

SARECO

Swiss-African Research Cooperation

Call for Proposals

Visiting Research Fellowships for Advanced PHD Students and Early Postdoctoral Researchers

in

Advancing the Sustainable Development Goals (SDG's) Era

Grant period: 2018–2020

Research areas / disciplines: **SDGs, with particular emphasis on Climate Change, Global and Environmental Health, Migration, Nanosciences and the Social Sciences**

Total budget available: CHF 350,000

SARECO grant per project: Maximum CHF 70,000

Additional third party funding: Strongly encouraged

Submission deadline: 10st June 2018

BACKGROUND

The Swiss State Secretariat for Education, Research and Innovation (SERI) has commissioned Swiss TPH with support from the University of Basel as the Leading House for its bilateral collaboration with partner institutions in sub-Saharan Africa¹ for the funding period 2017–2020. Switzerland and a number of sub-Saharan African countries, including South Africa, have been working together on bilateral programmes for science and technology since 2007. In this frame, more than 100 research projects, together with student and faculty exchange activities were funded and jointly implemented. At the end of the 2013–2016 funding period, the Swiss–African research cooperation SARECO was lifted to a next level by issuing a call for advanced PhD students and early postdoctoral researchers, harmonized with calls and activities from the African Academy of Sciences (AAS). The Leading House (LH) Basel is starting the new period of research cooperation with selected sub-Saharan African countries with another call for the same target group of advanced PhD students and early postdoctoral researchers for 2018–2020. Advancing the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs; <https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/sdgs>), using methodologies developed within the domains of Climate Change, Global and Environmental Health, Migration, Nanosciences and the Social Sciences have been designated as main areas of joint research action.

The LH Basel calls for applications for visiting fellowships from advanced PHD students and early postdoctoral researchers from sub-Saharan Africa or Switzerland that cover stays in research groups at a sub-Saharan African or Swiss University or research institution in a cross-continental manner, including field, laboratory and desk work for a period between 3 and 15 months. Regions eligible for partnership action pertain to Switzerland and the whole sub-Saharan African region; however, proposals from our four priority countries Cameroon, Ghana, Kenya and Uganda are particularly encouraged. Eligible costs cover equipment, research funds and mobility stipends.

In view of intensifying multilateral funding of research work in and with Africa, it is foreseen to invite successful applicants to a Swiss–African–EU grant and publications writing workshop once projects have started, if funds are available.

Scientific domains to be funded

We welcome proposals addressing any of the **SDGs** in the context of Swiss–sub-Saharan African cooperation. However, we particularly encourage multidisciplinary projects from collaborations that include one or several domains of:

- **Climate Change (e.g. SDGs 7, 12–15, 17):** A strong preference will be on projects that contribute in reducing greenhouse gas emissions and that have the scope to be scaled up continentally and globally.
- **Global and Environmental Health (e.g. SDGs 2, 3, 6, 11, 17):** We encourage scientific proposals that focus on the health and wellbeing of populations equally across all social strata and planetary health in the broader sense. Global health issues that transcend national borders or have economic, political and social impacts on a global scale should be addressed, while environmental health covers all aspects of the natural and built environment that might reverse past or minimize future anthropogenic imprints.
- **Migration (e.g. SDGs 8–11, 16, 17):** Proposals pertaining to migration should aim at deepening the understanding of the current migration trends between Africa and Europe and to identify strategies to maximize the benefits and minimize the disadvantages resulting continentally and locally from those migration trends, to inform policy and practice.

¹ All African countries except the Maghreb region and Egypt

- **Nanosciences (e.g. SDGs 6, 7, 9, 11, 17):** Emphasis will be placed upon the translation of basic concepts of nanoscience into disruptive technologies addressing the societal needs of Africa. We especially encourage candidates to apply who have research projects related to the deployment of nanoscale materials in renewable energy, clean technology, water resource management and purification, environmental monitoring and management.
- **Social Sciences (across SDGs):** A social science component is encouraged as part of any of the proposals submitted, if it can render the implementation of a project more efficient, and if it is likely to enhance the long-term benefit of the project. However, we will also consider proposals that have a social science core component, if the pertinence of a question can be demonstrated.

Application Requirements

Interested applicants are required to hold a PhD degree or to have submitted their doctoral thesis and to be employed by the home institution based in sub-Saharan Africa or Switzerland before, during and after their visit. During the visit, the joint project with the partner will be executed and is expected to lead to further joint work and an intensified institutional relation.

The department or institute hosting the visiting fellow must provide a letter of acceptance confirming that the fellow will be given access to all appropriate laboratory and infrastructure facilities. The local scientific host must be employed as a scientist at the host institution for the period of the exchange visit.

Costs associated with the attendance at specific workshops, conferences, seminars, summer schools or presentations during the planned visit may also be covered by the current funds. Applications from more senior academics on sabbatical leave will not be considered.

The main applicant and host will submit a joint proposal for their planned research work. All applicants submit their proposal to the LH Basel via email to Dr Jasmina Saric j.saric@swisstph.ch.

All proposals should be accompanied by a cover letter that clearly explains the reasons for applying, gives a succinct overview of the current research done by the applicant and highlights potential synergies and outcomes that the applicant wishes to achieve with his/her research partner when granted access to the visiting fellowship. If scientific collaborations with the partner are already established, this should be stated in the cover letter as well. The complete set of documents to be included in the proposals are: (i) a cover letter; (ii) the application form including a research proposal of the planned collaborative activities (max. 5 pages); (iii) a *curriculum vitae* (max. 2 pages); (iv) a complete list of peer reviewed publications from the applicant and 5 selected publications from each co-applicant; (v); a letter of reference from the fellow's supervisor; and vi) a letter of acceptance of the host institution/department.

A period of 3 months to a maximum of 15 months can be applied for. Applicants are furthermore encouraged to seek for additional sources of third-party funding that they and/or their partners could contribute to the project.

All documents have to be submitted **in English, by the 10th June 2018 00:00 CEST** for Swiss applicants and GMT+3 for applicants from sub-Saharan Africa.

Eligible costs

The fellowship covers the following costs:

- Equipment not exceeding 10% of the total award:

Costs of material of enduring value (indicate manufacturer, type and distributor).

- Research funds:

Funds needed to carry out the project, such as travel costs, room and board costs and unavoidable sundry expenses. Field expenses, expendable items and consumables up to 20% of the award are eligible.

For visits to Switzerland, max. CHF 160 per diem is paid or a monthly rate of CHF 3,600 (whichever is smaller). Total travel costs are refunded at a maximum of CHF 1,500. Fellowship holders are required to obtain a health insurance policy for their period of stay. For visits to Africa, the same travel refund rate applies. This instrument does not finance the acquisition or maintenance of expendable items that are part of the infrastructure of an institution (e.g. books, PCs, rental costs, etc.)

- Mobility stipends:

For fellowship holders going to Africa, the Swiss National Science Foundation (SNSF) mobility fellowship rates apply (see: http://www.snf.ch/SiteCollectionDocuments/stip_ansaetze_d.pdf).

For fellowship holders coming to Switzerland, the Swiss Government Excellence scholarship rates apply (see: <https://www.sbf.admin.ch/sbf/de/home/themen/bildungsraum-schweiz/stipendien/eskas.html>).

Please note that overhead costs are not admissible.

Fellowship payment

At the beginning of the project period, 80% of the approved amount will be paid out. The remaining 20% are transferred after acceptance of the final report.

Swiss fellows receive funds into a project account. Fellowship holders from Africa receive funds into the account of the hosting institution.

VAT

In Switzerland:

The Visiting Fellowships are not subjected to VAT or other taxes and charges (under the provision that relevant cantonal tax authorities do not consider these as taxable income). However, research expenses are not excluded from VAT. All costs budgeted for research visits (e.g. equipment, consumables, etc.) can therefore be charged to the project budget, VAT included, unless the research institution (e.g. university, public research organization, etc.) is able to recover the VAT

PROPOSAL SUBMISSION

The application consists of two parts:

- An administrative part:
 - Basic data on the project (e.g. title, research field, starting date, duration, summary)
 - Personal data of the visiting fellow and his/her supervisor
 - Personal data of the host
 - Amount of funding requested
 - Information on authorizations required in Switzerland and/or Africa

- The research related part:
 - Research activity plan (max. 5 pages)
 - Cover letter of visiting fellow
 - CV (max. 2 pages)
 - Complete list of publications from the applicant and 5 selected publications from each co-applicant
 - Letter of support from the visiting fellow's supervisor
 - Letter of support from the host institution/department

Evaluation

Peer review: Proposals for Visiting Research Fellowships will be evaluated according to international peer-review standard procedures, organized by the LH Basel. External peer-review experts will be designated.

Decision: Outcomes of the review will be communicated and submitted for final approval to the Swiss National Steering Committee.

The criteria used to evaluate the scientific quality of the proposals:

- Scope of proposed work fitting into *SDGs*, specifically *Climate Change, Global and Environmental Health, Migration, Nanosciences* and/or *Social Sciences*
- Scientific relevance and interest of the project at national and international level
- Originality of the aims and objectives
- Appropriateness of the methodology
- Experience and past performance of applicants
- Competence of research partners with respect to the project
- Complementary skills of research partners
- Feasibility of the project
- Capacity building

The evaluation results will be communicated to the researchers as soon as the final decision is approved by all parties. The main applicant will receive a decision letter from LH Basel. In case of a rejection, the reasons leading to the decision will be given. In case of approval, the Swiss budget and the conditions will be listed. If applicable, the main applicant will be responsible for transmitting the decision to the co-applicants.

The review of the submitted applications will take place within the 2 months following submission and results will be announced by the **10th August 2018**.

The earliest possible starting date for the Visiting Research Fellowships is 11th August 2018.

Reporting

Swiss and African project partners will report to LH Basel. Scientific and financial reports are to be submitted by the last day of the month following the project end. Fellowship holders will have a common template available for the scientific report. Scientific reports include a qualitative and a quantitative part (output data).

Publications and intellectual property

The main applicants are strongly encouraged to publish research results stemming from their joint research work in appropriate form and acknowledging the partner institutions and this funding program. The SNSF requirements for Open Access publication must be fulfilled. Applicants must consult both the Swiss and African host institution concerning their internal intellectual property regulations. For market-oriented projects, it is important that an agreement be reached in advance. It is the responsibility of both applicants to make sure such an agreement is signed before the project start.

Further mobility and research funding

Successful candidates are invited to consider follow-up funding for PhD mobility and research work of established researchers. Attention is especially drawn to the International Short Visit scholarships of the [Swiss National Science Foundation](#), the [Swiss Government Excellence Scholarships](#), [EDCTP](#) programs and small grant/travel grant fellowships from the [Royal Society](#). Funding information for Swiss–African Research Cooperation is also available on www.sareco.org, a recently launched database at the attention of early career scholars.

Further information can be obtained with:

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