

AFRICAN UNION

الاتحاد الأفريقي



UNION AFRICAINE

UNIÃO AFRICANA

**The African Union Kwame Nkrumah
Awards for Scientific Excellence (AUKNASE)**

RULES OF PROCEDURE

For The Continental Level Award

USD100,000

BACKGROUND

The African Union Commission is committed to ensure that science and technology contributes to our sustainable development efforts. The Constitutive Act, establishing the African Union, recognizes the need to advance the development of Africa by promoting research in all fields, and in science and technology in particular. The Commission, through its Department of Human Resources, Science and Technology implements a strategic science and technology development programme, aimed at contributing to the wellbeing and improved quality of life for the African citizens. In January 2007, the AU Heads of State and Government “*declared 2007 as the launching year for building constituencies and champions for science, technology and innovation in Africa*”.

As a holistic and deliberate measure to maintain science and technology on top of our development, cooperation and political agenda, the Commission urges the Member States and the Regional Economic Communities to popularize science among African citizens, empower researchers, celebrate their achievements and promote all efforts to use the results of scientific research for sustainable development. With the support of its Development Partners, particularly the European Commission, the African Union Commission, launched on 9 September 2008, the prestigious **African Union Science Award Programme**. The programme is implemented *at national level for young researchers¹, regional level for women scientists² and continental level open to all scientists*. The Continental level is the highest level of the programme. The objective is to give out science awards to top African scientists for their achievements and valuable discoveries and findings in science, technology and innovation.

In July 2010, the African Union Heads of State and Government took a decision to rename this Programme in memory of the Great Pan-Africanist and First President of the Republic of Ghana, Dr. Kwame Nkrumah, a firm believer in African liberation and unity! A man who pursued a revolutionary pan-African policy, with a strong vision extending beyond national boundaries, for the creation of a new Africa, “a federal union of African states”, to take charge of its own destiny. He is among the key founding fathers of the then Organization of African Unity in 1963, an important pan-Africanist organization, which later become the African Union in 2002. Today the “dream and determination” of Dr. Kwame Nkrumah inspires Africa in all facets of development and in science as summed up in his quote

“We shall accumulate machinery and establish steel works, iron foundries and factories; we shall link the various States of our continent with communications; we shall astound the world with our hydroelectric power; we shall drain marshes and swamps, clear infested areas, feed the undernourished, and rid our people of parasites and disease. It is within the possibility of science and technology to make even the Sahara bloom into a vast field with verdant vegetation for agricultural and industrial developments”.

This decision to rename the programme “**African Union Kwame Nkrumah Awards for Scientific Excellence**” reflects and underscores a success story and the critical role of science and

¹ Information regarding this programme can be obtained at national level, from the Ministries in charge of science and technology

² Information can be obtained from the implementing Regional Economic Communities

technology in the development and integration of Africa.

Under this programme prizes are awarded to top African scientists in each of the following two sectors (a) **Life and Earth Science and innovation**; and (b) **Basic Science, Technology and Innovation** at the national, regional and continental levels. The **African Union Kwame Nkrumah Awards for Scientific Excellence** Programme is implemented using rules of procedure presented in this document.

The **African Union Kwame Nkrumah Awards for Scientific Excellence Programme (AUKNASE)** shall be organized at three levels:

- Two Continental awards receiving each USD 100,000 of for pioneer scientists
- Regional award for women scientists two per each of the five regions and each award amounting to USD 20,000 and
- National awards for *young researchers two per country* and each award amounting to USD 2,000

1. OBJECTIVES

The **objectives** of **AUKNASE** are to:

- 1.1 To award and honour outstanding African scientists for their achievements and discoveries in science, technology and innovation;
- 1.2 Promote scientific development in Africa through recognition of excellence among African scientists, women, men alike and younger researchers and encourage them to persevere in their research or academic careers, and nurture their ambitions;
- 1.3 Popularize and promote public understanding and participation in the realization of the African Union Agenda 2063, through the implementation of *Science, Technology and Innovation Strategy³ for Africa*, the Sustainable Development Goals and the AU Assembly decisions on science, technology and innovation;
- 1.4 Raise the profile of science and technology sector in African Union Member States and the Regional Economic Communities so that science, technology and innovation contribute to Africa's sustainable development, poverty alleviation and integration efforts.

2. DEFINITIONS

For the purpose of this award the following definitions shall apply:

- 2.1 **The AU awards** are one-time monetary prizes that are given to outstanding African scientists for their scientific achievements and valuable discoveries and findings. They are not lifetime

³ STISA-2024 is the first of the ten-year incremental phasing strategies for science, technology and innovation

achievement awards;

- 2.2 **Life and Earth Sciences and Innovation:** embraces all sciences related to the planet earth, covering and innovations (*but not limited to*) the following disciplines, geology, geophysics and geodesy. On the other hand, we regard Life Sciences to encompass all sciences that have to do with 'organisms', like plants, animals and human. This may be Agro-technology, Animal Science, Plant Science, Biotechnology, Biology, Environmental Sciences, Food Sciences, Medicine, and Tissue Engineering to mention a few;
- 2.3 **Basic Sciences, and Technology and Innovation:** consists of all other sciences, technologies and innovations excluding those covered within Earth and life Sciences category. These may include, Physics, Chemistry, Mathematics, Engineering (Mechanical, Electrical, Electronics, civil etc), Artificial Intelligence, Material Sciences, Manufacturing and Production Technologies, Metallurgy, Textiles, Energy and Innovations, etc.

3. IMPLEMENTATION OF THE AWARDS

3.1 Nominations:

- 3.1.1 Online⁴ Nominations will be invited from any institution in the continent, from universities, research institutions, professional bodies, academies, industrial establishments, and so on.
- 3.1.2 Nominations may be received from:
- 3.1.2.1 individuals who may be senior individuals of the same or higher rank than the nominee;
- 3.1.2.2 Heads of institutions who may have their own formalized procedure for nomination, chairpersons of committees who review the achievements of scientists in their institutions;
- 3.1.3 The nominator is required to show the importance and impact of the research. The focus will be on the quality of the work and not necessarily the number of publications. The nominator should provide a narrative presentation (*up to five pages*) of the **importance, relevance, quality and impact of the work**. A full CV as well as 5-10 copies of best publications are to be submitted together with the nomination form.
- 3.1.4 All successfully completed nominations on the on-line system will be automatically acknowledged

3.2 Jury

- 3.2.1 For the Continental Awards, a five-person committee of jurors will be identified by the African Academy of sciences and submitted to the African Union Commission for approval by the

⁴ The Commission intends to implement this programme online, but for 2017 editions prospective applicants will complete the Nomination Form.

Chairperson of the AU. 3.2.2 The technical expertise of the jurors shall be such that there is reasonable diversity of expertise and experience to review the nominations across the spectrum of the scientific sectors;

3.2.3 The Jury composition shall have good regional and gender representation with no particular gender dominating beyond 70%;

3.2.4 Jurors shall serve for a term of two years.

3.3 Adjudication process:

3.3.1: All successfully completed nominations will be acknowledged. Further technical review of nominations may be performed and any nominations that fail such review will be rejected and nominators notified immediately. All such cases will be meticulously documented and reported at the first meeting of the jury. Only those nominations that are received within the given deadline will be considered.

3.3.2 There shall be at least five nominated and eligible shortlisted candidates for each sector and category of Awards after the review. If there are less than five nominations for each sector and category, the Award may be deferred for the following year with notification to the nominators.

3.3.3 The full nomination packages of candidates will be circulated to the members of the jury by the chair with instructions to perform a preliminary review and to rank each candidate in each of the two categories. The chair will also set the deadline for the jurors to submit their reviews;

3.3.4 The Chair will review the individual reports from the members of the jury and prepare a shortlist of the top 5 candidates for each category. The shortlisted candidates will be shared among members in order to reach consensus on the drawn list.

3.3.5 The Chair will also review the shortlisted candidates and will receive evaluation reports from suggested referees from the nomination forms as well as from new referees which may be recommended by the jurors.

3.3.6 A Physical meeting of the jurors will be held only after all required evaluations have been received by the chair of the jury. The Chair will also assign each juror to report on the evaluations received. Each juror will be required to submit his/her ranking on each of the shortlisted candidates;

3.3.7 The jurors will hear the reports and discuss their rankings so as to determine the top three candidates for each category of Award;

3.3.8 The jurors will submit a report of their findings and recommendations to the African Union Commission;

3.3.9 All juridical processes will be conducted confidentially and each jury member shall sign conflict of interest and confidentiality declarations;

3.4 Timing and Schedule of activities

3.4.1 The call for nomination will be announced on the 9th September at the end of each edition;

- 3.4.2 The deadline for receipt of applications for 2017 Continental Award will be 10th November 2017, but *the Commission reserves the right to extend the deadline to ensure success of the programme;*
- 3.4.3 The Award conferment ceremony shall take place at an Ordinary Session of the Assembly of Heads of State and Government of the African Union held the year following the launch of the process;
- 3.4.4 Award winners are expected to participate in Africa's science, technology and innovation efforts following the conferment of the award;
- 3.4.5 The award funds may be disbursed by bank transfer or bank draft or cheque payable to the recipient after the award ceremony has been held;

4. ELIGIBILITY

- 4.1 To be eligible for the African Union Scientific Awards nominees shall be African scientists who have made remarkable achievements, demonstrated by number and quality of their publications, number of trained research graduate students, applicability of the scientific work to Africa's challenges, and its patentability. The award is intended to recognize those who demonstrate excellence in research of relevance to the developmental needs of the continent.
- 4.2 Only nationals of the African Union (AU) Member States are eligible to participate in these Awards;
- 4.3 Nominees shall be Africans residing in any of the AU member states and can be nominated only for achievements based on work conducted in an African country.
- 4.4 APPLICATION for the CONTINENTAL PRIZE: Applicants should have nominees with a PhD degree, if the nominee is an Academic in a university must at least have a rank of Associate Professor. There is no age limit for this award. The nominee should meet at least four of the following:
- 4.4.1 Must have published in journals (at least 20 articles with impact factor greater than 1.0)
 - 4.4.2 Must appear as senior/corresponding author in at least 15 of the 25 articles
 - 4.4.3 Must have a minimum H-index of 25
 - 4.4.4 Must have at least two international or four national patents registered
 - 4.4.5 Must have supervised or co-supervised at least 10 PhD students
 - 4.4.6 Must have won an international grant as a principal investigator
 - 4.4.7 Must have written a review article in his/her field of specialization

Note: the above criteria are oriented to academics in a teaching or research institution. However, individuals or groups from non-academic establishments, such as industry, technical and vocational institutions where a patent or other trade secret may have been the basis for developing a product or service that has clearly made impact on society or have contributed in a significant way to objectives 1.3 and 1.4 may be nominated even though many of the criteria above have not been fulfilled.

5. EXCLUSION

Nominations may be declined due to the following:

- 5.1 Nominations which do not focus on specific contributions, but rather list lifetime achievements;
- 5.2 Self-nomination will not be accepted;
- 5.3 Dossiers are not complete and/or all supporting document/s are not included or not attached;
- 5.4 If the same work has received an **AUKNASE**;
- 5.5 If their Member State is under AU sanctions in conformity with a decision taken by the AU relevant policy organ;
- 5.6 If they are employees of any an AU organ or employees of the Regional Economic Communities.

6. APPLICATION FORMS

The Application forms are available from:

- AU Commission official website,
- Ministries in Charge of Science and Technology, National Academies and Research Councils in Member States, and
- the Regional Economic Communities Headquarters

7. ENQUIRIES

For any enquiries and or clarifications, please contact the secretariat of **AUKNASE Programme**:

E-mail: scientific-awards@africa-union.org

Or visit the AU Commission official website: <https://au.int/en/commission>

NB: For equal treatment answers to various questions will be posted on the AU Commission official website for this programme: