	IMT Mines Albi (IMTA)	France
9	Institut de Recherche pour le Développement (IRD)	France
10	Institute of Green Bio Science and Technology (GBST) in Seoul National University (SNU)	Korea
11	International Livestock Research Institute (ILRI)	Kenya
12	Iowa State University of Science and Technology	USA
13	Karlsruhe Institute of Technology (KIT)	Germany
14	Korea Institute of Energy Research (KIER)	Korea
15	Korea Institute of Science and Technology (KIST)	Korea
16	Korea Research Institute of Chemical Technology (KRICT)	Korea
17	Mohammed VI Polytechnic University (UM6P)	Morocco
18	North Caroline State University (NCSU)	USA
19	Rochester Institute of Technology (RIT)	USA
20	TELECOM SudParis	France
21	Université Cote d'Azur	France

22	University of Bristol	UK
23	University of Greenwich, Natural Resources Institute (NRI)	UK
24	University of Lisbon (ULisboa)	Portugal
25	University of Maryland (UMD)	USA
26	University of Michigan (U-M)	USA
27	University of Pretoria (UP)	South Africa
28	University of Zagreb	Croatia
29	Virginia Tech University (VT)	USA
30	Worcester Polytechnic Institute (WPI)	USA
31	World Vegetable Centre (WorldVeg)	Taiwan
32	Hanyang University, Seoul Campus	Korea

SUMMARY OF THE PHD SCHOLARSHIP ONLINE APPLICATION FORM

1. PERSONAL INFORMATION
2. Rsif PASET INFORMATION
 - Have you applied for an Rsif Scholarship before?
 - How did you hear about the Rsif Scholarship Program
 - Are you applying for a scholarship as a faculty member of a university in sub-Saharan Africa?
 - Give name of university, department, your position including dates and responsibilities.
 - Will you require study leave from your home organisation / institution?
 - Select AHU that is aligned with your proposed research project.
3. Rsif STANDARD CV TEMPLATE
 - Upload a filled Rsif Standard CV document (*Download and fill the Rsif Standard CV Template provided. Ensure your document is clearly saved as follows before uploading: ***your name*-Standard CV***)
4. PhD CONCEPT NOTE
 - Upload a PhD Concept Note that describes the research project that you would like to pursue for a PhD, methods and techniques to be employed and novelty and/or importance of the study. (*Download and fill the Concept Note template provided. Ensure your document name is clearly saved as follows before uploading: ***your name*-PhD Concept Note***).
 - Please note that the research topic must be in one of the PASET Priority Thematic Areas.
5. STATEMENT OF PURPOSE (MOTIVATION LETTER)
 - Upload a statement of purpose/ motivation letter that provides more insight into your academic and professional goals. Be sure to emphasize skills such as leadership, community service, outreach activities, past teaching/supervision experience, involvement in student activities, etc. Character limit, including spaces: 4,500 (*Ensure your document is clearly saved as follows before uploading: ***your name*-Motivation Letter***).
 - Your personal statement should answer questions such as:
 - Why have you chosen to apply to the PASET Rsif PhD Scholarship Program?
 - Describe why you wish to undertake a PhD and why you are well suited to research the proposed topic. Why is this program the logical next step considering previous work and academic experiences?
 - How does the Rsif PhD Scholarship program align with your career goals? Demonstrate your commitment and dedication to furthering research in your field of interest. Include how you wish to contribute to society through your research and how you expect to apply the acquired skills and knowledge upon completing your PhD.
 - What are your strengths? Demonstrate how you stand out from other candidates. Highlight relevant projects, dissertations thesis, presentations and contributions to society that demonstrate your academic skills and creativity.
 - If you are a university faculty member, explain how a PhD will enable you to strengthen the capacity of your university.
6. DEGREE CERTIFICATES
 - Upload certified copies of Bachelor's and Master's degree certificates.

- Please combine into one file. (*Ensure your document is clearly saved as follows before uploading: ***your name*- BSc and MSc Certificate***)
7. TRANSCRIPTS FOR BACHELOR'S AND MASTER'S DEGREES IN
- Upload certified copies of university transcripts for Bachelor's and Master's degrees.
 - Please combine into one file. (*Ensure your document is clearly saved as follows before uploading: ***your name*- BSc and MSc Transcripts***)
8. RECOMMENDATION LETTERS
- Upload two (2) signed, official letters of recommendation from your employer (if currently employed) or university where master's degree was undertaken. The letters must be on official letterhead. (*Ensure your document is clearly saved as follows before uploading: ***your name*- Recommendation Letters***)
9. IDENTIFICATION CARD/PASSPORT
- Upload a copy of a valid national identification card or biodata page of your passport. (*Ensure your document is clearly saved as follows before uploading: ***your name*- Identification Document***)

HOW TO CERTIFY YOUR BACHELOR'S AND MASTER'S DEGREE CERTIFICATE AND TRANSCRIPTS

1. Your degree certificates and all transcripts must be certified by one of the following (i) the University where you obtained the degree; or (ii) a Commissioner of Oaths (Lawyer), who may charge you a fee for their services; or (iii) Ministry of Education in the country where you obtained the degree; or (iv) Higher Education Commission in the country where you obtained the degree.
2. To get the documents certified, take the original documents and high-quality photocopies to the office of certification, and ask the certifier to:
 - a. Check the originals are genuine.
 - b. Check the copies to be certified are identical copies of the originals.
 - c. Write or stamp 'Certified to be a true copy of the original seen by me' on each document, then sign and date underneath. *If the certifier is using a stamp, please make sure an ink stamp is used. An embossing stamp is not acceptable.*
 - d. Under their signature, the certifier must write their name in CAPITAL LETTERS, adding their occupation, address, telephone number and email address.
 - e. If the original is a multiple page document, each page must be checked against the copy to ensure that it is correct. The certifier can then proceed as follows:
 - i. Sign each page of the copy.
 - ii. Certify the last page of the copy, as described above.
3. Scan (in colour) all pages of the certified copies. Upload onto the Online Application Platform.

Note: failure to certify using the instructions above will invalidate your application.