



International Centre of Insect Physiology and Ecology (*icipe*)
Bioresources Innovations Network for Eastern Africa Development Programme
(BioInnovate Africa)
<http://bioinnovate-africa.org>

Call for Early-Stage Bio Incubation Projects

Expected date of issue: 21 November 2022
Closing date: Open

Summary:

1	Grant type	Early-Stage Bio Incubation Projects
2	Call thematic focus areas	a) Value addition to agro-produce and other biological resources b) Biological Waste Conversion c) Biologically based Healthcare Products
3	Team members	Three (3)
4	Grant size per project	Up to US\$250,000
5	Project duration	Up to 3 years
6	No of grants to be awarded	Up to 7
7	Eligible applicants	Scientists in universities and research institutes who are resident in any of the eligible countries
8	Eligible countries	Burundi, DR Congo, Ethiopia, Kenya, Rwanda, South Sudan, Tanzania, and Uganda
9	Submission deadline	Open until all available grants are awarded

1.0 Background

BioInnovate Africa was established in 2010 with support from the Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency (Sida). It is implemented as a regional science and innovation-driven programme of the International Centre of Insect Physiology and Ecology (*icipe*) since October 2016. *icipe* is headquartered in Nairobi, Kenya. BioInnovate Africa participating countries include Burundi, Democratic Republic of the Congo (DR Congo), Ethiopia, Kenya, Rwanda, South Sudan, Tanzania, and Uganda. BioInnovate Africa enables scientists in these countries to translate biologically based 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.

2.0 Purpose

This grant will support entrepreneurial scientists from universities and research institutes to establish new and innovative biologically based enterprises that are sustainable and contribute to poverty reduction in eastern Africa. The new enterprise should be based on research outputs or scientific discoveries that can be translated to practical solutions for industry and society. Ideas presented should have past proof of concept in the laboratory or field.

2.1 Thematic areas

Proposals submitted should address any one or all the following BioInnovate Africa thematic areas:

a. value addition to agro-produce and other biological resources

This includes new food production and processing methods that promote circular food systems; new ways of reducing post-harvest losses; novel green industrial chemicals; biomaterials for packaging and construction; and biological fuels. Value addition may also include use of digital tools and enabling technologies such as artificial intelligence and machine learning in conserving biodiversity and ensuring sustainable supply and regeneration of biological resources.

b. biological waste conversion

Biological waste conversion involves methods of turning agro/biowaste and other feedstock into useful renewable products including product recovery from solid waste, using insects as biowaste converters, watershed preservation, and wastewater treatment and reuse and bioenergy production. Other useful products may include improved feed from waste, bioprocessing using selective biocatalysts/enzymes, or safe green chemicals, agroecological practices and community-based biorefineries that diversify and strengthen value chains.

c. biologically based healthcare products

This includes biopharmaceuticals and diagnostics for key human diseases affecting the region. It also involves use of indigenous knowledge and standardized dosages, which make traditional medicine safer and more efficacious. Other products may include biologically based topical applications for skin care that are derived from the region's biodiversity and would target niche markets or benefit from fair trade initiatives for poorer communities in the region.

2.2 Key activities and deliverables

The key activities and deliverables expected for this grant support should revolve around developing and testing inclusive business models, feasibility and market studies, product analyses and testing, networking with various partners along the value chain, branding, licensing, and registration (including intellectual property management), team formation, and where necessary, minor product refinements/reformulations and production of minimal viable products for market testing.

2.3 Eligible applicants

Eligible applicants are scientists working as employees of legally recognised universities and research institutes in any of the eastern African countries of Burundi, DR Congo, Ethiopia, Kenya, Rwanda, South Sudan, Tanzania, and Uganda. Furthermore, the scientists must be resident in Eastern Africa. For purposes of these guidelines, "scientist" includes any individual qualified in and/or creatively practicing physical, natural, and engineering sciences, medicine, business, social or other related discipline.

2.4 Team composition

A project team shall comprise three individuals from (a) the same organisation, (b) different organisations in the same country, or (c) different organisations in different countries in Eastern Africa. The latter will be given priority. Furthermore, project teams are encouraged to have members from Burundi, DR Congo, Ethiopia, Rwanda, and South Sudan. The team should be multi-disciplinary and diverse, including a balanced representation of men and women. They should be self-motivated, and passionate about the enterprise they wish to establish. The team should demonstrate a clear vision for success and transformational change in society. The organisation to which the team members are affiliated should have policies and practices that allow their staff or students to participate in creation of spin off enterprises as one of the means of translating research outputs into practical use and scaling them for societal impact.

2.5 Grant size, duration, and fund management.

Each project will be funded up to US\$ 250,000 (two hundred fifty only) for a maximum period of three years. The organisation managing the funds is considered an implementing partner, and therefore, shall not sub-grant any portion of the funds to third parties. That is, it shall not be allowed to make calls for proposals for subprojects. However, the organisation may make contracts for goods, services, and works.

2.6 Matching fund support

The organisation receiving the grant should be willing and commit to provide matching funds of 15% of the total project funds. The matching funds will be over and above the grant funding and shall be spent within the organisation to support project activities. Matching funds may come from the organisation itself, social impact investors, relevant government agencies, private sector, or other sources. The matching funds may be cash or in-kind contribution of staff time, laboratory space, infrastructure, other institutional support, etc., or both.

3.0 Evaluation

3.1 Selection process

Proposals are made online via BioInnovate Africa grants management information system. Once they are received, each proposal is automatically assigned a registration number. The proposal is screened by the BioInnovate Africa Programme Management Office (PMO) to ensure that it is complete and meets the eligibility requirements. Incomplete proposals and those that fail the eligibility check are automatically disqualified. Proposals that pass the eligibility screening are evaluated by a team of at least three (3) independent experts. The experts review and recommend to the BioInnovate Africa Programme Advisory Committee (PAC), proposals that should be considered for funding. The PAC reviews and makes the final decision on proposals to be funded based on the experts' comments and their own assessment of the quality, innovativeness, feasibility, and potential impact of the proposal.

3.2 Evaluation criteria

a. General Principle

Following a key principle of this grant category, teams should clearly demonstrate (with scientific evidence) that their biobased innovative idea is passed proof-of-concept stage i.e., has been tested or validated under laboratory conditions. Additionally, the team should clearly articulate the potential market demand, and the potential customers of the biobased products developed from the project.

b. Criteria

The proposals will be evaluated using the criteria shown in Table 1. Each criterion is marked out of 10 points.

Table 1: Evaluation Criteria

No.	Criterion
1	Regional relevance (<i>The project is beneficial to Eastern Africa as a whole</i>)
2	Innovation (<i>The project is based on an innovative product or service that is well described and supported by scientific facts or technical descriptions. It is a new product or service that has passed proof of concept in the laboratory or field</i>)
3	The need/problem (<i>There is a clear need for the project. The products or services that the project is developing address a well-articulated problem for a target group of people or customers</i>)
4	Expected impact or potential market (<i>The potential market of the product or service is explained. There is a likely demand for the product or service</i>)
5	Environmental sustainability (<i>The production or use of the product or provision of the service does not result in significant carbon emissions. It results in emissions reduction, biodiversity conservation and ecosystem services improvement</i>)
6	Team composition (<i>The team is multidisciplinary, diverse, and qualified to co-develop and take the product to market. The team has a good balance of men and women</i>)

All decisions of the BioInnovate Africa PAC on proposals submitted are final and shall not be subject to further claims or revisions. Furthermore, the PAC reserves the right to revoke its decision on a selected proposal if it is established that the information provided by the applicant is false.

4.0 Ethical issues

In the process of preparing the project grant application, the project team is obliged to observe ethical principles and rules and describe how ethical issues in the proposed project will be addressed. The applicant should indicate plans to obtain ethical approval from relevant bodies if the proposed project involves human or animal subjects.

5.0 Key requirements

Applicants must submit the following:

- a. A proposal of maximum 10 pages including references. The proposal should be written in Times New Roman font, size 12, margins normal (2.54 cm for top, bottom, left and right margins), and orientation portrait.
- b. A results matrix using the template provided.

- c. A project budget using the template provided.
- d. A letter of support from the head of the organisation.

6.0 How to submit your proposal

6.1 Application form:

Applications should be made in English using the application template available at: <http://grants.bioinnovate-africa.org/documents/Template%20for%20Proposals%20November%202022.docx> .

6.2 Online submission

Complete proposals (in English) should be submitted online via http://grants.bioinnovate-africa.org/forms/early_stage_bio_incubation.php . The document should be saved in doc, docx, or pdf. The maximum file size accepted for any single file is 10 MB. Once submitted, no changes can be made to the application.

6.3 Submission deadline

There is no deadline for receiving proposals. However, proposals will be evaluated every three months until the available grants have been awarded.

6.4 Conditions for submission

By submitting a proposal, the applicant agrees to the following:

- a. to abide by all rules for participating in this Call as outlined in the guidelines and related documents.
- b. that the BioInnovate Africa PAC decision on the proposal is final.
- c. that if successful, the names, and organisation of affiliation of members of the project team, and title, objectives and total budget of the project will be shared on the BioInnovate Africa web site (*The applicant should notify BioInnovate Africa PMO if there are any proprietary and confidential business information, which should not be publicly shared*).
- d. that the names of independent expert evaluators shall be kept confidential and will not be released to applicants under any circumstances. However, feedback based on the review comments and the BioInnovate Africa PAC will be provided to the applicant.
- e. an applicant who is already a core team member in an ongoing BioInnovate Africa supported project should not participate in this Call category.
- f. that the submission timelines and schedules of fund disbursement to selected proposals may be adjusted without prior notice in the event of uncertainties in funding.

7.0 Further information

Please, visit <http://bioinnovate-africa.org> for more information about BioInnovate Africa and this Call or contact the BioInnovate Africa PMO on email: bioinnovate@icipe.org or telephone +254 (20) 8632433 for any inquiries about the Call. Information webinars on this Call will be conducted once every quarter. Interested applicants should visit the BioInnovate Africa website for a schedule of the webinars.