

Call for applications – AI4D Africa Professional Development Award

Date issued: November 1, 2022

Deadline for applications: February 1, 2023

1. Background

The [Artificial Intelligence for Development in Africa \(AI4D Africa\)](#) is a 5-year partnership between [International Development Research Centre \(IDRC\)](#) and the [Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency \(Sida\)](#). AI4D Africa seeks to *improve the quality of life for all in Africa and beyond by partnering with Africa's science and policy communities to leverage artificial intelligence (AI) through high-quality research, responsible innovation, and talent strengthening.*

AI4D Africa support is structured around three pillars: **policy research** to promote and support responsible AI; supporting **responsible innovation** to address Africa's development challenges; amplify African **talent** to develop and deploy responsible AI.

IDRC and Sida are seeking applications from individual researchers to undertake a 12-month Professional Development Award (PDA). The recipient will be based in IDRC's Nairobi office and will receive additional support to advance research focusing on responsible AI for development in Africa, while also contributing to the development and management of the AI4D Africa program.

Applicants are encouraged to have a look at the [AI4D Africa website](#) for more information about the program.

2. The scope

This project aims to build career experience and professional capacity of early career researchers focusing on AI for development or related policy issues. The program will support one Professional Development Awardees (PDA) posted at the IDRC office in Nairobi. The PDA will join IDRC for a one-year paid program to work within the AI4D Africa team to assist in program activities, as well as undertake research on the AI for development topic of choice. They will receive hands-on experience in research and program management and support, grant administration, and the creation, dissemination, and use of knowledge from an international development perspective.

For this call, AI4D Africa is seeking a PDA to conduct research in the area of artificial intelligence and sustainable development. Examples include but are not limited to:

- Policy and regulation to support the development of responsible AI for development;
- Social and ethical impacts of specific AI innovations, such as in agriculture, climate change, education, health care, etc.;
- Bias and inclusion in AI systems in Africa;

- Automated decision-making and accountability;
- Understanding African-based principles of ethical or responsible AI;
- How to foster the development, use and governance of human-centred responsible AI systems in Africa;
- How AI technologies can advance gender equality, diversity, and inclusivity in Africa.

The successful candidate will allocate 50% of their time for a research project relating to AI for development under the guidance of a program officer. The awardee will be expected to prepare a research plan, potentially publish an article, provide progress updates during the year, and present their findings at the end of the year.

The other 50% of the successful candidate's time will include contributions to AI4D Africa program operations, which may include synthesizing and disseminating project outcomes and results; participating in program development; monitoring, and evaluation; events coordination; and preparing reports.

3. **Desired profile**

AI4D Africa seeks applications from candidates with the following qualifications:

- Minimum of a master's degree in computer science, machine learning/artificial intelligence, mathematical sciences, neuroscience, communication studies, science and technology studies, or a related field;
- At least two years' experience working in a development organization and/or conducting research in a related field;
- Demonstrated interest in research on AI, innovations and technologies, and their application for international development;
- Strong research, analysis, and writing skills for different audiences (academic, policy, public);
- Experience in considering equity, gender and inclusion in AI;
- Superior verbal and written communication skills in English; intermediate skills or above in French considered an asset.

4. **Eligibility and conditions**

This call is open to Kenyan citizens, or citizens that have a work permit valid for full-time work in Kenya, having completed a Master's degree program at a recognized university in the last five years.

The PDA is expected to join the team in May 2023 for a one-year contract. Depending on the situation with COVID-19 at that time, the selected candidate may be expected to start their position virtually. The position may be hybrid. The selected candidate shall have to be ready to work in person in IDRC's Nairobi office once this is permitted.

The annual salary range for the position is 2,032,072 to 3,204,520 KES (Kenyan shilling). Some travel and research expenses are also supported, up to a maximum of CA\$15,000.

5. **Application process**

Applicants must prepare a complete application that includes their resume, a cover letter as well as a research proposal of not more than three pages. Resumes should be succinct, no more than 3 pages. In the cover letter, applicants should clearly outline their qualifications for this position and explain how this opportunity will advance their career goals. The research proposal should be no more than 3 pages and include the following information:

- A description of the purpose of the research
- Proposed methodology
- Timeline that demonstrates a feasible approach
- Ethical considerations

Applications must be submitted by email to AI4DAfrica@idrc.ca by 23:59 ET on February 1, 2023. Late and/or incomplete applications will not be considered. We thank all applicants for their interest. Only shortlisted candidates will be advised by email.