

OWSD Early Career Fellowship

Call for Applications

The OWSD Early Career fellowship is a prestigious award of up to USD 50,000 offered to women who have completed their PhDs in Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM) subjects and are employed at an academic or scientific research institution in one of the listed **Science and Technology Lagging Countries (STLCs)**. The OWSD Early Career fellows will be supported to establish an environment at their institution where they can maintain an international standard of research and attract scholars from all over the world to collaborate.

You will find all the information you need to prepare your application below.

All applications must be submitted online.

The official language for the application is English.

If you are submitting any supporting documents (such as residency certificate, degree certificate, etc.) in your local language, you must attach at least an informal translation into English. Documents without any English translation will not be considered.

IMPORTANT

Please note that the duration of the 2024 OWSD Early Career Fellowships will be **24 months** instead of 36 as in previous years.

Please note that an applicant, at the time of application, must NOT have an active research grant or fellowship with [The World Academy of Sciences \(TWAS\)](#) or have already submitted an application for a TWAS programme within the same given year. Only one application per year is possible across all TWAS and OWSD programmes. Applicants will not be eligible to visit another institution in that year under the TWAS Visiting Professor programmes.

However, candidates can still apply to the OWSD-Elsevier Foundation awards (please note that previous OWSD-EF winners are also eligible).

The 2024 Call for Applications is open as of 5 February 2024.

Deadline for completed online applications: 14 March 2024 (at 23:59 Rome time)

Successful candidates will be notified by **September 2024**. Please note that this year, the expected duration of the fellowship is **two years (24 months)** from the date of contract signing (end 2026). No extension will be granted.

IMPORTANT: From the time of notification of selection, **awardees will have 2 weeks to confirm acceptance** of the award, and will need to confirm personal details and provide Administering Institute's banking documentation needed for the contract. Additionally, **awardees will have 45 days to return to OWSD all required documentation signed and endorsed by the Administering Institute**. It is the responsibility of the candidate to ensure timeline is respected and OWSD cannot

grant extensions beyond 45 days. **Failure to comply with this timeline will result in the fellowship offer being withdrawn and made to reserve list candidates.**

If your questions are not answered in the information provided or in the [Frequently Asked Questions \(FAQs\)](#), contact earlycareer@owsd.net. Please make sure to read carefully all the instructions provided. The Secretariat reserves the right to not provide feedback on information already available in the Call and the FAQs.

Purpose

The OWSD Early Career fellowships programme is administered by OWSD with funds generously provided by the [International Development Research Centre \(IDRC\)](#), Canada.

The fellowship programme supports early career women scientists to lead important research projects in those countries which have been identified as especially lacking in scientific and technological resources.* The fellows will undertake their research projects in one of the eligible countries and applicants must demonstrate that they have spent significant periods of time in that country (at least 5 years in total). Applicants must also have a guarantee of employment at the institution where they intend to carry out the research.

During the 2-year fellowship, fellows will build on their leadership and management skills, develop connections with a variety of public and private sector partners to potentially convert their research into marketable products or guarantee its impact on a broader scale. By improving their communication and outreach skills, fellows will also learn to effectively present their research to various audiences, thus attracting new collaborators and potential funders to ensure the sustainability of the research project.

By supporting an increasing number of Early Career fellows, OWSD is creating a network of outstanding women scientists who can provide mentorship and be role models for the next generation of women leaders in STEM.

** as defined by the TWAS-OWSD Coordinating Committee*

Fellowship support

The OWSD Early Career fellowship is for two years and offers up to USD 50,000.

Please note that the OWSD Early Career fellowship **does not provide for the fellow's salary** which must be guaranteed by the fellow's institution.

The fellow's institution must **waive any overhead or indirect costs** on the research project. However, applicants can include in their budget break-down any direct costs for support from the institution that will directly benefit the research project (for example, lab technician's time, maintenance and utilities costs, administrative officer's time, etc.).

The fellowship entails:

- An initial advance payment of 33% of the total grant value
- Reimbursements of expenses made with funds advanced by the Administering Institute

- Support for direct procurement done by the OWSD Secretariat on fellows' behalf (only for purchases above USD 4,500)

Overhead and indirect administrative costs are not eligible. If these costs are included, the application will be disqualified.

A non-exhaustive list of eligible expenses is presented below to help with development of your application.

a) Research-related costs

- *Equipment*
 - Necessary equipment to build up research units or set up a lab
 - Training in use of equipment
 - Maintenance of equipment
- *Consumables*
 - Expendable supplies that will be consumed or replaced (e.g. glassware, solvents, feed, reagents)
- *Research visits, exchanges and programmes*
 - Attendance at international scientific meetings (e.g. travel, accommodation, meals, registration, visa)
 - Hosting visiting scholars and/or establishing a visiting scholars programme
 - Organizing and hosting scientific events (e.g. seminar series, international symposium, themed workshops, regional and international conferences)
 - Organizing exchange programmes with national/international scholars
- *Teaching and Assistance*
 - MSc, PhD, Postdoctoral researchers
 - Research assistants (e.g. to gather information and data)
 - Teaching assistants
 - Family care assistance (e.g. childcare costs in order for fellow to undertake research project, travel support for family members)
 - Other assistant (based on applicant's needs, e.g. casual labor)
- *Field work*
 - Transportation (e.g. car rental, public transport, airfare)
 - Board and lodging
 - Sample collection and analysis
 - Hospitality fees (e.g. dinner with research partners in the field)
- *Publication costs* (e.g. in peer-reviewed journals, open source)
- *Information resources*
 - Subscriptions (e.g. journal, library)
 - Literature (e.g. books, reprints, photocopies)
 - Library resources
- *IT facilities*
 - Computer hardware
 - Computer software
 - Computer services (internet connections, technical support, database development)
- *Training*
 - Science communication (e.g. writing for publication, presentation skills)

- English language courses (for improved science communication)
- Specialist courses for team leader and project staff or group training sessions (e.g. long-distance learning)
- *Other*
 - Monitoring and evaluation costs (to measure the impact of the research project)
 - Rent paid for land or premises used in a research activity
 - Any other support costs directly related to the research project (for example, lab technician's time, maintenance and utilities costs, administrative officer's time, etc.)

b) Linking with industry and other partners

- Visits to companies, private sector (e.g. travel, board and lodging costs)
- Product development (e.g. patent, prototype, Intellectual Property costs)
- Technology transfer
- Licensing costs
- Research-to-product related expenses
- Training (e.g. understanding/developing IP and patents, research-to-product training, communicating with industry, business, management and marketing skills)
- Scaling up of teaching programmes and/or 'training the trainers' (e.g. offering specialist courses at PhD level to ensure level of training in given discipline is adequate)

A downloadable list of appropriate industry, private or civic partners for collaboration is available [here](#).

c) Outreach, communication and networking

- Website development
- Communications materials (e.g. flyers, posters)
- Dissemination (e.g. development of stakeholders' contact database for information sharing)
- Networking (e.g. development of online community/forum, linking with OWSD members and National Chapters, science academies)
- Mentoring (e.g. establishing a mentoring programme with partners in industry)
- Translation of project-related documents
- Training (e.g. social media, language courses necessary for communicating research)
- Other costs needed to undertake outreach activities

A downloadable list of the above eligible expenses is available [here](#).

Please note that this list is not exhaustive. In addition, selection for a fellowship does not imply that all costs requested will be automatically granted. The Selection Committee will evaluate each expense requested in the proposed budget and take a final decision on related costs to be awarded.

Additional support provided by OWSD:

Two training workshops per fellowship on managing the grant, leadership, outreach and entrepreneurial skills.

- The first workshop (held in Trieste, Italy, soon after being awarded the fellowship) will establish communication and networking between fellows and provide guidance on how to

set up a lab, manage a research group and link with industry. Fellows will present their research projects and work plans and receive feedback.

- The second workshop (held towards the end of the second year of the fellowship) will provide feedback on the fellows' work and discuss the best ways to ensure the research project is sustainable beyond the duration of the fellowship. This workshop will be hosted by one of the four OWSD regions, possibly by an appropriate OWSD national chapter or national academy.

Eligibility

To be eligible to apply for the OWSD Early Career fellowship applicants must meet the following criteria:

1. Eligible countries

- Applicants must have been resident in one of [the listed 66 Science and Technology Lagging Countries \(STLCs\)](#) for at least 5 years. The 5 years do not have to be consecutive.
- Applicants can be citizens of any country, provided that the above residence requirement is fulfilled.

2. Eligible employment

- At the time of application, applicants must provide proof of being employed at the university or research institute where the research project will be carried out. If employment has not yet commenced, a proof of employment offer and confirmation of acceptance is required.
- The institution where the research project will be carried out must be in one of the listed STLCs.
- Applicants must provide evidence that they will receive a salary from their university/research institute for the duration of the two-year fellowship.

3. [Eligible STEM fields \(Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics\)](#)

- Agricultural Sciences
- Astronomy, Space and Earth Sciences
- Biological Systems and Organisms
- Chemical Sciences
- Computing and Information Technology
- Engineering Sciences
- Mathematical Sciences
- Medical and Health Sciences
- Neurosciences
- Physics
- Structural, Cell and Molecular Biology

Research project proposals from other fields (social science, education, etc.) are not eligible and will not be taken into consideration.

4. Eligible academic qualification

- PhD in one of the above listed study fields.
- PhD awarded not more than 10 years prior to application.

Research project proposal

For more information concerning the research project proposal, please click [here](#).

Required documents for application

We strongly encourage eligible applicants to start gathering all requested documentation as soon as possible. The documents listed below may take some weeks to prepare, especially when they require official signatures.

Applicants must submit:

1. Passport

- A scanned copy of the passport page containing personal details (photo, document number etc.)
- Passport-size portrait photo

2. Proof of residence

- Official documentation that proves residency for at least 5 years in one of the eligible STLCs. As long as the address and the name of the applicant appear clearly, the following documents can be submitted as proof of residence: certificate of residency, statement from the local police office or municipality, population registry office, rental agreement, utilities bills, employment contract. This list is not exhaustive and alternative documents can be considered.
- If you are submitting any supporting documents in your local language, you must attach at least an informal translation into English. Documents without any English translation will not be considered.

3. PhD certificate

- A scanned copy of the PhD degree certificate or proof of PhD issued by the University.

4. Proof of employment

- A letter from the employer (dean, vice-dean or equivalent head of the applicant's institution) on headed paper confirming applicant's position at the institution and that the applicant will receive a salary for at least two years starting from the year of application. **IMPORTANT: Please use the template that can be downloaded [here](#).**
- If employment has not been undertaken yet, a proof of employment offer and confirmation of acceptance will be requested from the applicant, to be submitted together with the above-provided template, duly completed and signed.

5. Curriculum Vitae

- Complete updated CV.

6. Publications

- Complete list of publications.

7. Reference letters

- Applicants must submit two (2) reference letters; at least one must be from a senior scientist familiar with the applicant's recent research.
- The letters must include the referee's contact details for follow up from Selection Committee.

8. Supporting statement of head of applicant's institution

- The supporting statement of the head of the applicant's institution completed and signed by the dean, vice-dean or equivalent head of institution. **The supporting statement can be downloaded [here](#).**

9. Budget file

- Applicants must upload a standardised budget file in Excel format inserting all items and related costs requested in order to undertake the research project. The file will be available for download from the online application system.

10. Additional documentation

- The applicant may wish to provide additional documents which provide evidence of skills, qualities or actions described in the research project (e.g. certificate of awards, memberships etc.).

All documents must be uploaded through the online application system. Do NOT email any documentation to OWSD.

Evaluation

The applications will be evaluated based on the following criteria:

Research proposal

- *Problem identified:* original, relevant, important. A clear demonstration of research expertise and innovation that will be recognized at national, regional and international level.
- *Feasibility:* methodology, infrastructure, timetable/work schedule.
- *Context:* the applicant's institution has sufficient resources to support the applicant. The relevant heads of department/ institution demonstrate that they are supportive of the applicant and the research project.

- *Collaborations and networking*: the applicant and the institution have and will have developed links to relevant organisations and individuals at national, regional and international level.
- *Linking with industry and other sectors*: a distinct feature of the OWSD Early Career Fellowship is to promote collaboration between scientists and industry, private or civic partners in order to develop innovations for more inclusive economies and societies. Which strategies have been put into place to establish such links? Have efforts been made to convert research findings into marketable products or processes? Have prototypes been developed at this stage or planned for the near future? What support mechanisms have been put in place or planned at the institution to facilitate the relationship building with private sector partners (e.g. technology transfer office, intellectual property/legal office, or career center)?
- *Impact*: how will communities be affected by the research (e.g. increased access of marginal groups to resources, goods and services, improved quality of knowledge and training in a specific subject, product developed and used by local communities).
- *Inclusiveness*: research design and product development must demonstrate awareness of and relevance to diverse members of the community e.g. women, indigenous, ethnic, sexual minorities, possible links between disability and development.
- *Sustainability*: after OWSD Early Career Fellowship funding has ended, how will the applicant secure funding, partnerships, links with industry and the private sector or in-kind contributions to ensure the work can continue?
- *Ethical, environmental and risk factors*: the applicant has considered these aspects and addressed their mitigation.

Applicant's profile

- *Scientific excellence* based on evidence of scientific activities such as publications, invitations to speak at international and regional conferences; chair and convenor of panels and meetings; reviewer of journal manuscripts or research grant proposals; recipient of national, regional and international grants and awards; membership of academic boards, committees, associations.
- *Leadership skills* based on evidence of engagement in supervision; heading a team; coordinating a programme; organizing events; founding a group, committee, task force; leading a campaign or movement; evidence advising roles to e.g. ministers, academic bodies, civil society organizations; evidence of having influenced positive change in practices and policies in academia and beyond.
- *Outreach skills* based on evidence of engagement in community activities e.g. mentoring, tutoring, science communication, advocacy, volunteering, networking, support for youth.

Selection

The OWSD Early Career fellowship is intended for research that will have a demonstrable impact on the local, national or regional community.

Applications will be reviewed by a panel of eminent scientists who are specialists in each of the STEM subjects and have knowledge of the challenges facing women scientists from developing countries. Committee members will be appointed by OWSD and the selection meeting will be chaired by OWSD.

Applications will be evaluated based on scientific quality, project feasibility, geographical and scientific fields' distribution.

The Selection Committee's decision is final and not eligible for appeal. It cannot be contested or subject to explanation or justification. Individual feedback will not be provided.

If selected for an OWSD Early Career fellowship, kindly note that OWSD must be informed by the fellow of additional/supplementary grants, funds and bursaries that have been awarded in connection with her research, specifying the donor, amount, duration and purpose of the grant. Please note that funding from other sources is seen as a positive demonstration of concept and feasibility as long as resources requested expand and supplement activities and resources rather than duplicate them.

IN ORDER TO APPLY, PLEASE CLICK [HERE](#).