

THE PASET REGIONAL SCHOLARSHIP AND INNOVATION FUND

Call for Proposals for Innovative Projects in Applied Sciences, Engineering and Technology (The RSIF Cooperability Grants)

Closing Date: 31 May 2021, 23:59hrs EAT

1. Introduction

The [Partnership for skills in Applied Sciences, Engineering and Technology](#) (PASET) is an African-led initiative to strengthen skills in applied sciences, engineering and technology (ASET) and 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 students and post-doctoral scientists in response to the human resource gap in the fields of ASET¹ and to contribute to improving research and innovation capacities in those fields in SSA. RSIF also supports universities in SSA to establish a high-quality training, research and innovation and to develop their institutional capacity for the benefit of the continent.

RSIF is funded by contributions from African governments, the World Bank, The European Union and the Government of Korea; and coordinated by the [International Centre of Insect Physiology and Ecology](#) (*icipe*), Nairobi, Kenya, as the Regional Coordinating Unit (RCU).

2. About RSIF Innovation Grants

RSIF provides competitive grants for innovation projects, aimed at translating research outputs into commercializable products. Two types of innovation grants are available: Type 1 grants are awarded to support strengthening of innovation environments at RSIF African Host Universities (AHUs), also known as *RSIF Institutional Innovation Capacity Building Program (RSIF ICBP)*. Type 2 grants support commercialization of research outputs in partnership with the private sector and International Partners, also referred to as *RSIF Cooperability Grants*. **This Call for Proposals is for the RSIF Cooperability Grants.**

3. Subject of the RSIF Cooperability Grant Call

The RSIF Cooperability Grant call is for innovative projects carried out by researchers or faculty at the RSIF AHUs who are actively involved in the RSIF PhD program in SSA countries. The faculty or researchers are expected to work cooperatively with private firms² and relevant international partners to implement an innovation project that address any one or more of the RSIF thematic priorities. The grant will fund activities aimed at translating new knowledge towards the production of useful materials, devices, systems and/or methods and novel technologies at commercial scale. Applications that propose innovative use and scale up of ICTs or digital manufacturing techniques such as 3-D printing of products, and solutions that can be used to

¹ PASET Thematic Areas include; ICTs including big data and artificial intelligence; food security and agribusiness; minerals, mining and materials engineering; energy including renewables; and climate change.

² Private firms include legally registered SMEs, for profit non-governmental and governmental organizations operating as business enterprises, multinational, regional and national corporate business entities among others.

address the impact of COVID-19 and the capacity of SSA countries to handle future pandemics are especially encouraged.

The Grant will provide an opportunity to University faculty and innovators in partnership with private sector actors to develop new or improved technologies, create startup enterprises or spin-offs based on innovative technologies or products that have passed proof of concept, to protect intellectual property (IP) and to commercialize research results. Project results are ultimately expected to contribute towards regional economic and workforce development by spurring high-tech small business growth and “lab to marketplace” development.

Beneficiaries of the **RSIF Cooperability** grant will gain access to high-quality complimentary capacity building and professional development opportunities to facilitate development of commercialization pathways, build networks and encourage cross-disciplinary collaboration.

4. Grant size and duration

The size of each grant is US\$ 50,000 for a **maximum period of 2 years from the time of award**.

5. Eligibility criteria

- a. The Call is open to faculty and students involved in RSIF PhD program in the selected [Africa Host Universities](#) (AHU) who have an innovative idea or product that could potentially be commercialized. Applicants are encouraged to identify and work with private sector (registered legal entities) companies and International Partner institutions³ who have experience in innovation development and commercialization of knowledge. Applicants may apply individually or as a team. In each case, the applicant must demonstrate cooperation with the private sector in carrying out the activities of the project. The lead applicant must be a member of faculty of the AHU. Students may be part of a project proposal but cannot be lead applicants. Qualified female faculty are encouraged to apply. The project proposal must be linked with the RSIF PhD program in the African Host University.
- b. An applicant is encouraged to identify a **legally registered business entity** and an International Partner to be part of the project proposal. The business partner/firm should be registered in the relevant national central register of business entities and have been in operation for at least two years. Project partners are obliged to submit a copy of the operating license or certificate from the Central Register of Business Entities (depending on the type of legal entity).
- c. The lead applicant is encouraged to integrate faculty from relevant departments/ schools in the University to support the successful implementation of the project.

³ An international partner may be from one of the universities or institutions already enlisted as an international partner institution or from one of the AHUs (see list on the RSIF website) or another institution with a similar profile

6. Proposal Guidelines

- a. Project proposals must be aligned with PASET priority thematic areas. The PASET priority thematic areas are:
 - ICTs including big data and artificial intelligence;
 - food security and agribusiness;
 - minerals, mining and materials engineering;
 - energy including renewables; and
 - climate change.
- b. The proposal should contain the following sections: introduction, description of the innovative idea/technology, objectives, expected outputs, methods to be used, description of activities, gender considerations, risk analysis, ethical considerations, intellectual property management, team composition including role of partners, budget, matching support, and references. The proposal should be no more than 15 pages including references. It should be written in Times New Romans font, size 12, single spacing, normal margins.
- c. The applicant may submit only one proposal where he/she is the project leader and may also be a co-leader/applicant in only one other proposal submitted. The applicant should not appear in more than two proposals submitted. Faculty who are recipients an RSIF Research or Innovation Grant cannot be lead applicants in this Call, however, they can be part of the project team.
- d. The lead applicant should submit a letter of support from the AHU signed by the Dean or Principal of the School or College that is hosting the RSIF PhD program.

7. Budget Guidelines

- a. The applicants should use the budget template, which can be accessed from this [link](#): Applicants should indicate a cash or in-kind matching funding of at least 15% of the total grant amount requested from RSIF. This can be shared among the partners in the proposal. The matching funding may be from a variety sources, including RSIF AHU, business partner entity or International partner. The matching funding may be cash or in-kind contribution (goods or services). The budget requested from RSIF should not exceed **US\$50,000**.
- b. Activities that can be financed include; direct project costs such as the cost of lab/field work, travel, meetings, services, equipment and supplies for product development, business incubation costs e.g developing business models, value chain, market feasibility studies/ analyses and testing, branding, license registration, Intellectual property management and where possible pilot production.
- c. The applicant's organization of affiliation (AHU) may charge **overhead** not exceeding 10% of direct project costs. The organization may wish to waiver overheads and consider it as in-kind support to the project. See budget template for more details.

8. Evaluation process and criteria

a. Evaluation Process

- All proposals are evaluated against the criteria stated below. Each proposal is reviewed by at least three internationally recognized independent experts.

- Evaluated proposals are submitted to the RSIF Grants Independent Technical Committee (GITC) for the final assessment, selection and recommendations to PASET Executive Board for funding.
- The PASET Executive Board make the final decision on the selected projects to be funded in line with the recommendations of the RSIF GITC
- The list of the projects selected for co-financing shall be published on the RSIF website (<https://www.rsif-paset.org/>)

a) b. Evaluation criteria (Table 1)

Table 1. Criteria for evaluation of proposals

Criteria	Max. Allocated	Score
Originality and innovativeness of the project idea	30	
Scientific and technical quality of the proposal	30	
Potential for commercialization/market application and sustainability	20	
Budget, financial structure	10	
Capacity of the project team, team composition	10	
Total	100	

9. Ethical issues

In the process of preparing the grant 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 proposed project involves human or animal subjects.

10. Risk Management Plan

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 template that is provided.

11. Application templates

- i. Complete the online application and submit together with the required supporting documents *via* the online system at this link [Application for RSIF Cooperability Grant - 2021 \(rsif-paset.org\)](https://www.rsif-paset.org/)
- ii. The online system will accept the following file types of doc, docx, pdf, rtf, zip, rar, jpg, jpeg, png, bmp, tif. The maximum file size accepted for any single file is 5 MB.
- iii. Refer to the Proposal Guidelines document for guidance in completing your application. Should there be any challenges navigating the application system, please contact rsifgrants@icipe.org
- iv. Refer to the [list of selected RSIF African Host Universities](#) and the respective approved thematic areas to establish partnerships.
- v. The proposal must be written in English or French.
- vi. Applications for the Call should be submitted no later than **31 May 2021, 23:59hrs EAT**

- vii. The table below provides a checklist of the documents required for completion of the application:

Documents required for RSIF -Cooperability Grants Program application	
1.	Project Proposal
2.	Project Budget using the budget template
3.	Workplan and Result Matrix using template provided
4.	Curriculum vitae of key research team members
5.	A letter of support signed by the Dean or Principal of College or School hosting the RSIF PhD Program at the RSIF African Host University
Documents to be submitted by a private company include:	
1.	A photocopy of a Certificate from the Central Register of Business Entities
2.	Support letter from the private company indicating their commitment and support for the project

12. **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 Fund nor icipe as the RCU. All decisions of the Approval Committees are final and are not subject to further claims or revisions, with 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](#).

13. **Contact Information and Support**

A webinar session to provide clarifications on the call register in advance on <https://us02web.zoom.us/meeting/register/tZModO6vpzpkHNQ3srHvsRUKf3WUT2zNCgDY>. After registering, you will receive a confirmation email containing information about joining the meeting. For more information visit <https://www.rsif-paset.org/>.

Further enquiries can be sent to rsifgrants@icipe.org
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