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Press release

Paris, September 19th, 2024

New African Scientific Progress Award Launched by the AXA Research Fund in Partnership with The National Research Foundation of South Africa and The Future Earth Africa Hub

- **The AXA Research Fund (AXA RF), the National Research Foundation (NRF) and the Future Earth Africa Hub are proud to collaboratively announce the launch of the African Scientific Progress Award (ASPA).**
- **The 440K€ endowed initiative will support and empower 5 early career researchers on the African continent.**

ASPA seeks to strengthen **sustainability research** and innovation in Africa by fostering **young scientific excellence** and empowering networks of early career researchers. The award particularly aims to support sustainability research activities related to the intersection of **climate change and health**. The initiative will provide actionable insights for practitioners to effectively address the challenges through strategies on mitigation, adaptation, governance, all within a local context and preferably looking at intersecting risks.

The ASPA targets groups of **five early career researchers** from across the African continent, aiming for an equitable geographical spread in North/South/East/West and Central African regions. Candidates are required to have a **PhD plus 3-5 years**, with a minimum of three years of active research, and must be of **African nationality**. Career breaks up to 3 years are considered. Applicants demonstrate that they have started to build a track record in their selected field and show **potential as a future research leader**.

Perspective researchers should also exhibit an **interest in developing a strong international standing** and in fostering **cross-continental scientific connections**. The award will include a component of capacity development allowing fellows to enhance their leadership and communications skills. Grantees will have to commit to **sharing their research openly** and communicating it to a broad audience.

“We are thrilled to launch this one-of-a-kind initiative, that aims to catalyze the potential of the best emerging scientists in Africa to address pressing sustainability challenges. We are proud to expand our experience as a global science philanthropist with this focus on African research, thanks to our prestigious partners The National Research Foundation and Future Earth” Julia d’Astorg, Head of the AXA Research Fund.

“The NRF is delighted to partner up with AXA for yet another initiative aiming to support our early career researchers by, among a range of things, providing opportunities for fellowship, training, mentoring as well as networking and collaboration. The initiative will avail resources to early career researchers from our continent for their research. This will be instrumental to increasing scientific output across the continent, and also grow the pool of academics for our institutions. It is significant to the NRF that this partnership will be implemented through the Future Earth Africa Hub, which is another significant international partnership in which we’re involved,” says NRF CEO, Dr Fulufhelo Nelwamondo.

“We are excited to be part of this groundbreaking initiative that will not only advance sustainability research in Africa but also empower a new generation of researchers to tackle the continent’s most pressing challenges. By fostering collaboration and providing essential resources, ASPA will help build a resilient and innovative scientific community across Africa, capable of driving transformative change,” says Professor Heila Lotz-Sisitka of the Future Earth Africa Hub Leadership Centre.

Application process

Application will have to be made on the NRF website. The deadline of the call has been set for **November 22nd, 2024 23:59 SAST**. [[link for NRF platform](#)]. The final projects will be selected by an independent Expert Panel.

About

The **AXA Research Fund** is AXA Group’s global scientific philanthropy initiative launched in 2008 to address the most important issues facing our planet. It supports human progress by funding research in key areas related to risk and helping inform public and private decision-making based on science. Since its inception, the AXA Research Fund has supported over 720 transformative research projects in 340 leading academic institutions.

For more information: www.axa-research.org @AXA Research Fund on [LinkedIn](#) and [X/Twitter](#)

The **National Research Foundation**² is the government's national agency responsible for promoting and supporting research and human capital development through funding, the provision of National Research Facilities, and scientific outreach platforms and programs for the broader community in all fields of science and technology, including natural science, engineering, social science and humanities. The NRF hosts the Future Earth Africa Hub through which it primarily supports sustainability research activities on the continent.

For more information: <https://www.nrf.ac.za/> and @NRF_News on X & The National Research Foundation of South Africa (NRF) on [LinkedIn](#).

Future Earth³. Future Earth is an international network of researchers and change-makers focused on accelerating global sustainability transformations. Through collaboration and research, it aims to broaden understanding of sustainability challenges and connect different approaches to find solutions. Governed by a Council, Future Earth works with global, regional and national partners to drive the sustainability agenda worldwide.

For more information: <https://futureearth.org/> and @FutureEarth on X & [LinkedIn](#)

Contacts

The National Research Foundation

Michael Nxumalo

Director: International Grants and Partnerships

National Research Foundation

Meiring Naude Road, Brummeria, PO Box 2600, Pretoria 0001, South Africa

mg.nxumalo@risa.nrf.ac.za

Media Contact:

Bongani Nkosi

Media Relations Officer

National Research Foundation

+27 61 477 3064

b.nkosi@nrf.ac.za

The AXA Research Fund

For all intents & purposes: axaresearchfund@axa.com