

Funding Initiative

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

Call for Pre-Proposals for Postdoctoral Fellowships in the Social Sciences in Sub-Saharan Africa

Deadline for Pre-Proposals

June 15, 2011

Information

Africa Initiative
The Humanities and
Social Sciences,
The Engineering Sciences

The International Team

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1. Objectives

This Postdoctoral Fellowship Programme, funded by the Gulbenkian Foundation, the Volkswagen Foundation and other European partners aims at providing sustainable support for research in Sub-Saharan Africa. Besides an African-European cooperation, special emphasis is put on the development and extension of academic networks within Africa.

This call is part of the Foundations' career development strategy for African researchers in which junior and senior postdoctoral fellows should take responsibility for developing and executing their own research project and show leadership responsibilities for their research group (in the case of senior fellows). The project must be carried out in collaboration with a European partner institution. The call is open to all scholars from Sub-Saharan Africa active in the research fields mentioned below.

2. Thematic Scope

Current social, economic and political developments in contemporary Sub-Saharan societies are at the core of this call for proposals. Cultural and religious as well as historical questions and approaches can be included but should not be the main focus of the project. Projects understanding African countries as entangled in global interdependencies will be given preference. These interdependencies refer to North-South as well as South-South relations. Processes of globalization in the African context and their social and/or cultural impact on societies can be an important aspect of the project. Possible research areas include: processes of urbanization, the emergence and scope of violent conflicts, peace building strategies, foreign actors in Africa, inter-African relationships, questions of social order, measures aiming at poverty reduction. All projects should have a strong reference to present questions and problems concerning Sub-Saharan Africa and transcend disciplinary boundaries and limitations by exploring linkages between disciplinary

approaches.

The programme is open to applications from disciplines like sociology, cultural sociology, political science, economics, social anthropology, and social or political history. Only researchers from Sub-Saharan countries are eligible for funding.

3. Funding Opportunities

This Postdoctoral Fellowship Programme aims at supporting young African postdoctoral researchers in Sub-Saharan Africa by (1) providing an opportunity to enhance both skills and academic qualifications (2) strengthening partnerships between African and European scholars, and (3) developing and extending academic networks inside Africa. The programme includes both junior and senior fellowships. For both fellowship types, a cooperation with a European partner institution is required. Furthermore, up to 25,000 EUR for an associated European Postdoctoral Fellow - to enhance the exchange of scholarly expertise - can be applied for. Additionally, the possibility of an accompanying assistance by mentors is given. The applications for junior and senior fellowships should include a statement by the Fellow concerning the institution she/he intends to collaborate with and what research topics will be covered. The official grant recipient will be the academic institution in Africa where the Fellow will be employed. Basic infrastructure should be provided by the African institution; the fellowship may include administrative costs for this institution up to a maximum of 5,000 EUR.

Junior fellowship

A three year fellowship (36 months) is offered to outstanding African junior researchers holding a Ph. D. (not more than three years after completion of Ph. D.). Project ideas must be developed independently by the applicant and should be realized primarily at an African institution. The fellowship covers salary, research, and travel costs up to a maximum of 90,000 EUR.

The budget must be justified specifically. It could include:

- Salary of Fellow or topping up if already employed at the African research institution (depending on experience and customary local salaries),
- Salaries of graduate students involved in the research project,
- Travelling to conferences/workshops,
- Research visits to African/non-African institutions of up to 3 - 4 months per year,
- Language courses, or courses for project management etc.,
- Consumables,
- Publication costs,
- Administrative costs (max. 5,000 EUR),

- Small equipment (max. 10 % of total budget).

Additional and optional budget items

- Additional European Postdoctoral Fellow (optional, max. 25,000 EUR),
- Additional Mentorship Programme (optional, max. 10,000 EUR),
- Costs of Preparatory Meeting for the full proposal with European partner institution and European Postdoctoral Fellow (optional).

Senior fellowship

A three year fellowship (36 months) is offered to researchers with a substantial research experience (3 to 6 years of postdoctoral experience). Applicants will need to demonstrate experience and achievements (as documented by their publication record) appropriate to the extended funding and research group leader responsibilities. The fellowship covers salary, research and travel costs up to a maximum of 120,000 EUR.

The budget must be justified specifically and could include:

- Salary of Fellow or topping-up if already employed at the African research institution (depending on experience and customary local salaries),
- Salary of 1 - 2 Ph. D. students involved in the project, (co-)supervised by the applicant,
- Salaries of graduate students involved in the research project,
- Travelling to conferences/workshops,
- Research visits to African/non-African institutions of up to 3 - 4 months per year,
- Language courses, or courses for project management etc.,
- Consumables,
- Publication costs,
- Administrative costs (max. 5,000 EUR),
- Small equipment (max. 10 % of total budget).

Additional and optional budget items

- Additional European Postdoctoral Fellow (optional, max. 25,000 EUR),
- Additional Mentorship Programme (optional, max. 10,000 EUR),
- Costs of Preparatory Meeting for the full proposal with European partner institution and European Postdoctoral Fellow (optional).

Mentorship Programme

By taking part in the optional Mentorship Programme, 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 offers the possibility of scientific networking and knowledge exchange between Mentors and Fellow. For meetings between the Fellow and the Mentors, up to 10,000 EUR can be applied for. The Mentors must agree to act as supporters of the Fellow by encouraging the career development, introducing them to peer networks and assisting with publication in international journals. Mentors must not be supervisors or main collaborators in the project and should be based at an academic institution different from the institution where the Fellow is employed. Additionally, the Mentors must not be identical with the European partner institution. The role of the Mentors is meant to give further assistance beyond the support of the European partner institution.

Additional support for Postdoctoral Fellows from Europe

As optional feature of this programme, it is possible to receive funding of up to 25,000 EUR for a European Postdoctoral Fellow. The funds are meant to support European Postdoctoral Fellows to participate actively in the research project outlined by the African applicant. The African Fellow needs to apply for these additional funds for his/her European partner. The European Fellow must be based at a European research institution. The role of the European Postdoctoral Fellow in the project has to be described and justified by the applicant.

Additional workshops, trainings, summer schools

Funding of workshops, trainings, symposia, and summer schools in addition to training courses which are part of the research projects can be applied for. These events should take place in Sub-Saharan Africa and should aim for a high visibility and for the strengthening of networking activities between African junior and senior researchers as well as European junior and senior researchers. Applicants are requested to send draft proposals to the Volkswagen Foundation. If approved, the applicants will be invited to submit a full proposal. Full proposals should be submitted at least four months before the proposed activity. They can be submitted any time during the course of the fellowship.

4. Application and Selection Process

The application is organized as a three-stage process, and pre-proposals must be submitted as one pdf file in English by **15 June 2011** to socialsciences2011@volkswagenstiftung.de, or alternatively via the electronic application system (<https://portal.volkswagenstiftung.de/vwsantrag/login.do?siteLanguage=en>).

Stage 1

The pre-proposal applications will be reviewed by an international expert committee. Decisions including recommendations will be communicated by October 2011. Please, note the attached check-list for pre-proposals for Postdoctoral Fellowships for the Social Sciences in Sub-Saharan Africa. Successful applicants of stage 1 may apply for funding of preparatory meetings of the prospective Fellow with the European partner institution and the European Postdoctoral Fellow (if applicable). Date, venue, participants, and costs of these meetings have to be specified already in the pre-proposals.

Stage 2

Successful applicants of stage 1 **will be invited to submit full proposals**. All full proposals will undergo an international review process. Details of the requirements for full proposals including the recommendations made by the review committee will be forwarded to the successful applicants of stage 1.

Stage 3

Successful applicants of stage 2 **will be invited to present their project** at a selection workshop to be held in Africa in early 2012. During the conference they will also be interviewed by an international review panel.

5. Notes for Applicants

The Foundations can only provide funds to academic institutions. Furthermore, it is not possible to fund projects for development aid or short-term applications. The Foundations cannot consider applications which have been submitted at the same time either in the same or some similar form to other funding institutions. Also, the Foundations are not able to allocate funding to cover commitments entered into prior to the receipt of the grant letter.

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Check-list for Pre-Proposals for Postdoctoral Fellowships for the Social Sciences in Sub-Saharan Africa

Pre-proposals have to be written in English and have to be submitted by the applicant. Particular format requirements or application forms do not exist for this call. The project proposal must be submitted either by email to socialsciences2011@volkswagenstiftung.de or alternatively via the electronic application system (<https://portal.volkswagenstiftung.de/vwsantrag/login.do?siteLanguage=en>). Application deadline for project pre-proposals: 15 June 2011.

A pre-proposal should contain the following information on the front page:

- Full name, address and signature of the applicant,
- Indication of programme/call for pre-proposals the application refers to,
- Brief informative title of the proposed project,
- Duration of funding and sum applied for.

The following information is needed for the evaluation of the pre-proposal:

- A summary of the applicant's current research/work (max. 1,000 words),
- Expertise and role of the participating European partner institution,
- Expertise and role of the European Postdoctoral Fellow (if applicable),
- Date, venue, participants and costs of preparatory meetings for full proposals (only funded for successful applicants of stage 1),
- Description of the topic and of the relevant information for the realization (max. 1,000 words):
 - o aim of the project,
 - o state of the art including references,
 - o preliminary work,
 - o theories and methodological approach,
 - o working programme and time schedule, including distribution of tasks among Fellow and European Postdoctoral Fellow (if applicable),
 - o budget.

As appendices:

- CV of the applicant – not more than 2 pages,
- Letter of support from the African research institution stating that it will provide the basic infrastructure and
- Specifying the logistics and/or financial support it will provide for the applicant,

- Letter of support of the European partner institution,
- Statement of the applicant whether this application has been or will be sent to another funding organization,
- Description of the role of the European Postdoctoral Fellow in the project – if applicable,
- Statement of the European Postdoctoral Fellow – if applicable,
- Letter of support of the Mentors (if applicable).

PLEASE NOTE:

Applications are only accepted if a preceding pre-proposal was evaluated positively. Deadlines will be communicated with the approval of the pre-proposal.

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