

Africa Regional Scholarship and Innovation Fund for Applied Sciences, Engineering and Technology

Progress Report January to March 2019

A. Component 1: Capacity development for Operation of the Scholarship, Research and Innovation Fund

1.1 Setting up the RSIF Permanent Fund

- 1.1.1 Terms of Reference for a consultant to undertake a feasibility study on the establishment of the Fund was approved by the World Bank and a Request for Expression of Interest from eligible firms was published with deadline date for February 15, 2019. A total of five firms submitted Eols of which one was disqualified. The deadline has been extended to March 8, 2019 to allow for competition.
- 1.1.2 The interim resource mobilization plan was updated, and specific activities undertaken as part of implementation of the Plan. Meetings have been held with Government representatives of France, Sweden and Norway. Discussions are being initiated with targeted Foundations including the MasterCard Foundation. Presentation was also made by the RCU manager to country representatives of eight countries on joining the PASET initiative during the World Bank African Centers of Excellence Phase 3 Bootcamp in Djibouti. Discussions are underway with the Ministry of Education in Kenya to hold a fundraising breakfast for Kenyan based institutions, including the private sector. A draft concept note has been developed for this purpose.

1.2 Management of PhD scholarships and research grants

- 1.2.1 Following the second [call guidelines](#) and application materials for RSIF host universities that was published on 8th November 2018, 144 applications were received by the RCU. The RCU developed selection criteria for the host university selection with input from the Consultative Advisory Group (CAG) that was approved by the Executive Board (EB) (See Annex 1). The RCU undertook compliance/eligibility check and 80 applications were sent out to be reviewed by three independent external reviewers each. The three top proposals in each thematic area will be selected and an Independent Evaluation Committee will select those to be visited for onsite evaluation prior to recommendation to the Board by mid-April, 2019.

Table 1: Eligible Applications Received at RCU for RSIF Host Universities

Priority Area*	CC	E	FS	ICT	MM	Total
No. of submitted proposals	13	17	24	14	12	80

* ICT=Information and communication technology including big data and artificial intelligence; FS=food security and agribusiness, CC=climate change, E=energy including renewables, and MM=minerals mining and materials engineering

- 1.2.2 The [Expression of Interest for RSIF partner organizations](#) was shared with over 42 institutions in the United States of America, China, Japan, and Korea. The EoI has been further improved and will continue to be shared with other institutions. Discussions have been held with twenty institutions with over ten in Korea, three in the United States, two in Europe and two in Japan.

A trip led by the World Bank was made to Korea 23-28 February 2019 to follow up on partnerships with Korean institutions. Strong support was expressed by the Korea Ministry of Science and ICT for the program. Three institutions were very positive and ready to move to the next step in placing the RSIF PhD students. These were Seoul National University (GBST), Korea Advanced Institute of Science and Technology (KAIST), Korea Institute of Energy Research (KIER). Discussions will continue with other institutions that we met in Korea for future placement, including Korea Research Institute of Chemical Technology (KRICT), Korea Research Institute of Bioscience and Biotechnology (KRIBB), Electronics and Telecommunication Research Institute (ETRI), Gwangju Institute of Science and Technology (GIST). Discussions are underway for existing scholars to apply and initiate 'matching' of research topics with Korean Professors at Korea Institute of Science and Technology (KIST).

1.3 Capacity building of host universities

icipe will undertake a capacity assessment of both the newly selected and existing host universities to inform the capacity building strategy for host universities. This will be done in the next period, subsequent to selection of Host universities.

1.4 Management of innovation grants

An innovation grants administration unit has been set up, building on *icipe's* capacity for management of innovation processes including private sector engagement. ICT tools and systems available are being reviewed for strengthening the operationalization of the unit. Draft Terms of Reference (ToR) for a consultant to develop a framework and operational plan for the grants was prepared. The RCU Manager has submitted the draft ToR for review by the RSIF TTL at the World Bank. Further, a research and innovation grants officer has been recruited and will report on 1st April 2019.

B. Component 2: PhD Scholarships, research grants and innovation grants

2.1 PhD Scholarships

The 16 existing RSIF Students are in the process of finalizing their research proposals and have taken or about to take TOEFL exams. TOEFL with minimum score of iBT79-80/ CBT 213 is required for participation in the Korea Sandwich Program. Matching of students with Korean Professors at KIST is underway.

The selection process for the second cohort of PhD Scholars (40) has been developed and discussed with the CAG. The process will be shared with the EB during March, 2019. A second [pre-announcement of the call](#) will be made in March, 2019 prior to the Call for PhD Scholars to apply in May, 2019. The Call will target emerging faculty and women and Host Universities will be encouraged to distribute the call across their networks encouraging applications from a diverse pool of applicants. The process proposed will be sent shortly to the World Bank and EB for approval. The RCU will finalize development of an online centralized application tool in preparation for receiving PhD Scholarship applications.

2.2 Research grants

icipe has prepared a draft ToR for the development of the framework for research grants that is currently being discussed by the CAG.

C. Crosscutting activities

- 3.1 The RSIF Project World Bank Implementation Support Mission (ISM) was held during the week of 18th February 2019. The meeting reviewed the progress in implementation of the recommendations of the previous ISM and progress in implementing the agreed workplan. The meeting noted the progress being made and provided recommendations for the next period.
- 3.2 The PASET RSIF website is now under the full management of *icipe*. The domain has been transferred from AAU to *icipe*. The site is undergoing reconstruction and update. Similarly, the facebook page will soon be operational again.
- 3.2 *icipe* is making use of the World Bank STEP system for procurement and has published four activities including for consulting firms to provide translation services. Further training on STEP has been requested for *icipe* staff.
- 3.3 The RCU manager reported on 15 January 2019. Four other staff have also reported since February 1st, 2019. An additional seven staff are expected to report in the next month with the unit expected to be fully operational by end of March 2019.
- 3.4 *icipe* was represented by Dr. Moses Osiru at the Africa Centers of Excellence for Development Impact Project in Djibouti on 21 & 22 February 2019.
- 3.5 *icipe* was represented by Dr. Moses Osiru and Rob Skilton in a visit to Korea in a mission led by the World Bank to identify and strengthen partnership with Korean academic, research and government institutions

D. Key planned activities for the next quarter (April– June 2019)

General Fund and Endowment Fund

- 4.1. Initiate feasibility study on the establishment of the permanent fund.
- 4.2. Implement the interim resource mobilization plan per the activities and schedules indicated therein
- 4.3. Further develop the comprehensive resource mobilization strategy

Management of PhD Scholarships and Research Grants

- 4.4. Select the second cohort of host universities
- 4.5. Advance in the selection of at least three additional partner organization
- 4.6. Initiate contracting of individuals to develop the framework for research grants.
- 4.7. Initiate contracting of individuals to develop the framework for innovation grants.

Capacity building of host universities

- 4.8. Complete host university capacity and training needs assessments (both existing and new)
- 4.9. Hold individual discussions with RSIF host universities during 5th PASET Forum in Kigali, Rwanda

PhD Scholarships

- 4.10. Complete the selection and pairing of the first cohort of PhD students with their academic advisors at partner institutions
- 4.11. Develop quarterly and annual student reporting tools
- 4.12. Open the call for PhD scholarships for the next cohort of 40 students
- 4.13. Ongoing recruitment of independent evaluation committee for the review and selection process of RSIF scholars
- 4.14. Open invitation for RSIF Scholars in 1st cohort to submit statement of interest for the Samsung Dream Foundation Scholarship
- 4.15. Host virtual orientation session for independent evaluation committee to provide in-depth details on the student selection process and RSIF scholarship selection criteria

Cross cutting activities

- 4.16. Complete the recruitment of RSIF RCU staff
- 4.17. Hire consultancy firm to offer English to French/French to English translations
- 4.18. Develop an RSIF communication strategy and continue preparations of relevant communication materials targeting key stakeholder segments, including governments, private sector executives, and donors in English and French.
- 4.19. Attendance of *icipe*, Host Universities and Cohort 1 scholars at the 5th PASET Forum. The students will present posters highlighting their work. During the PASET Forum, *icipe* will organize training activities for the students to build their capacity in Communication Skills (how to present a poster to a scientific and nonscientific audience), Research Ethics, Information Management, and introduction and orientation on living and working in Korea.