IMPERIAL

Africa Research Partnerships Seed Fund 2026-27

CALL DOCUMENT AND GUIDANCE FOR APPLICANTS

1. Purpose

The Africa Research Partnerships Fund aims to help kick-start early-stage research ideas and collaborations that might not otherwise be pursued. It promotes and supports early-stage collaboration among academics, researchers and students based at universities in Africa and Imperial College London. It facilitates exchange between participating research groups through provision of grants to cover travel, workshops, meetings, hackathons, networks and other activities to explore research directions.

Partners in both Sub-Saharan and North Africa are eligible to apply.

Please note that this opportunity is open to **new collaborations only**, i.e., the PIs, as co-applicants, have not been funded by Imperial and have not received grants above £5,000 from external funders before.

2. Africa Research Partnerships Seed Fund

To support collaborative endeavours, Imperial will provide seed funding to build new research collaborations. Funds can be requested to support one or more of the following activities:

- Exploratory research, travel costs and other activities that often do not receive financial support at the earliest stages. Imperial funds can also be used to support small-scale experiments or the development of prototypes;
- Outward/inward visits for academics, research staff and students to investigate the potential for, initiate, follow-up, or work on a collaborative project or training opportunity, and for other stakeholder engagement;
- 'Hackathon' or other collaborative day or week-long events involving staff and students from both institutions to explore new risky and 'blue skies' research directions and ideas;
- Longer stays for students or research staff (up to maximum 2 months) to learn new techniques, analyse results or undertake other activities;
- Set up of new networks to promote the exchange of ideas, best practice, and other research goals;
- Networking events such as workshops and seminars to bring together researchers to foster new links or strengthen existing collaborations.
- Facilitation fees for online workshops (to encourage innovative ways of online interaction)
- Payment for student assistance (to encourage student engagement in projects)

The goal is for these collaborations to support both Imperial and partner academics to initiate and pursue collaborations that lead to new science and to future applications for external funding.

3. Funding and Project Duration

The overall budget of this seed fund is £50,000, and we plan to award up to eight projects. Funds can only be spent on activities that fit the purpose of this call. Applicants should itemise their budget using the tables in the application form.

All expenditure should be completed by **31 July 2027**. Please note that extensions are not possible.

Please refer to the list of fundable / non-fundable items below:

Fundable	**Y/N**
Student support costs (e.g., student bursaries)	Y
Limited Research Consumables	Y
Travel	Y
Accommodation	Y
Subsistence	Y
Networking events such as e-workshops and e-seminars	Y
Bench fees	N
Indirect and estate costs	N
Salary	N

4. How to Apply

Proposals must be submitted to globalseedfunds@imperial.ac.uk. Only applications submitted to this email addresses, and before the deadline, will be considered.

One proposal per Principal Applicant per call is permitted.

Each application should have one Principal Applicant based at Imperial and one Principal Applicant based at an African institution and should contain:

- A written case for support (maximum 2 pages) to include:
    - A description of the activities and collaboration proposed;
    - An explanation of how the activities proposed will generate demonstrable added value to the PI / Research Group / Department / Faculty / University
    - A description of the potential wider impact of the proposed collaboration and its strategic importance
    - A description of the opportunities available for leveraging funding
- A financial summary: each application should provide information on the requested costs using the budget section of the application template (see 'Funding Requested').
- Applicable only to Imperial Applicants: an InfoEd / Worktribe statement is not needed.

Applications must be completed on the template provided and within the page limit stated.

Please note that it is the responsibility of the PI to ensure that all travel arrangements are in line with the FCDO travel advice.

All new partners will be required to pass Imperial's due diligence checks. This process often takes longer than expected, so PIs are encouraged to contact their departmental Research Team and Finance Officers as soon as they have been awarded funding.

5. Application Deadline and Project Milestones

- Deadline for the submission of applications: 3 July 2026
- All awarded projects must end by: 31 July 2027

6. Reporting

Principal Applicants who are successful in receiving an award are required to provide a report within 2 weeks of the end of the award period to globalseedfunds@imperial.ac.uk using a template provided. The narrative element of the report should provide details of the relevant activities supported and how these have addressed the objectives of the call. The financial element of the report serves as a Final Expenditure Statement and should detail the award amount and the award spent. Responsibility remains with the PI to ensure all spend has been charged to the correct award code.

Imperial is a proud signatory to the San-Francisco Declaration on Research Assessment (DORA), which means that in hiring, promotion and research funding decisions we will evaluate applicants on the quality of their work, not the impact factor of the journal where it is published. More information is available at https://www.imperial.ac.uk/research-and-innovation/about-imperial-research/research-evaluation/.