

# BioInnovate Africa Fellowship for Women Scientists (BA-FWS)

## Call for Applications

Nomination and application deadline: Tuesday, 16 January 2024, 23:59 hours East Africa Time

### 1. Context

BioInnovate Africa is the largest regional innovation-driven bioeconomy platform in Africa, comprising over 400 scientists and innovators based in more than 130 organisations. It currently operates in eight countries: Burundi, Democratic Republic of Congo (DR Congo), Ethiopia, Kenya, Rwanda, South Sudan, Tanzania, and Uganda. BioInnovate Africa was established in 2010 with support from the Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency (Sida) and is implemented by the International Centre of Insect Physiology and Ecology (*icipe*) based in Nairobi, Kenya. The mission of BioInnovate Africa is to enable scientists to translate innovative bioscience research ideas, inventions and technologies into practical uses that benefit society. This is crucial as the countries accelerate efforts towards achieving the Sustainable Development Goals 2030, and search for more sustainable solutions that conserve biodiversity, reduce carbon emissions, and mitigate and help the region adapt to climate change.

The BioInnovate Africa Fellowship for Women Scientists (BA-FWS) provides opportunities for early and mid-career women scientists to work with and learn from the diverse BioInnovate Africa bioeconomy projects and benefit from the vast networks in the region. The Fellows are hosted in BioInnovate Africa organisations outside their home countries for a period of three months, where they gain experience and establish networks to advance their skills, innovation capacity and overall career progression.

### 2. Themes, projects and topics

Prospective applicants to the 2024 Fellowship call should select two topics from any of the following themes of BioInnovate Africa projects:

- a. Phytomedicine
- b. Food and nutrition
- c. Biomaterials
- d. Biopesticides
- e. Biofertilizers
- f. Bioeconomy policies

Placement of a Fellow in a project is guided by the Fellow's choice of a theme of interest and an independent assessment by BioInnovate Africa Programme Management Office (PMO) of their capacity to work in BioInnovate Africa supported project.

### 3. What the Fellowship provides

The Fellowship package includes a round trip air ticket (from home country to country of host organisation), modest monthly stipend of US\$ 1,000 and health insurance for the Fellows outside their home countries.

### 4. Benefits of becoming a BioInnovate Africa Fellow

- a. Practical experience: Each Fellow is placed in a BioInnovate Africa supported project, working alongside peers in biological based research and innovation. This hands-on opportunity provides an all-rounded experience in developing, testing, producing and commercializing impactful innovative biological based ideas and technologies.
- b. Career development: This fully supported Fellowship includes one-on-one mentorship by leading research scientists and bio-innovators, as well as access to entrepreneurs and leaders in bio-innovation in eastern Africa and around the world.
- c. Knowledge and skills improvement: The Fellowship ensures access to advanced training opportunities to nurture practical skills in applying scientific knowledge for beneficial societal use, as well as leadership skills in managing innovation projects.
- d. Networking: Fellows are assured of interaction with other Fellows, project teams and researchers/scientists in the host organisations. This widens their network and creates opportunities for scientific collaboration.

## 5. Expected outcomes of the Fellowship

BioInnovate Africa Fellows will continue to interact with each other and the teams they have networked with and be able to develop their ideas into bankable bio-innovation projects in the region. Beyond the Fellowship, and upon return to their respective organisations, Fellows are expected to contribute to innovation ecosystem building, and serve as role models for other female scientists.

## 6. Eligibility

- a. Female nationals or residents of Burundi, DR Congo, Ethiopia, Kenya, Rwanda, South Sudan, Tanzania, and Uganda.
- b. Master's degree holder in any of the following fields: biological, chemical or environmental sciences, medicine, ICT, agriculture, engineering or any other closely related field.
- c. Early and mid-career female scientist affiliated to a university, research institute, or a legally registered private firm, which is currently participating in a BioInnovate Africa supported project (See list [here](#)).
- d. Readiness to take up the Fellowship on a full-time basis, and in another BioInnovate Africa country.
- e. Not a previous Fellow.

## 7. Application requirements

All applications **MUST** be accompanied by:

- a. A motivational essay of between 500- and 700-words detailing interest in the Fellowship, and how the Fellowship will contribute to career advancement. Applicants should **clearly** indicate the BioInnovate Africa theme to which their idea applies. The idea **should have** potential to develop into a possible bio-innovation project on completing the Fellowship.
- b. An up-to-date Curriculum Vitae, which includes two referees with knowledge of the applicant's educational and professional qualifications and capabilities.
- c. A signed letter of support from the applicant's head of organisation or department, written on official letterhead. The letter should describe an applicant's suitability for the Fellowship and commitment by the organisation to grant sufficient leave to the Fellow to participate in the Fellowship.

## 8. Application and selection process

- a. All applications should be made through the online application system [http://grants.bioinnovate-africa.org/forms/womens\\_fellowship\\_2024.php](http://grants.bioinnovate-africa.org/forms/womens_fellowship_2024.php). Only applicants recommended by heads of respective partner organisations will be considered.
- b. The deadline for application is **Tuesday, 16 January 2024, 23:59 hours East Africa Time**. Late applications will not be considered. Applications sent through email or post will not be accepted.
- c. After the application deadline, BioInnovate Africa Programme Management Office (PMO) will screen the applications received through the online system for completeness and eligibility. Incomplete applications will be rejected. Qualifying applications will be evaluated by an independent panel of experts set up by the PMO. The panel will select up to 5 applicants in this round of the call.

## 9. Award of the Fellowship

Successful applicants will be notified by 9 February 2024. Successful applicants will be expected to undertake and complete the 3-month Fellowship by December 2024.

For more information about the Fellowship, please contact:

*The Programme Manager, BioInnovate Africa  
International Centre of Insect Physiology and Ecology, icipe, Duguru Campus, Kasarani  
P.O. Box 30772-00100  
Nairobi, Kenya.  
Telephone: +254-20-8632433  
Email: [bioinnovate@icipe.org](mailto:bioinnovate@icipe.org)*