

Africa-UniNet | 5th Call

Guidelines for Applicants

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1. About Africa-UniNet

With Africa-UniNet an instrument has been created to enable and strengthen existing and new interdisciplinary and transdisciplinary research cooperation between Austria and African countries.

Africa-UniNet was initiated by the Austrian Federal Ministry of Education, Science and Research (BMBWF) and launched by Austria's Agency for Education and Internationalisation (OeAD-GmbH) and the University of Natural Resources and Life Sciences, Vienna (BOKU) in order to create a long-term, stable basis for cooperation between Austrian and African universities and research institutions. Africa-UniNet intends to promote new contacts and deepen existing scientific cooperation.

<http://www.africa-uninet.at>

The OeAD-GmbH – Agency for Education and Internationalisation – in short OeAD – implements Africa-UniNet in accordance with the special directive “Maßnahmen zur Internationalisierung” (GZ: BMBWF-2024-0.205.097) of the Federal Ministry of Education, Science and Research (BMBWF).

2. Scope of Africa-UniNet Cooperative Research Projects

Africa-UniNet funds collaborative research projects between researchers from active Africa-UniNet member institutions in Austria and in African countries. **Researchers from at least one Austrian and at least one African member institution must be involved in each project.** All participating institutions must be **active Africa-UniNet members**, i.e. they must have paid the membership fee 2024.

Africa-UniNet promotes **excellent research** based on mutual knowledge exchange. While the thematic scope of the cooperative research projects is not restricted, they set out to contribute to the **Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)**. At the same time, they enhance the scientific foundation of the involved institutions and reinforce the formation of the network itself by promoting new partnerships between Austrian and African universities and research institutions and by strengthening existing ties. Research projects must be new. The project may build on previous Africa-UniNet projects if fundamentally new research questions or methodologies are applied. Revised applications of previously rejected Africa-UniNet projects are allowed.

Africa-UniNet aims to contribute to the creation of an environment that fosters international collaboration between researchers and institutions beyond the duration of individual projects. Key indicators and results from the projects are considered to be **joint publications**, as well as further collaborations and **follow-up projects**. The project consortia therefore undertake to report publications and projects resulting from the Africa-UniNet grant even after the Africa-UniNet project has been completed.

The special directive “Maßnahmen zur Internationalisierung” (GZ: BMBWF-2024-0.205.097) of the Federal Ministry of Education, Science and Research (BMBWF), which was published in 2024, defines the following formal requirements for a cooperative research project.

Compared to the previous Africa-UniNet Calls, the new special directive has resulted in significant changes. These are highlighted in coloured boxes. We therefore ask you to read the guidelines for the 5th Call particularly carefully.

3. Submission, Project Coordination and Project Consortium

Researchers from at least one Austrian and one African member institution must be involved in each project. All participating institutions must be active Africa-UniNet members, i.e. they must have paid the membership fee 2024.

Only researchers (post docs) who are affiliated to an Austrian member institution are eligible to apply for, submit and coordinate a project. The project coordinator that submits the project proposal will also assume overall responsibility for coordinating the project and for reporting. The funds are to be handled via a bank account of the institution. The project coordinator must hold at least a **PhD**. All participating researchers must either be **PhD students** or **post docs**. Master students are not eligible to participate.

There are no restrictions as to how many applications per institution can be submitted.

Please note: Only researchers (post docs) who are affiliated to an Austrian member institution are eligible for application, submission and coordination of a project.

4. Project Duration and Maximum Funding Amount

- Project duration: 24 months
- Maximum funding amount: 40,000 euros per project

Please note: All projects have a project duration of 24 months. The maximum funding amount is 40,000 euros per project.

5. Eligible Costs

Project funding is only intended as a grant and is not designed to cover the entire costs of the project.

Please note: As stipulated in the special directive “Maßnahmen zur Internationalisierung” (GZ: BMBWF-2024-0.205.097) the grant recipient must ensure the implementation of the project through the use of appropriate **own funds**. This must be clearly presented in the financing plan.

Only the following expenses can be claimed:

Incoming mobility | travel from the partner country in Africa to Austria:

- 1) Travel costs to Austria. The cheapest reasonable means of transport must be chosen. The financing only covers the journey to the partner institution in Austria and back home. No further travel financing is provided. A maximum of 2,000 euros per person per return trip can be reimbursed. This includes only the following:
 - a. Flight costs including airport taxes: cheapest option, economy class only. Fees for the reservation of certain seats cannot be reimbursed. CO2 compensation cannot be reimbursed. Costs for visa and travel insurance cannot be reimbursed.
 - b. Travel costs to and from the airport.

- 2) Allowance for the stay: Daily allowance of no more than 180 euros per day spent working on the project during the stay in Austria. The maximum amount is 2,160 euros per month. The maximum duration per person per trip per stay is three months. No further costs can be reimbursed.

Outgoing mobility | travel from Austria to the partner country in Africa

- 1) Travel costs to the partner country in Africa. The cheapest reasonable means of transport must be chosen. The financing only covers the journey to the partner institution in Africa and back home. No further travel financing is provided. A maximum of 2,000 euros per person per trip can be reimbursed. This includes only the following:
 - a. Flight costs including airport taxes: cheapest option, economy class only. Fees for the reservation of certain seats cannot be reimbursed. CO2 compensation cannot be reimbursed. Costs for visa and travel insurance cannot be reimbursed.
 - b. Travel costs to and from the airport.
- 2) Allowance for the stay: Daily allowance of no more than 180 euros per day spent working on the project during the stay in Africa. The maximum amount is 2,160 euros per month. The maximum duration per person per trip per stay is three months. No further costs can be reimbursed.

Please note: Travel costs within or between African partner countries cannot be reimbursed.

Material costs

Material (consumables), only if they are essential and specifically relevant for the project, can be covered up to a maximum amount of 5,000 euros for the entire project duration. Only consumables can be reimbursed, e.g.: test kits, chemicals, research permit, data acquisition, vehicle rent for field research, publication costs. No infrastructure or basic equipment can be reimbursed, e.g.: no laptops, no telephone or internet costs, no staff costs, no honoraria for participants.

6. Application

6.1. Submission of the Application

The project is applied for via the StipOnline portal. The basic data for the project must be entered in this portal and the application documents uploaded. The documents to be uploaded are:

- 1) **Project Proposal (pdf)**
- 2) **Abstract (pdf)**
- 3) **Financing Plan (excel file)**
- 4) **CV of the Project Coordinator (pdf)**
- 5) **Letters of Endorsement of ALL participating institutions (as one pdf)**

Please note: Applications can only be submitted via the StipOnline portal.

Application documents can be downloaded from the Africa-UniNet website. The templates for the project proposal and the financing plan, which can be found on the Africa-UniNet website, must be used. Please copy the abstract from the project proposal and upload it as a separate pdf document. You may use or adapt the templates for the CV of the project coordinator and the letters of endorsement to suit the needs of the respective project coordinator/institution. However, ensure that all relevant content is included as stated in the respective template. Please note that the application must be submitted in English.

6.1.1. Project Proposal

The template for the project proposal provided on the Africa-UniNet website must be used. The project proposal consists of the following sections:

- 1) Project Overview
- 2) Abstract
- 3) Cooperation and Partnership
- 4) Project Design and Scientific Quality
- 5) Contribution to the SDGs and Added Values
- 6) Results and Sustainability
- 7) Risk Management and Cost-Effectiveness
- 8) List of References

The project proposal must not exceed 12,000 words for the whole document.

6.1.2. Abstract

Please copy the abstract from the project proposal and upload it in pdf format.

6.1.3. Financing Plan

The template for the financing plan provided on the Africa-UniNet website must be used.

The financing plan provides an overview of the costs requested for funding by Africa-UniNet along three categories:

- OUTGOING costs requested for funding by Africa-UniNet, i.e. from Austria to the partner country.
- INCOMING costs requested for funding by Africa-UniNet, i.e. from the partner country to Austria.
- Material costs requested for funding by Africa-UniNet, only if they are essential and specifically relevant for the project.

Project funding is only intended as a grant and is not designed to cover the entire costs of the project. Thus, the financing plan also has to include the total expected costs (excluding staff costs) and funding sources.

Please note: As stipulated in the special directive “Maßnahmen zur Internationalisierung” (GZ: BMBWF-2024-0.205.097) the grant recipient must ensure the implementation of the project

through the use of appropriate **own funds**. This must be clearly presented in the financing plan.

6.1.4. CV of the Project Coordinator

The template for the CV of the project coordinator (CV template) from the Africa-UniNet website can be used or adjusted to fit the requirement of the respective project coordinator. In this case, however, ensure that all relevant content is included as stated in the template.

6.1.5. Letters of Endorsement of All Participating Institutions

The template for letters of endorsement (LOE template) from the Africa-UniNet website can be used or adjusted to fit the requirements of the respective institutions. In these cases, however, ensure that all relevant content is included as stated in the template. The letters of endorsement have to be signed by an authorized signatory of the respective institution. The letters of endorsement of all participating institutions, i.e. the coordinating institution and all partner institutions, must be compiled and uploaded as one pdf file.

7. Checklist on Formal Requirements

- Only researchers (post docs) who are affiliated to an Austrian member institution are eligible to apply for, submit and coordinate a project.
- Researchers from at least one Austrian and one African member institution must be involved in each project.
- All participating institutions must be active Africa-UniNet members, i.e. they must have paid the membership fee of the respective year.
- The project coordinator must hold at least a PhD.
- All participating researchers must either be PhD students or post docs. Master students are not eligible to participate.
- The project duration is 24 months.
- The maximum funding amount of 40,000 euros per project must not be exceeded.
- Compliance with financial regulations: Africa-UniNet can only provide allowances for PhD students and post docs travelling to and from Austria. Material costs for a project must not exceed 5,000 euros in total.
- Submission only via the StipOnline portal. The basic data for the project must be entered in this portal and the application documents uploaded. The documents to be uploaded are Project Proposal (pdf), Abstract (pdf), Financing Plan (excel file), CV of the Project Coordinator (pdf file), Letters of Endorsement of all participating institutions (compiled and uploaded as one pdf file).
- The templates for the project proposal and the financing plan provided on the Africa-UniNet website must be used.
- The application has to be in English.
- The document Project Proposal must not exceed 12,000 words.
- The document Financing Plan must comply with the guidelines and be completed in full.
- The document CV of the Project Coordinator must include all information as listed in the CV template.
- The Letters of Endorsement of all participating institutions have to be compiled and uploaded as one pdf file. They must be signed by the authorized signatories of the

respective institutions. They must include all information as provided in the LOE template. LOEs from all participating institutions are necessary, i.e. the coordinating institution and all partner institutions.

- The application must be submitted within the deadline.

8. Review and Selection Process

The Africa-UniNet Office at OeAD checks whether the project applications fulfil the formal criteria. Formally correct proposals are evaluated by two independent reviewers for each proposal. They evaluate the project proposals individually and submit their reviews to the Africa-UniNet Office. The reviews include a scoring matrix (max. 100 points) and narrative assessments.

The evaluation criteria are:

- Project Design and Scientific Quality, Cooperation and Partnership (max. 50 points)
See Project Proposal Sections 2-4, CV, Letters of Endorsement, Financing Plan.
- Contribution to the SDGs and Added Values (max. 20 points)
See Project Proposal Section 5
- Results and Sustainability (max. 20 points)
See Project Proposal Section 6
- Risk Management and Cost-Effectiveness (max. 10 points)
See Project Proposal Section 7, Financing Plan

The ranking is based on the average score of the evaluations (maximum score 100). The list of selected projects has to be approved by the General Assembly and the BMBWF.

9. Disbursements of Funds and Reporting

Disbursement of funding to the institutional account (no disbursement to private accounts).

A disbursement of 50 per cent of the funding per project is made to an account of the coordinating institution after the contract has been signed. Further 25 per cent are disbursed after approval of the mid-term report. The remaining max. 25 per cent of the project budget will be transferred after approval of the final report.

The mid-term as well as the final report must include a scientific and a financial report. The reports have to be in English and have to be submitted by the project coordinator within 2 months after the end of the reporting period. All reports have to be submitted via email to africa-uninet@oead.at. Failure to report will automatically result in the termination of the Africa-UniNet project and the requirement to return undocumented funds to OeAD.