

SARECO

Swiss-African Research Cooperation

Call for Proposals

Visiting Research Fellowships for Advanced PHD Students and Early Postdoctoral Researchers

in

Global and Environmental Health and Nanosciences

Grant period: 2016 - 2017

Research areas / disciplines: **Global and Environmental Health
Nanosciences**

Total budget available: CHF 340,000

SARECO Grant per Project: Max. CHF 70,000

Additional third party funding: Strongly encouraged

Submission deadline: 30 September 2016

Background

Switzerland and South Africa started a joint action in 2007 by signing a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) on bilateral research activities (Swiss-South Africa Joint Research Programme; SSAJRP in short). In the meantime, more than 100 joint research projects have been awarded and jointly implemented in Switzerland and South Africa, accompanied by numerous student and faculty exchanges. For the period 2013-2016, the scope of cooperation was extended to additional partner countries in Africa (SARECO). Following an extensive survey among Swiss Higher Education and Research Institutions, seven additional countries in Eastern and Western Africa with considerable research potential were identified. Three main fields of collaborative action emerged, among these the life sciences, and global and environmental health.

In order to build on the existing network, to consolidate the research collaborations, to strengthen international cooperation and to facilitate the transition into the funding period 2017-2020 (to be confirmed by Swiss Parliament), the Leading House (LH) of the University of Basel now calls for applications for visiting fellowships in the areas of *Global and Environmental Health* and *Nanosciences*. The fellowships cover stays in research groups, including field, laboratory and desk work for a period between 3 and 12 months. Regions eligible for partnership pertain to Eastern, Southern and Western Africa. Eligible costs cover equipment, research funds and mobility stipends.

The visiting fellowships are open to advanced PHD students and early postdoctoral researchers in the aforementioned fields that are further specified below.

Background information on the scientific fields and needs to be addressed by fellowship holders:

In the field of *Global and Environmental Health*, we encourage scientific inquiry, research and action that focus on the health of populations, placing particular emphasis on improving people's health and wellbeing and achieving equity for health for all people. With regard to global health, issues that transcend national borders or have economic, political and social impacts on a global scale should be addressed. Environmental health pertains to a branch of public health that addresses all aspects of the natural and built-up environment that might affect human health and wellbeing. Hence, it includes research on protecting the natural environment and ecosystem functioning which, in turn, is pivotal to ensure human health and wellbeing.

Nanosciences will be interpreted in its broadest sense pertaining to basic or applied research with materials exhibiting nanostructure. Although basic research is included in the call, particular emphasis will be placed upon the translation of basic concepts of nanoscience into disruptive technologies addressing the fundamental needs of society. The societal needs of Africa will be given high priority and 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.

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 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 can also be covered by this instrument. 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. Applicants from Switzerland submit their proposal to the Leading House Basel by writing to Erich.Thaler@unibas.ch. Applicants from Africa submit their proposal to the African Academy of Sciences via applications@aasciences.ac.ke

All proposals are accompanied by a cover letter that should clearly explain the reasons for applying, give a succinct overview of the current research work done by the applicant and highlight 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. Further documents that accompany the proposal are: (i) a *curriculum vitae* (max. 2 pages); (ii) a complete list of publications; and (iii) a research proposal of the planned collaborative activity (max. 5 pages).

A period of 3 to a maximum of 12 months can be applied for. Applicants are furthermore encouraged to seek additional sources of funding that they and/or their partners could contribute to the project.

All documents have to be submitted by 30 September 2016 17:00 local time.

Eligible costs

The fellowship instrument 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 a maximum of 20% of the award are eligible.

For visits to Switzerland, a 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 organisation, etc.) is able to recover the VAT.

Submission of proposal

The application consists of two parts:

- An administrative part:
 - Personal data of the Swiss main applicant
 - Personal data of the African main applicant
 - Personal data of the co-applicant(s) from Switzerland and/or Africa (if applicable)
 - Basic data on the project (e.g. title, research field, starting date, duration, summary)
 - Amount of funding requested
 - Information on authorisations required in Switzerland and/or Africa
 - Other information (e.g. whether the project benefits from other fundings, the name of the Swiss/African university/research institution at which the planned project will be implemented, information on national and international

collaborations, statement concerning already available funds or funds requested elsewhere)

- The research related part:
 - The research activity plan (max. 5 pages)
 - The CV (max. 2 pages)
 - Complete list of publication from the applicant and 5 selected publications from all researchers involved).
 - Other documents (if any)

Evaluation

Peer review: Proposals for Visiting Research Fellowships will be reviewed according to international peer-review standard procedures, jointly organized by the LH University of Basel and the African Academy of Sciences (AAS). 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 and the AAS.

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

- Scope of proposed work fitting into *Global and Environmental Health* and/or *Nanosciences*
- 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 Swiss main applicant will receive a decision letter from the LH University of 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 Swiss main applicant will be responsible for transmitting the decision to the other Swiss applicants. The African main applicant will be informed by AAS via a decision letter.

The review of the submitted applications will take place within the 2 months following submission and results will be announced by mid-December 2016.

The earliest possible starting date for the Visiting Research Fellowships is January 2017.

Reporting

Swiss and African project partners will report jointly to LH University of Basel and AAS. Whereas the scientific report will be sent in to both LH University of Basel and AAS, the financial report will be submitted to LH University of Basel only. 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 programme. 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 (www.snf.ch), calls of the so-called Research for Development/ r4d instrument (http://www.snf.ch/SiteCollectionDocuments/int_sdc_snf_fund_factsheet.pdf), calls of ERANet Africa and the Swiss Government Excellence Scholarships (www.sbf.admin.ch/scholarships ENG). Funding information for Swiss – African Research Cooperation is also available on www.sareco.org, a newly launched and growing database for joint research work funding.

Further information can be obtained with:

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