

# **Africa Science Leadership Programme (ASLP)**

## **Call for applicants 2022**

### **Background**

The speed and quality of the development of science capacity in Africa and the rest of the developing world depends not only on infrastructure and the technical training of people, but is intimately linked to the quality of leadership to lead change. It is widely accepted that the future of scientific development lies in enabling interdisciplinary, interconnected and often large, international teams. Training structures are, however, often not set up to prepare a next generation of scientists for the complexities that an interconnected, interdisciplinary approach to science entails. There is an internationally emerging paradigm that recognizes that the focus on individual leadership is often inadequate to address complex challenges, which require skills across many sectors and collaborative processes. This was very evident during COVID-19 where collective leadership was critical to navigate through the crises posed by the pandemic. The African Science Leadership Programme (ASLP) will therefore focus on developing collective leadership skills that will help fellows contribute to the "Agenda 2063: The Africa We Want". The ASLP will therefore focus on developing collective leadership skills.

### **Overview of the Programme**

The ASLP is an initiative of the University of Pretoria in partnership with the Global Young Academy, funded by the Robert Bosch Stiftung Foundation. It serves early- to mid-career researchers in basic and applied science, engineering, social sciences, arts and the humanities.

The programme aims to grow mid-career academics in Africa in the areas of thought leadership, team development, engagement and collaboration, with the intention of enabling them to solve the complex issues that face both Africa and the global community.

The leadership programme:

- Identifies early- to mid-career academics who have demonstrated leadership potential and an interest in developing key leadership skills
- Supports them to apply the acquired skills to projects that are relevant to the academic development on the continent and its impact on society
- Creates a network of academic leaders on the continent, spanning not only across countries, but also across disciplinary boundaries
- Advances a curriculum for academic leadership development which can be utilised in institutions in Africa and beyond.

### **Programme Structure**

The programme will use a highly interactive approach to training, application of skills to a leadership project, peer support, and mentorship. Fellows will attend an initial 5 day, intensive on-site programme in Pretoria, South Africa from 07-12 February 2023 (Departing on the 13th). The process will involve an approach that cycles between theory, application and reflection. Participants will be

challenged to work collaboratively to design initiatives that advance a new paradigm for African science.

The training will cover:

- Core elements of collective leadership
- Creative and systems thinking
- Development of effective networks
- Stakeholder engagement for change
- Maximising the efficiency and impact of collaborative efforts
- Advanced dialogue and communication skills
- Effective problem solving and decision making

Following the first training, fellows will apply their skills to a focus area or project relevant to their context. As described above, projects will aim to contribute to a new paradigm for Africa science. During the year, participants will continue to engage with the group and have access to professional support. Most training, travel, meal and accommodation costs will be covered. In January 2024, fellows will complete their projects and present them at the second training, which will be for 3 days.

### **Expected commitment**

The ASLP is seeking candidates who are committed to developing leadership in Africa. The training itself requires the time commitment of the two multi-day training sessions. Furthermore, fellows will be expected to develop their leadership project and engage with other fellows for peer support.

There will be some costs which are not covered by the programme, such as visas, vaccinations or local travel and lodging expenses, for which you may need to seek support from your local institution or fund personally.

### **Selection criteria and application process**

To be selected, applicants need to display a compelling vision of their future involvement in the development of research projects, programmes, human capacity, specific policies or societal structures. The selection process will consider individual qualities but also focus on ensuring a diversity of culture, subject background (Natural and Social Sciences, Humanities) and gender among the fellows. Where possible the programme will also attempt to create small 'cores' of leadership; multiple strong applicants from the same centre or country will thus be considered.

The following criteria are used as a guide for the nomination and selection of fellows:

- A PhD or equivalent qualification
- A faculty or a continuing research position at a research institution;
- Active in research and teaching at an African institution of higher education or research;
- A sustained record of outstanding scientific outputs;
- Interest in translating and communicating the results of their work for impact in society;
- Demonstrated leadership ability in research and beyond;
- Interest in the role of research in addressing complex issues affecting society;
- Interest in collaborations across disciplines and sectors (e.g. industry, government, etc.);
- Commitment to participate in all the activities of the fellowship; and
- Intent to share what is learned in the programme with their broader networks.

All applicants have to provide two support letters from academic referees (details are provided in the application form). Please ensure that the support letters are sent from an accredited institutional email address. One of the two referees has to commit to be involved in future communications and mentorship in case of selection of the applicant into the programme. This referee will be informed about the progress of the fellow and should be willing to support the fellow if he or she requires it.

All applications will be reviewed and shortlisted by representatives of the University of Pretoria, the Global Young Academy, national young academies, and ASLP Management. The final selection of candidates will be made by the ASLP Management team.

*Key dates:*

<i>07 October 2022</i>	<i>Applications close</i>
<i>12 November 2022</i>	<i>Outcome letters sent to applicants</i>
<i>07 February 2023</i>	<i>Arrival of fellows in Pretoria</i>