

TWAS – BMFTR PROGRAMME FOR CAPACITY BUILDING IN AFRICAN COUNTRIES LAGGING IN SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY

“SEED GRANT FOR NEW AFRICAN PRINCIPAL INVESTIGATORS” (SG-NAPI)

APPLICATION GUIDELINES

Applicants are advised to read this document carefully to ensure that they fulfill all the requirements in preparing the application and are familiar with the general policies and guidelines for the programme.

General Information

- **The German Ministry of Research, Technology and Space (BMFTR)** – <https://www.bmftr.bund.de> – aims at enhancing Germany’s innovative strength, creating sustainable employment and improving the quality of education. The Ministry provides institutional funding for research organizations (except for universities) and programmes, represents Germany internationally in R&D matters and coordinates overall public R&D spending and structures.
- **The World Academy of Sciences (TWAS) – for the advancement of science in developing countries** – www.twas.org – is an autonomous international organization founded in Trieste, Italy, in 1983. Under a 1991 agreement, the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) assumed administration of TWAS funds and personnel. TWAS represents the best of science in the developing world. Its principal aim is to promote scientific capacity and excellence for science-based development in the Global South.
- **SG-NAPI** is fully funded by the BMFTR and aims to support early-career scientists in Sub-Saharan Africa, with particular emphasis on Least Developed Countries (LDCs), who:
 - a) have completed their PhD studies within the last 5 years *and returned home* within the last 36 months and are in the process of getting their research established, or
 - b) have been working abroad but are actively seeking to go back to their home country or, preferably, are in the process of securing a position in an institution in their home country, to contribute to their communities.

- **Number of available awards** – Within the framework of the multi-component SG-NAPI programme, the BMFTR and TWAS will assign at least 20 awards to early-career scientists to set up a research project in countries lagging in science and technology in the Sub-Saharan African region.

Components of the Programme

- Scientists can apply for several or all of the following components of the programme:
 - i) Equipment start-up grant: up to USD 20,000; allowing scientists to equip their laboratories. For any single item of equipment of USD 5,000 in value or above, a valid proforma invoice (quotation) from a supplier must be uploaded to the application portal. Purchase of fuel, fees/salaries for experts or consultants or labourers, laptops, tablets, drones and laboratory animals is not accepted and will not be covered.
 - ii) Consumables grant: up to USD 15,000; allowing scientists to acquire consumables for specific research projects. For any single item of equipment of USD 5,000 in value or above, a valid proforma invoice (quotation) from a supplier must be uploaded to the application portal. Purchase of fuel, fees/ salaries for experts or consultants or labourers, laptops, tablets, drones and laboratory animals is not accepted and will not be covered.
 - iii) MSc. training grant: up to USD 10,000; allowing scientists to train and teach M.Sc. students within their research group. For this component, the M.Sc. form (available in the annex below) must be filled and uploaded on the application portal.
 - iv) International conference grant: successful candidates will be provided with up to USD 3,000; for participation in an international conference.
 - v) Industrial link grant: up to USD 4,000; to cover travel and incidental expenses as well as laboratory bench costs of scientists who cooperate with industrial partners. The industrial partner must be based in Germany *only*. An *acceptance letter from the industrial partner* must be uploaded on the application portal. Should you not have an identified a partner at the time of application, you may do so by submitting a request and justification to TWAS after receiving the award, if your application is successful.

vi) South-North collaborative mobility grant: worth up to USD 10,000; to cover travel to the collaborative laboratory, accommodation during the visit and laboratory bench costs. The research visit must be carried out by the Principal Investigator. Under this component, only the following form of collaboration is eligible for support:

- Africa-Germany Cooperation visit(s) at a laboratory in Germany with which a collaboration can be established and where new skills can be acquired).

Should you not have a collaborator at the time of application, you may do so by submitting a request and justification to TWAS after receiving the award, if your application is successful.

vii) Open access international publication grant: each successful candidate will be provided up to USD 2,000 to cover fees for publication in reputable open access journals.

viii) Skills-building workshop grant: each successful candidate will be provided with an opportunity to participate in a workshop which provides advice and guidance on a range of soft skills, such as: writing research proposals, presentation and communication, sustainable development, plagiarism, etc. The event will be organized by TWAS.

- The programme has an additional component which seeks to enhance the productivity of female scientists returning to academia after a maternity leave:

ix) female “scientist-after-child” grant: support for a research assistant (up to 12 months) may be offered to women scientists in the following cases:

- a) Scientist with a child up to 12 months of age;
- b) Scientist going through a pregnancy at the time of the application.

- One award may include several or all of the components outlined above: it is granted for a period of 30 months, however a final report will be required a year after receiving the last item of equipment/consumables.

Subject Areas

- Scientists working in the following research areas can apply for an SG-NAPI award:

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| ✓ Agriculture | ✓ Biology |
| ✓ Chemistry | ✓ Earth Sciences |
| ✓ Engineering | ✓ Information Computer Technology |
| ✓ Mathematics | ✓ Medical Sciences |
| ✓ Physics | |

Germany's High-Tech Agenda (<https://hightech-agenda-deutschland.de/en/>) is a national innovation initiative focused on key emerging technologies. If your research aligns with any of the following research areas Artificial Intelligence (AI), Quantum Technologies, Microelectronics, Biotechnology, Fusion and climate-neutral energy Generation or Technologies for climate-neutral mobility, you are strongly encouraged to apply.

Eligibility Criteria

In order to apply in year 2026, candidates must fulfill the following criteria:

- be 40 years old or younger;
- obtained their Ph.D. within the last 5 years;
- returned to their home country (see list below) within the last 36 months;
- hold, be offered or be in the process of accepting a position at an academic and/or research institution (including international research centers) in their home country;
- be nationals of an eligible African country that is lagging in science and technology, as follows:

Countries for new African Principal Investigators

Western Africa	Benin, Burkina Faso, Cape Verde, Côte d'Ivoire, Gambia, Ghana, Guinea, Guinea-Bissau, Liberia, Mali, Mauritania, Niger, Nigeria, Senegal, Sierra Leone, Togo.
Eastern Africa	Burundi, Djibouti, Eritrea, Ethiopia, Kenya, Mauritius, Reunion, Rwanda, Sudan, Somalia, South Sudan, Tanzania, Uganda.
Central Africa	Cameroon, Central African Republic, Chad, Congo, Democratic Republic of Congo, Equatorial Guinea, Gabon, São Tomé, Príncipe.
Southern Africa	Angola, Botswana, Comoros, Eswatini (Swaziland), Lesotho, Madagascar, Malawi, Mozambique, Namibia, Zambia, Zimbabwe.

- Applications from women scientists are especially encouraged.

How to apply

- Applications must be submitted online via the link at the relevant page on the TWAS website: www.twas.org
Only applications submitted online will be considered.
- Candidates applying for must provide a clear and explicit justification for each component for which they applied: the applicants will need to explain how each component supports the overall aim of the research project.

When to apply

- The **deadline for receiving applications is 31 March 2026 (11:59 Central European Summer Time)**. No applications will be accepted after the deadline: therefore, we strongly recommend that you submit your application as early as possible.
- Incomplete applications will not be considered.