

Rothamsted International African Fellows Programme



Programme Guidelines

Objectives

The Rothamsted International African Fellows Programme (AFP) aims to provide problem-focused advanced research training in Europe, for mid-career scientists from Sub-Saharan Africa.

The purpose of the AFP is to assist in capacity building, institutional strengthening and knowledge transfer in order to empower resource-poor countries to find relevant solutions to the problems of achieving sustainable agricultural production, improving rural development and conservation of biodiversity.

The development of effective partnerships is fundamental to ensuring the success of the programme, where all partners contribute, gaining mutual recognition and respect, in order to build long-term strategic alliances.

Fellowships will be awarded on a competitive basis through an assessment panel and will normally be for periods of **6 months** although they can vary from 4 – 12 months depending on the nature of the project.

Eligibility

The AFP is open to ‘mid-career’ scientists who are citizens of a Sub-Saharan African country, or whose scientific work has been based in Africa and directed to problems of relevance to Sub-Saharan Africa.

The programme is not applicable to students at the start of their career or senior scientists in the later stages of their career.

There is an absolute requirement that applicants undertake to return to their home country in Africa, or the African country in which they are based.

Applications will be considered on scientific merit and the potential for impact of the project on African agriculture, regardless of political or religious status. Applications from women are encouraged. Bursaries will not be awarded for general training, or as part of higher degree courses (MSc / PhD).

Financial Implications

The African Fellowship Scheme is fully funded and any successful Fellow should not be financially inconvenienced. However, the Fellowship award does NOT make any provision for dependents.

Rothamsted International will pay for one return travel trip only for the named Fellow from their country of origin. The Fellow will receive a monthly stipend to cover accommodation and subsistence costs. This is currently £1,100 (UK pounds sterling), or equivalent, regardless of the European country in which the Fellow is based.

The European Partner can apply for a budget to cover the costs of the project incurred by the European Partner Institution, up to a maximum of £13,200 per year, or equivalent.

Bench fees *per se*, cannot be covered. Items of equipment are not normally covered, but costs such as laboratory consumables, computing access and office space will be considered.

Subject Areas

Projects should be based on research targeted at a problem which is of benefit to small-scale African farmers, directed at crop or livestock systems, provide technology to increase food security and /or household income and demonstrate a clear path from research to application.

Projects will focus on a scientific research problem that needs to be urgently addressed because it is a constraint to agricultural production and hence the practical improvement of rural livelihoods. Proposals should provide evidence that there is a demand for the work in Sub-Saharan Africa. The nature of the problem and the solution offered by the proposed research should be clearly stated in the application form. Proposals should also outline how the project will have a practical application. Projects focusing on food processing and socio-economic research are not within the remit of the programme. Examples of potential project areas include the following (these are examples only and other areas will also be considered):

- Identification of the geographical variation in a pest semiochemical produced by plants, in order to ensure efficacy in different regions / countries
- Characterisation of and/or strategies to control a new pest, pathogen or other plant protection problem which is recognised to be a high priority at national or regional level
- Determining the role of particular nutrients or cultivation techniques to enhance soil fertility or help protect agroecosystems
- Crop improvement using molecular markers or other techniques to produce varieties adapted to withstand regionally important abiotic or biotic stresses (e.g. drought tolerance)
- Characterisation and/or treatment of livestock diseases leading to improved understanding of epidemiological and control measures. Note that for livestock topics, the development of novel feeds or nutritional supplements will not normally be considered
- Addressing agronomic constraints associated with the introduction of new, underutilised or alternative crops or cropping strategies (intercropping, multiple cropping) to provide food security and to alleviate poverty.

Prior to submission of a full Fellowship proposal, the African candidate and nominated European partner will have held detailed discussions to determine the components of the project, including timescale, experiments, report writing and technology transfer activities. The dissemination of findings of the experimental work for follow-on activities, leading to impact and adoption of improved practices is an important aspect of the Fellowship programme, and this feature of the project should be thought through from the start.

Rothamsted International will help to facilitate contact with potential European project partners, but will not be responsible for the development of the actual proposal (see below).

Submission Procedures

There will be a two-stage submission procedure:

a) Pre-Proposal

A short pre-proposal should be submitted by those considering making a full application. Application forms for this can be downloaded from the web site:

http://www.rothamsted-international.org/HTML/Fellowships/AFP_main_page.html

or can be requested from the AFP Co-ordinator at: rothamsted.international@bbsrc.ac.uk

Pre-proposals can be submitted by individuals with the support of their Home Organisation, regardless of whether or not a European Partner Organisation has been identified. All candidates must attach a full CV with their pre-proposals before applications can be considered. Failure to do so will result in the pre-proposal being rejected. For pre-proposals without a partner scientist or European Organisation identified, Rothamsted International will endeavour to link the potential candidate to an appropriate European centre of excellence and help to establish communication. Candidates should be aware that this may take some time, and there is no guarantee that an appropriate partner can be found. Once a partner has been found, the candidate and European partner will be expected to work together to complete the full application.

Pre-proposals will be acknowledged on receipt, and reviewed on need for the work, scientific quality, candidate background and potential impact. Advice will be given by email as to whether a full application should be submitted.

Full Proposal

Application forms for full proposals will be supplied by email to selected candidates by the Fellowship Co-ordinator. They will **not** be available from the web site. Please ensure that all applications include the following information:

- *Applicant's own Case for Support:* showing how the research will be applied and benefit the Home Organisation's research programme –
 - i) summary of the problem in Sub-Saharan Africa
 - ii) possible solutions and constraints
 - iii) proposed research solution proposed
 - iv) nature of Fellowship project
 - v) the route for dissemination.
- *A supporting statement from the Applicant's Head of Organisation:* a statement of support must be provided by the Director or appropriate equivalent from the applicant's home Organisation. This should include:
 - i) Project title
 - ii) statement testifying to the benefits to the individual and the Organisation and relevance to development issues in the home country likely to be derived from the visit.
 - iii) an indication of whether the applicant is holding a permanent salaried appointment to which they will return, and whether salary will be paid during the Fellowship period.
 - iv) acknowledgement of and support for the Impact Assessment Form, and agreement to provide a statement on impact achieved one year after the Fellow has returned home.

- v) Accompanying letters should be on official Organisation letter-headed paper showing full contact details.
- *Publication list* over the last 5 years: preferably listed in order of articles in internationally refereed journals, national or regionally circulated journals, articles for farming press and a list of conference proceedings and presentations. Where key publications are not available from accessible, refereed journals, the European Partner is responsible for providing a substantiated case for scientific merit.
- *Referees*: the names and addresses of three scientists, preferably one international referee and one not associated with the home organisation, who are closely acquainted with the applicant's scientific attainments and who, having seen these criteria, would be prepared to recommend the exchange. Rothamsted International will require references from nominated referees within one to two weeks of the deadline for submission of Full Proposals. Applicants must ensure their referees have been alerted and are willing to meet our request.
- *Support by European Partner Scientist from the European Organisation*: a statement of support must be provided by the European Partner. This should include:
 - i) Project Title
 - ii) details of the project on which the applicant would work, and relevance to the development issues of the applicant's home country
 - iii) the tenure of the Fellowship applied for and suggested start date
 - iv) Fellowship costs anticipated to be incurred by the European Partner Organisation
 - v) a signature of European Organisation Director or Head of Department confirming a willingness to receive the prospective visitor to carry out the research project proposed within the fixed period of the Fellowship tenure
 - vi) the project leader must also provide a *summary* CV with a list of publications and records of previous supervision of degree-level and post-doctoral researchers.

Closing Dates

Information on closing dates for pre-proposals will be posted on the web site. Electronic submissions are preferred; paper copies or faxed documents are acceptable. The deadline for full proposals will be given to applicants who have passed the pre-proposal round. For full proposals, applications must be submitted on paper containing original signatures of the applicant, the Director (or appropriate Deputy) from the applicants Home Organisation, and the European Partner Scientist from the European Organisation.

Contacts

For any enquiries or further information please contact the AFP Co-ordinator, Rothamsted International, Harpenden, Hertfordshire, AL5 2JQ, UK.

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