

For immediate release**Sub-Saharan Africa to receive £25M in new programme aimed at early career scientists**

A new sub-Saharan Africa grant scheme, Future Leaders – African Independent Researchers (FLAIR) Fellowships, opens for applications today (21 May 2018). The scheme offers talented African early career researchers who have the potential to become leaders in their field, the opportunity to develop an independent research career in a sub-Saharan African institution.

The programme is being run in partnership with the African Academy of Sciences (AAS) and the Royal Society, with support from the UK's Global Challenges Research Fund.

The aims of the FLAIR fellowship programme are:

- **Developing Africa's next generation of research leaders** - supporting talented early career African researchers to establish their scientific independence, focus on developing their research and become leaders in their chosen discipline covering natural sciences.
- **Supporting excellent research** - enabling African researchers to address areas of global significance across the natural sciences through high-quality research, advancing knowledge and innovation which aims to benefit their country and address aspects of the Sustainable Development Goals.
- **Enhancing research environments** - working through relevant partners, awards will contribute towards institutional research capacity strengthening and establishing good financial grants practice in African universities and research institutions.
- **Fostering collaboration and impact** – establishing mutually beneficial long-term links between African Fellows and UK researchers to harness the expertise of the UK research base through equitable partnerships and enhancing knowledge exchange and translation into sustainable policy and practical benefits.

Professor Richard Catlow, Foreign Secretary of the Royal Society said:

“We are delighted to have joined in partnership with the African Academy of Sciences, and are looking forward to working together with support from the Global Challenges Research Fund, to launch the FLAIR Fellowships.

“Science is a truly global endeavour that benefits from a diversity of approaches and experiences. Our ambition for FLAIR is that it will help to establish the next generation of leading African scientists, supporting them in partnership with the African Academy of Sciences to realise their goals and forge independent paths in research, whilst addressing the global challenges that are directly relevant to their countries and developing countries more broadly. FLAIR also provides an opportunity for these future leading scientists to tap into the network of scientific excellence that both the Academies' represent, to take advantage of training and mentoring opportunities, as well as building lasting connections and international collaborations with peers across Africa and UK scientists.”

Prof Felix Dapare Dakora, AAS President said: “The AAS sees postdoctoral training as a critical stepping-stone to a successful research career and to promote globally competitive research in African universities and research institutions.

This partnership with the Royal Society enables us to help African scientists to develop their careers and contribute to the creation of knowledge-based economies on the continent.”

Prof Tom Kariuki, AAS Director of the Alliance for Accelerating Excellence in Science in Africa (AESA) said: “As an academy of all knowledge, the AAS sees FLAIR as a great opportunity to address critical gaps in the continent’s research capacity to ensure thriving ecosystems and catalyse science-driven enterprises. FLAIR will be essential to attract, train and retain the best scientists on the continent and to support them to provide solutions to improve the quality of lives for all Africans.”

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Notes to editors

Further information about the scheme

- Each Fellowship/grant? provides:
 - Up to £150,000 per year, for two years initially, to include funding for research fellow’s salary, research expenses, equipment, training, travel and subsistence and institutional overhead.
 - In addition the scheme will provide a wider programme of support to develop fellows as independent research leaders including training and mentoring, and opportunities to network and develop international collaborations.
- The programme will provide two years of funding and support in the first instance; subject to progress during the first two years (and continued funding from the Global Challenges Research Fund) holders may have the opportunity to apply for a renewal for an additional three years.
- Successful applicants will be talented African early career researchers who are ready to develop their independence and have the potential to become leaders in their field. The applicant must be:
 - a national of a sub-Saharan African country and wish to work in a sub-Saharan African country in a research position; or
 - a national of a sub-Saharan African country in the diaspora and wish to return to a sub-Saharan African research position
- The applicant must have been awarded a PhD by the time of application.
- The applicant must be an early career researcher with no more than 10 years of research experience since their PhD by the closing date of the round and must hold the fellowship in a research institution in a sub-Saharan African country.
- Applicants are not permitted to submit more than one application per round.
- Applicants who are not currently employed are eligible to apply.

- Applications should be within the remit of natural sciences. This includes physics, chemistry, mathematics, computer science, engineering, agricultural, biological and medical research (excluding clinical and patient-orientated research), and the scientific aspects of archaeology, geography and experimental psychology but excluding economics, social science and humanities research.
- Applicants must have a clearly defined scientific research proposal focusing on one or more of the Global Challenge areas outlined in the [scheme notes](#).
- Eligible countries include: Angola, Benin, Botswana, Burkina Faso, Burundi, Cameroon, Cape Verde, Central African Republic, Chad, Comoros, Republic of the Congo, Democratic Republic of the Congo, Cote d'Ivoire, Djibouti, Equatorial Guinea, Eritrea, Ethiopia, Gabon, The Gambia, Ghana, Guinea, Guinea-Bissau, Kenya, Liberia, Madagascar, Malawi, Mali, Mauritania, Mauritius, Mozambique, Namibia, Niger, Nigeria, Rwanda, Sao Tome and Principe, Senegal, Seychelles, Sierra Leone, Somalia, South Africa, South Sudan, Sudan, Swaziland, Tanzania, Togo, Uganda, Zambia and Zimbabwe
- Please contact the office at flair@royalsociety.org with any queries regarding eligibility for this scheme.

About the African Academy of Sciences

The AAS is a Pan-African organisation whose headquarters are in Kenya.. The Academy has a tripartite mandate of pursuing excellence by recognising scholars and achievers; providing advisory and think-tank functions for shaping the continent's strategies and policies; and implementing key science, technology and innovation programmes that impact on developmental challenges through the agenda setting and funding platform - the Alliance for Accelerating Excellence in Science in Africa (AESA).

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About the Royal Society

The Royal Society is a self-governing Fellowship of many of the world's most distinguished scientists drawn from all areas of science, engineering, and medicine. The Society's fundamental purpose, as it has been since its foundation in 1660, is to recognise, promote, and support excellence in science and to encourage the development and use of science for the benefit of humanity. <http://royalsociety.org>

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About the Global Challenges Research Fund (GCRF)

The [Global Challenges Research Fund \(GCRF\)](#) is a £1.5 billion fund announced by the UK Government to support cutting-edge research that addresses the challenges faced by developing countries. The Fund forms part of the UK's Official Development Assistance (ODA) commitment which is monitored by the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD). ODA funded activity focuses on outcomes that promote the long-term sustainable growth of countries on the [OECD Development Assistance Committee \(DAC\)](#) list and is administered with the promotion of the economic development and welfare of developing countries as its main objective.