

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

Call for Pre-Proposals for Postdoctoral Fellowships on Livelihood Management, Reforms and Processes of Structural Change

Deadline for Pre-Proposals

April 6, 2016

Information

**Africa Initiative –
Natural and Engineering
Sciences, Medicine**

The International Team

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1. Objectives

The Foundation's funding initiative "Knowledge for Tomorrow - Cooperative Research Projects in Sub-Saharan Africa" aims at providing sustainable support for research and research capacity development in Sub-Saharan Africa. This funding scheme represents a fundamental career development strategy for African researchers, as it provides promising postdoctoral researchers based in Africa with opportunities to enhance both their skills and academic qualifications; ultimately, it enables them to establish professional perspectives in academia. This is to be achieved in cooperation between African and German scholars, as any postdoctoral project funded under this scheme needs to be carried out in collaboration with a German academic partner institute. Through this African-German cooperation, the initiative aims to support the development and extension of academic networks within, and beyond the African continent.

This postdoctoral fellowship program aims at providing sustainable support for research on Livelihood Management, Reforms and Processes of Structural Change. It offers opportunities for postdoctoral researchers at both junior (i.e. up to 3 years post-PhD) and senior level (i.e. 3 to 6 years post-PhD) to develop and conduct their own research projects of a duration of three years. While open for any applicant who meets the eligibility criteria, the current call builds on a previous call in 2012, and especially invites those junior fellows currently funded within the initiative to submit applications for senior fellowships. Similarly, senior fellows currently funded within this initiative can apply for final funding for up to two years.

2. Thematic Scope

The research projects under this call should deal with the question of how individual or collective social actors can manage and protect resources efficiently and develop sustainable livelihood strategies under present social and environmental conditions and in view of locally and globally changing circumstances.

Resources, in the context of this call, do not only include natural resources (e.g. water, soil, land, forest, energy, raw materials, protected areas) but also all kinds of resources related to human activities or societal structures (such as farming or land tenure systems, product chains, local governance structures and indigenous knowledge). Regarding interpersonal relationships or relationships between persons and organizations/institutions it is mandatory to go beyond the unilateral approach of increasing the productivity of natural or economic capital. At the same time sustainable approaches are developed to support livelihoods that will have no or minor adverse effects on livelihood conditions.

All projects should have a strong reference to current questions and problems concerning respective regions and/or Africa as a continent. Transcultural dimensions as well as bridging the anglophone/francophone divide in Africa could be important aspects of these projects. The program is open to applications from disciplines of both the natural (biology, agriculture, ecology, geosciences, etc.) and social sciences (economy, politics, governance etc.).

In more detail, this call for pre-proposals focuses on the following two areas:

a) Livelihood strategies from the perspective of local actors: the social dimension

Here, pre-proposals concentrating on innovative approaches of livelihood management strategies at communal or individual levels will be considered, focusing on local actors such as non-state actors, local authorities, rural communities, farmers, micro-enterprises etc. Possible topics include the necessary (pre)conditions for innovation processes, the constraints for success or failure of (new) resources management approaches, and the share and distribution of benefits. Furthermore, projects addressing the relationships between local actors and local, national, and/or international institutions and their effects on resource management are welcome – these may focus on the micro, meso or macro level.

b) Livelihood strategies with regard to natural resources: preservation, utilization, reclamation

Most African countries and societies are highly dependent on natural resources and agricultural production in particular. Accordingly, and in view of changing consumption patterns, projects are welcome which address, e.g., a

growing demand for agricultural and forestry products, rising energy as well as associated food prices, and the direct and indirect impacts of climate and land use change on local livelihoods from a natural sciences point of view. This includes specifically projects on biodiversity conservation focusing on habitats and the capacity of ecosystems to support sustainable livelihood strategies. Local, national or regional strategies for the prevention of and adaptation to disasters and hazards can also be in the focus of projects to be submitted, if they imply tangible resources management approaches.

General remark on the interdisciplinary aspect of this call

It is intended to establish interdisciplinary contacts and academic links among and beyond the postdoctoral fellows funded. Therefore, the motivation and the willingness to cooperate with other scholars coming from a different disciplinary background are key factors for a productive and innovative atmosphere, and for new scientific insights; they are thus essential for this call. Each applicant has to describe the benefit of the inputs from the other discipline (social or natural science) for the own research (i.e. the personal as well as scientific motivation to include the other disciplines) and how she/he will ensure to gain (more) experience in these fields during the three-year funding phase. In addition, each applicant has to include a M.Sc. project (junior fellows) or a Ph.D. project (senior fellows) of the other discipline in their fellowship proposal, to ensure that the project will address its questions in a truly interdisciplinary manner. This has to be described briefly in the pre-proposal and has to be elaborated in detail by the applicants invited to submit a full proposal at a later stage (for more details on the selection process, see chapter 4).

Successful applicants who are invited to submit a full proposal will be invited to an interdisciplinary workshop and a conference during the next stages of the selection process (the workshop before preparing the full proposal and the conference afterwards for the final selection of applicants, for more details cf. page 8). Applicants are requested to take this already into account while preparing the pre-proposals. Young researchers with no or only little knowledge on Livelihood Management (but with intense motivation to become acquainted with it) are also welcome to apply.

3. Funding Opportunities

As indicated, this fellowship program aims at supporting young postdoctoral researchers who are based in (or wish to return to) Sub-Saharan Africa by (1) providing an opportunity to enhance both skills and academic qualifications, (2) strengthening partnerships between African and German scholars, and (3) developing and extending academic networks within Africa and beyond.

The call provides funding opportunities for both junior and senior postdoctoral scholars. To be eligible for a **junior postdoctoral fellowship**, applicants must have less than three years of postdoctoral experience (the Ph.D. must be completed by February 2017, at the latest). Postdoctoral researchers with more than three, but less than six years of postdoctoral experience are eligible to apply for a **senior postdoctoral fellowship**. Both senior and junior

researchers are then offered a three-year fellowship to conduct postdoctoral research while based on the African continent.

The fellowship covers salaries for the fellow (and for M.Sc. and/or Ph.D. students) as well as non-personnel costs for e.g. consumables, equipment, travel, and administration of up to 110,000 EUR for junior fellows and of up to 145,000 EUR for senior fellows. Furthermore, the budget may include salary for lecturers to reduce the personal teaching workload of the applicant.

Additional funds can be applied for (1) a lecturer for the African host institution, (2) the cooperation with a German academic partner institution, (3) the cooperation with a postdoctoral fellow based in Germany, (4) the mentorship program. For details please see below.

Information for current senior fellows wishing to apply for a funding extension (2 years, up to 60,000 EUR) can be obtained directly from the program director Dr. Christoph Oestreicher (see contact).

Coordinator of the Postdoctoral Fellowship Program

The entire fellowship program on Livelihood Management, Reforms and Processes of Structural Change is operated by a team of senior academics based at a German university. These program coordinators have already been nominated and are responsible for the management of all the fellowships awarded. Besides the financial administration of the grants, the coordinators organize workshops and summer schools covering soft skill trainings, career perspectives, and discussions of theoretical and methodological questions regarding all research projects. Furthermore, the coordinators act as additional academic mentors.

Please note that only the German coordinators will be the official grant recipients who will forward any financial means awarded for the fellowship to the fellow's African host institution. That implies that neither the African host institution nor the German academic project partner will be the official grant recipient.

African Research Institution

The local academic institution on the African continent where the fellow will be employed is responsible for the administration of the funds. A basic research infrastructure should be provided for the fellow by the African institution; the fellow may include administrative costs for this institution of up to 8,000 EUR for the whole funding period (have to be included in the total sum of the fellowship). Furthermore, it is possible to apply for a lecturer who will be based at the African host institution (up to 15,000 EUR on top of the fellowship). This lecturer will have to be employed at the same department/faculty as the fellow at the African host institution to provide an additional support for the African host institution.

German Partner

For both types of fellowships, cooperation with a senior academic from a German research institution is mandatory. He/she will act as a scientific consultant to the fellow and his/her research project. Mutual visits and exchanges will not only benefit the project, but also offer valuable opportunities for international networking. To enable a fruitful exchange between the German senior academic partner and the African postdoctoral fellow, applicants can include an additional amount of up to 5,000 EUR (optional) for recurring non-personnel costs in their budget, which can be used by the German partner (e.g. to cover travel expenditure).

The African fellows (both junior and senior) need to find and choose their German partner independently. When looking for partners, they should carefully reflect on their choice, especially in light of the research topics covered by the selected institution. Please note that the Foundation cannot give any specific advice on German research institutions since this would bias the applications significantly.

Cooperation with a Postdoctoral Fellow based in Germany (optional)

African postdoctoral fellows may cooperate with a postdoctoral fellow (with less than 6 years of postdoctoral experience) based at a German research institution. For these associated postdoctoral fellows, who will enhance the exchange of scholarly expertise, an *additional* sum of up to 30,000 EUR can be applied for. The funds are meant to support these postdoctoral fellows to actively participate in the research project proposed by the African applicant. This sum can be split into personnel expenditure (max. 15,000 EUR), travel costs for meetings, workshops and fieldtrips to/in Africa, joint soft skill trainings with the African fellow, publication costs as well as consumables. The German fellow's role in the project has to be described and justified by the applicant. He/she may be involved during the whole duration of the project or only for individual work packages. The German fellow may, but does not have to be associated with the cooperating German academic partner institution.

Mentorship Program (optional)

A key feature of this fellowship program is the funding provided for personal mentorship. Through the mentorship program, the fellow can establish links to leading scientists of his or her choice – both from African as well as non-African institutions. This additional element offers opportunities for (1) scientific networking, (2) knowledge exchange between mentors and fellow, and (3) a third-party perspective on the fellow's project. Mentors could, for example, get involved by introducing the fellow to peer networks, assisting him/her with publications in international journals as well as presentations of his/her work at international conferences. In addition, mentors should provide knowledge not only of techniques and methods, but also of know-how learned and experiences made throughout a scientific career. Prospective mentors must agree in a written statement to act as supporters of the fellow. The applicant can apply for an additional sum of up to 10,000 EUR for the

mentorship program (or up to 5,000 EUR, if only one mentor is chosen); however, these funds can only be used for meetings between the fellow and the mentor(s). Salaries or honoraria for the mentors will not be covered.

When choosing their mentors, applicants must consider the following regulations: Mentors must not be the anticipated German academic partner of the fellow but should act as additional mentors beyond the support of the German partner. One of the mentors can (but does not have to) be based at the African host institution where the project is meant to be conducted.

Please note that the Foundation strongly recommends the inclusion of an African mentor in order to strengthen the fellow’s scientific network in Africa. Any further mentor(s) should be from a different institution and, preferably, a different national context. Previous collaborators are not excluded from the mentorship program, yet, please note that widening professional networks is an essential idea behind this program. Furthermore, applicants may also choose mentors who are working for NGOs, companies or governments as long as they provide relevant support for the research project.

The expected role of the mentors has to be described by the applicant. If the applicant cannot nominate at least two mentors at the time of application, he/she can still apply for the mentorship funds, but needs to specify and justify the desired areas of expertise covered by the mentors. Mentors can, then, be nominated at a later stage.

Budget

As noted, the total budget covers up to 110,000 EUR for junior fellowships and up to 145,000 EUR for senior fellowships. All budget items must be justified specifically and could include, for instance:

<i>Budget item</i>	<i>Comment(s), specifications,</i>
Personnel expenditure	
Salary or “top-up” of fellow	Depending on experience and customary local salaries; “top-up”: applies to those already employed by an African research institution ¹
Salaries and/or fees of graduate students involved in the research project	<i>Juniors:</i> can include (and supervise) students up to Master’s Level <i>Seniors:</i> can include (and supervise) students up to Ph.D. Level (at least one, but a maximum of two Ph.D. students should be involved)
Salary or “top-up” to employ a lecturer for the fellow	One lecturer to reduce personal teaching duties of the fellow (included in the fellowship)

¹ The applicant has to provide information on the calculation of the proposed salary according to local standards (with references or detailed explanation) and has to state explicitly whether he/she is applying for a full salary or a top-up. Furthermore, he/she has to state whether he/she will work part-time or full-time for the project (in percentages of a full-time position).

Child care (for children of the applicant)	Only if receipts can be provided. (Please note: Child care is not covered if offered by family members.)
Recurring expenses	
Travel costs	To conferences, workshops and meetings; the fellow needs to have an active part
Visits to institutions (e.g. German partner institution)	up to 4 months per year
Organizational costs	for a conference or workshop organized by the applicant
Consumables	
Costs for field work	
Soft skill development	E.g. language courses or courses for project management
Non-recurrent expenses	
Small equipment	Limited to up to 15% of the total fellowship budget
Publication costs	Fees for publication (e.g. open access, trade journal or book)
Administrative costs	Up to 8,000 EUR

When preparing the budget, the applicant is requested to adhere to the above structure and take the specifications for the respective budget items into consideration. The (additional) budget for the German partner (optional, up to 5,000 EUR), the lecturer for the host institution to support the department/faculty where the applicant will be affiliated (optional, up to 15,000 EUR for three years), for the postdoctoral fellow based in Germany (optional, up to 30,000 EUR), and for the mentorship program (optional, up to 10,000 EUR) should be listed separately, however, still follow the above structure where applicable.

Electronic application

Please use the Foundation's application system: **portal.volkswagenstiftung.de** for the electronic submission of your application. Please do not forget to print, sign and upload the scanned signature sheet. Instructions on the electronic application system are provided online.

4. Application and Selection Process

The application and selection process is organized as a three-stage process. Pre-proposals must be submitted **in English** by **April 6, 2016**. Please submit your application using the Foundation's electronic application system (<https://portal.volkswagenstiftung.de/vwsantrag/login.do?siteLanguage=en>) and upload the files under the respective items (marked bold in the checklist). Make sure to register in time and allow for some extra time to upload all files. If you should face any problems (i.e. bad internet connection), get in touch early enough before the deadline. For further information, please see point 6. Electronic Application – Instruction and Tips.

Please note the checklist for pre-proposals at the end of this document.

Stage 1 – Submission of pre-proposals

The pre-proposals will be reviewed and assessed by an international expert committee. Decisions on these pre-proposals will be communicated in July/August 2016.

Meeting for the preparation of the full proposal (optional; to be included in the pre-proposal)

Applicants may apply for funding of a preparatory meeting with relevant project partners (up to 4,000 EUR) to be organized and held (preferably) directly after the preparation workshop (see below). Date, venue (preferably in Germany), participants, and budget of this preparatory meeting already have to be specified in the pre-proposals.

The budget should be listed separately as part of the additional budget. It should, however, still follow the structure outlined above for those budget items relevant to the meeting. Grants for preparatory meetings are only made available to those applicants who will be invited to submit a full proposal (and only if a detailed justified budget is provided in the pre-proposal). Please note that the timeframe between the communication of the decisions of stage 1 (approval of pre-proposal) and the deadline for submitting the full proposal is tight and that the preparatory meeting will thus have to be organized at short notice.

Stage 2 – Preparation and submission of full proposals

Successful applicants of stage 1 will be invited to prepare and submit full proposals.

Preparation workshop

Successful applicants of stage 1 will be also invited to a preparation workshop that should help them to write the full proposal. The meeting will provide the candidates with livelihood management frameworks presented by experts. The workshop should also serve as a platform to meet the other applicants and experts in the field for an intellectual exchange and cooperation already at this early stage. Here, applicants should develop a sound idea of the research questions to be addressed by the mandatory M.Sc. or Ph.D. project of the other discipline within their overall research project. Applicants from the other discipline should also support their peers in formulation of appropriate questions and in the search for suitable students.

Participation in this workshop is mandatory for all successful applicants of stage 1; it will take place in Germany on September 5-7, 2016.

Submission of full proposals

All invited full proposals will undergo an international review process. Details of the requirements for full proposals including the recommendations of the review committee will be forwarded to the successful applicants in July/August 2016. The deadline for the submission of full proposals will be in late October 2016.

Please note: Applicants cannot proceed to *stage 2* unless they have been invited to do so.

Stage 3 – Presentation of project ideas

Applicants who have submitted full proposals **will then have the opportunity to present their project** at a selection conference in January 2017. In the course of this conference, they will also be interviewed by the international review panel. Final decisions on fellowship grants will be made in early 2017.

5. Important Notes for Applicants

The Volkswagen Foundation can only provide funds to academic institutions. Furthermore, it is not possible to fund projects for development aid or short-term applications. The Foundation 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 Foundation cannot allocate funds to cover commitments an applicant entered into prior to the receipt of the grant letter.

Contact:

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Checklist for Pre-Proposals for Postdoctoral Fellowships on Livelihood Management, Reforms and Processes of Structural Change

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; however, applicants are requested to consider the structure provided below.

Cover letter, which should contain

- Full name (surname in CAPITAL letters), gender, address, and scanned signature of the applicant
- Indication of the call for pre-proposals to which the application refers
- Indication of the fellowship (junior or senior) applied for
- Brief informative title of the proposed project
- Duration of funding and sum applied for (total as well as separated into fellowship, postdoctoral fellow based in Germany, funds for the German academic partner, mentorship program, if applicable)
- Sum applied for the preparatory meeting, if applicable
- Full name (including title) and address of the German partner, the postdoctoral fellow based in Germany and the mentors, if applicable

Pre-proposal

- **Summary** of the project (up to 1,600 **characters** including spaces)
- **Pre-proposal description**
 - Summary of the applicant's current research/work including preliminary studies, if applicable² (up to 1 page)
 - Description of the project and relevant information for its realization (up to 2,500 words) with (1) the aim of the project, (2) a brief overview of and relation to the existing literature, and (3) the theoretical background and methodological approach
 - Description of the benefit of another discipline for the research (i.e. the motivation to get research experience in this discipline) and how to gain (more) experience in these fields as well as the brief description of an M.Sc. project (junior fellows) or a Ph.D. project (senior fellows) of the other discipline (up to 1 page)
 - Expertise and role of the German partner institution (up to 1 page)
 - Expertise and role of the postdoctoral fellow based in Germany – if applicable (up to 1 page)
 - Expertise and role of the mentors, if applicable (up to 1 page)
 - Date, venue, participants, and budget of the preparatory meeting for full proposals (if applicable, up to 1 page, only funded for successful applicants of stage 1)
- **Working plan** including distribution of tasks among fellow and postdoctoral fellow based in Germany, if applicable

• **Budget**

Appendices

- **CV** of the applicant – up to 2 pages
- **Ph.D. certificate** or a letter from the main supervisor stating that the Ph.D. will be completed by February 2017
- **Institutional declarations**
 - Statement of support from the African research institution (including the relevant financial administration) agreeing to the terms and conditions of the postdoctoral fellowships [see additional form]
 - Letter of support of the German partner institution stating that it will provide the basic infrastructure during the visits
- **Other enclosures**
 - Statement of the German postdoctoral fellow confirming an interest to actively participate in the research project proposed by the African applicant, if applicable
 - Statement by the mentors confirming their support for the applicant, if applicable

² Applicants who received a grant from the previous call should include a condensed one-page version of their final report. In addition they should add at least one publication (e.g. article) resulting from the previous fellowship project to the appendices.

Electronic application

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for the electronic submission of your application. Please do not forget to print, sign and upload the scanned signature sheet. Instructions on the electronic application system are provided online.

6. Electronic Application – Instruction and Tips

Please note that you need to register on the electronic application system to be able to submit an application and have access to application data. It is required for all applicants to register themselves (instructions are also provided on the system).

Please follow these steps to compile and submit your application:

If you are a new user, please register on the application portal with your name, your e-mail address, and a password. When registering, you will be asked the details of your work address. Subsequently, you must activate your account using the link sent to you by e-mail. If you already have an account, you can immediately login using your e-mail address and password.

Via the button “new application”, you can select the relevant funding initiative (“Postdoctoral Fellowships on Livelihood Management, Reforms and Processes of Structural Change”) and begin the application process.

- Please fill in the required fields and forms.
- Remember to read and accept the legal statement. If you wish, you can generate a PDF of the complete application for verification and your files.
- Under the button “other enclosures”, you are able to upload files as required according to the checklist on the preceding page. Only PDF files are accepted.
- Additionally, it is required to generate a signature sheet for print-out. Instructions are provided on the system. Please do not forget to print, sign, scan, and upload your signature sheet.

Please note that the “save”-button does not transfer any data to the Foundation. You are able to revise all data until final submission and can interrupt the application process at any time as often as required. Once your application is completed, you can submit it electronically.

In the course of processing your application, the Foundation might request additional information. The button “new supplement” is used to upload and submit these respective files.