

## Knowledge for Tomorrow – Cooperative Research Projects in Sub-Saharan Africa

### Call for Proposals for Research and Training Fellowships for Junior African Researchers in the Engineering Sciences

**Deadline**

September 15, 2010

**Contact****The Natural and Engineering  
Science, Medicine****Africa Initiative**

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## 1. Thematic Scope

The most pressing challenge for the engineering sciences in Africa is the development of sustainable value chains taking advantage of the existing resources and preserving the natural environment at the same time. On the one hand, these processes should be developed in Africa for the use of the local people, on the other hand they must be competitive in a globalized world. Therefore, the focus of this call lies on the development of appropriate “low tech”, “high tech” and “adapted” technologies for Sub-Saharan Africa which could be ‘small scale’ but should particularly be controlled by local communities. Product development should be sustainable, simple in maintenance, environmentally-friendly and aim at poverty reduction and the creation of added value. Obviously, major problems need to be solved regarding the food crisis. Therefore, an important aspect of the call lies on agriculture, e.g. innovative technologies for agricultural and food production adapted to the local conditions, food distribution or models for combined (cascadic) use of biomass for food, fodder, material, energy. Another field could cover aspects of developing new ways for the use of primary and secondary resources in Africa which also looks at ways to provide the commodities as well as the recycling and disposal of products. Water is clearly a key issue, e.g. the question of how to deliver a sustainable supply for domestic and industrial use. Also, the development, construction, and maintenance of infrastructure represents a serious challenge in Africa, especially in the fast growing urban areas. New concepts and ideas for possible solutions need to be developed urgently.

## 2. Funding Opportunities

The call offers an 18 months fellowship to junior researchers in the Engineering Sciences either holding a PhD which must be granted at the end of 2010 at the latest, or an MSc in combination with a position as a junior lecturer at a research institution in Sub-Saharan Africa. It is provided by a consortium of European foundations led by the Volkswagen Foundation and the Fundação Gulbenkian. Project ideas must be developed by the applicant

and should be executed mainly at an African host institution. The Fellow should explain with which institution he/she proposes to collaborate and on what research issues and topics. Proposals can only be considered if there is a substantive and explicitly stated cooperation between African and European academics working on the project. Subsequent support is envisioned at a later stage as a follow-up activity. The foundations can provide funds only to academic institutions. However, applicants are encouraged to develop product development schemes and to collaborate with industry, if appropriate. It is not possible for the foundations to fund projects for development aid or short-term applications.

### **Fellowship**

The Fellowship covers salary, research and travel costs up to a maximum of 25,000 EUR over 18 months. In addition, for an individual Mentorship Program up to 5,000 EUR can be applied for. The official grant recipient will be the scientific host institution where the Fellow will be employed. Basic infrastructure should be provided by the African host institutions; the Fellowship may include administrative costs for the host institution up to a maximum of 1,500 EUR.

The budget items must be justified specifically and could include:

- Salary of Fellow (depending on customary local salaries and experience); if not already employed at the African research institution;
- Salaries of students involved in the research project;
- Traveling to conferences/workshops;
- Scientific/Training visits to African/non-African institutions;
- Soft skill development, e.g. language courses or courses for project management;
- Consumables;
- Costs of field work (but not vehicle purchase);
- Publication costs;
- Small equipment (max. 20% of total budget). Basic infrastructure should be provided by the host institution;
- Administrative costs (max. 1,500 EUR)
- Additional and optional Mentorship Program (up to 5,000 EUR)

### **Mentorship Program**

Through the Mentorship Program, the Fellow can establish links to two leading researchers of her/his choice – one from a European and/or one from an African institution. The mentorship is intended to extend the Fellow's scientific networks and skills base. Up to 5,000 EUR can be applied for under the Mentorship Program for meetings between the Fellow and the mentors. The mentors must agree to act as supporters for the Fellow – assisting with

their career development through, for instance, introducing them to peer networks and helping them to publish in international journals. They should not be supervisors or main collaborators in the project and they should not be based at the Fellow's host institutions.

### 3. Application and Selection Process

This is a two-stage process, and **proposals must be submitted as one .pdf document in English by September 15, 2010** to [svc2010@volkswagenstiftung.de](mailto:svc2010@volkswagenstiftung.de).

#### Stage 1

The applications will be reviewed by an international expert committee. Decisions will be communicated by December 2010, including recommendations made by the review committee. The applications must include all of the following:

- Project description written in English of not more than 1,500 words with:
  - Research proposal;
  - Work plan including timelines;
  - Budget;
- CV of the applicant – no more than 2 pages;
- Letter of support from the African host institution stating that it will provide the basic infrastructure, and specifying the logistic and/or financial support it will provide for the applicant;
- Letter of support of the European partner institution;
- Letter of support of the mentors (if applicable);
- Statement of the applicant whether this application has been or will be sent to another funding organization.

#### Stage 2

Successful applicants of stage 1 will be invited to present their project at the first conference "Sustainable Value Chains for Africa 2011" in early 2011. At the conference, they will also be interviewed by an international peer-review committee. Final decisions on fellowship grants will be made in spring 2011. While the most convincing fellows of stage 2 will be able to start their projects immediately, others might get the opportunity to revise their proposals and to present them again to the foundations.