

## **Application Guidelines for**

# **Funding and Organisation of an Interdisciplinary Fellow Group (IFG)**

## **at the Maria Sibylla Merian Institute for Advanced Studies in Africa (MIASA)**

The IFG brings together a group of up to six fellows for a duration of four months. The group comprises both senior and junior fellows including researchers from Germany, Africa and other parts of the world. The group centres around a research question which necessitates the input of experts from different academic fields and backgrounds. The group will work on the joint topic by, among other things, holding weekly colloquia and organizing a final workshop or conference. The group will be asked to produce working papers based on their work at MIASA. Each member of the group will also be expected to contribute a guest lecture on a relevant postgraduate course in the curriculum of the University of Ghana.

## **Fellowship Conditions**

An interdisciplinary fellow group may include early career researchers (awarded PhD plus up to six years post-doctoral experience) and senior researchers (awarded PhD plus a minimum of six years post-doctoral research experience or a tenured professorship or equivalent permanent position).

The IFG provides fellowships of four months duration.

Selected applicants are offered a Senior or Junior Fellowship at MIASA with all the corresponding rights and obligations for the duration of the fellowship. Within the current call for applications, fellowships are awarded for four months in the period from mid-January to December 2021.

MIASA will cover the fellow's salary on the principle of "no loss, no gain", or the salary of a teaching replacement up to a maximum of a standard wage for a full professor (senior fellowship) or a lecturer (junior fellowship). The fellow's salary costs will be paid directly to his/her home institution. Furthermore, fellows will receive a monthly allowance of 400 €. For fellows affiliated with an African institution at the commencement of the IFG, this monthly allowance will be 1.000 €.

Non-affiliated senior fellows receive a monthly grant of 2.000 € in total. Non-affiliated junior fellows will receive a monthly grant of 1.200 €.

For all fellows MIASA will provide accommodation and reimburse travel costs. In addition, a contribution to support research undertaken at MIASA (max. 250 €/ fellow month) can be granted upon application.

The Institute provides its fellows with modern office space and an up-to-date infrastructure. Fellows have full access to all library services at the University of Ghana, and electronically, at the University of Freiburg.

The expectations that accompany a MIASA fellowship include a clear commitment of the researchers to the proposed project, full-time presence at the Institute and active participation in the Institute's academic and cultural events. A full-time presence of fellows at MIASA for the fellowship period is expected. Periods of leave need to be negotiated with the MIASA directors prior to the signing of the fellowship agreements, and must not exceed a total of four weeks. These expectations are clearly set out in the fellowship agreement signed by the fellow and MIASA.

## **Composing an Interdisciplinary Fellow Group**

Interdisciplinary Fellow Groups are initiated by a convenor/organizer who decides on the topic of the IFG, chooses its members and is responsible for every step in the process of submission and later on during the residency of the IFG at MIASA.

### **I. The Convenor/Organizer**

The convenor/organizer is a senior researcher (more than 6 years after completion of their PhD) or an experienced early career researcher (4-6 years after completion of their PhD) based at an institution in sub-Saharan Africa (preferably Ghana) or in Europe (preferably Germany) at the time of the application deadline.

#### **Role and Responsibility of the Convenor/Organizer**

Before final approval of the IFG:

1. The convenor/organizer is responsible for nominating the most appropriate scholars as fellows for the IFG, and for obtaining their commitment to fully participate as fellows.
2. The convenor/organizer is responsible for acting on behalf of the proposed IFG in the application process, including submitting the full proposal.
3. The convenor/organizer must update MIASA on any changes in the composition of the IFG Fellows after the submission of the full proposal.

Following final approval of the IFG:

4. The convenor/organizer is responsible for notifying the Fellows, as defined below, of the IFG approval.
5. The convenor/organizer is responsible for being in continuous interaction with MIASA concerning administrative and academic issues prior to commencement of the IFG.
6. The convenor/organizer plans with the IFG Fellows the programme for IFG Activities and sends a copy of this programme to MIASA at least 3 months prior to the start date.

### **II. The Topic**

The topic of the IFG must match MIASA's umbrella topic of 'sustainable governance', ideally covering one or more of the following sub-topics: sustainable democracy, sustainable peace and conflict management, environmental transformation, migration and displacement, restitution of cultural objects, human rights.

### **III. Composition of the IFG**

IFGs are composed of at least four and maximum of six Fellows (including the Convenor/Organizer). These Fellows will participate in IFG activities at MIASA, as set out in these Guidelines, for the entire period of their residency with their IFG (Fellowship).

The choice of proposed Fellows by the Convenor/Organizer(s) should strategically strengthen the interdisciplinary and collaborative work of the IFG. MIASA encourages diversity within each IFG, including the participation of early and mid-career fellows, women, and scholars from a range of geographic locations, including sub-Saharan Africa. Inadequate diversity within the composition of the IFG will negatively affect the chances of the proposed IFG being selected.

### **Fellows**

A Fellow must have a PhD in a relevant discipline of the Humanities or the Social Sciences.

1. No more than two Fellows may be nominated from the same academic institution.
2. Group members need not have worked together or collaborated on research in the past.
3. At least half of the IFG fellows must be from outside Ghana.

### **Guest researchers**

In addition to the IFG Fellows, the Convenor/Organizer may invite guest researchers to be part of an IFG. An IFG may have up to 4 guest researchers, totalling for 4 weeks for all guest researchers together. The minimum stay for a guest researcher is one week (5 working days).

## **IV. IFG Activities and Responsibilities**

During its period of residency, the IFG must conduct activities and participate in events relating to the IFG's research topic, in accordance with a programme approved in advance by MIASA's directors. These shall include but not be limited to:

### **1. A Weekly Seminar**

The IFG must hold weekly seminars and the times must be coordinated in advance with MIASA. Seminars may be open to guests, closed or by invitation only.

### **2. IFG Conference/Workshop**

Each IFG must hold a final conference/workshop, which must be coordinated in advance with MIASA. MIASA funds the conference and provides logistical assistance and coordination of the conference.

### **3. Guest Lecture**

Each of the IFG's Fellows and Guest Researchers must give at least one guest lecture on a relevant postgraduate course in the curriculum of the University of Ghana.

### **4. MIASA and IFG Events**

Fellows must participate in formal, social and cultural events organized by MIASA.

### **5. Reports**

The Convenor/Organizer must submit a conference report (within 10 working days of completion of the conference), and a final report (by the end of the IFG). Fellows must submit a personal fellow report to MIASA (by the end of the fellowship).

## 6. Publications

The academic results of the IFG remain the full property of the fellows. However, all publications, presentations, awards and other outputs resulting from the IFG are required to carry the acknowledgement of MIASA support -- i.e., "Supported by the Merian Institute for Advanced Studies in Africa (MIASA), University of Ghana and the Federal Ministry of Education and Research, Germany" ("MIASA Branding").

The groups are required to produce working papers based on their work at MIASA. After review, these will be uploaded onto the MIASA website on an open access basis.

The fellows must update MIASA about the IFG Products and send to MIASA a digital and hard copy of the IFG Products within one month of their publication or presentation. Additionally, the fellow will include the MIASA logo and attribution in lectures, seminars, and conferences where he or she presents IFG Products. When presenting at another institute during the fellowship, a fellow is required to mention their current status as a MIASA fellow.

## Application

Candidates apply exclusively through the online application portal. Applications will be accepted in English and French. The completed application form together with the required documents has to be uploaded on the application webpage (<https://frias.wufoo.com/forms/miasa-ifg-2021/>) and submitted by **March 31, 2020; 24.00 h CET**. After submission of the documents applicants will receive an acknowledgement of receipt providing contact details and including a copy of their submission.

The four required documents (see 1-4 below) must be written in English or French and formatted as follows:

Formatting: font Arial, 11 pt, line spacing 1.5, all margins 2.5 cm.

Page limits may not be exceeded.

All required documents should be in pdf format. Materials 1 – 4 are to be included in one pdf-file.

1. General information (max. 2 pages).  
For each member of the applicant group:
  - a. Title, name (last, first), e-mail address, link to webpage (optional)
  - b. Date of doctorate
  - c. Current position, institution and business address (Name of institution/city/country)
  - d. Research field
  
2. Project proposal (max. 6 pages).

The compulsory structure of the project proposal is as follows:

- a. Project title (max. 50 characters)
  - b. Abstract of the research project
  - c. Aims, theoretical framework and methodology of the project.
  - d. Work plan and feasibility (time schedule and projected costs).
  - e. Innovative potential, originality and relevance of the project.
  - f. The two most important reasons why the research project matches MIASA's umbrella topic of 'sustainable governance'
  - g. Added value of conducting research within an IFG at MIASA (both for the applicant and the local research community at the University of Ghana).
  - h. Bibliographical references.
3. CVs in tabular form (max. 2 pages per applicant).
  4. Publication list highlighting the most important publications and the most important project-specific publications (max. 2 pages per applicant).

We do not accept applications submitted by email or surface mail.

## **Selection**

The selection of fellows is competitive and strictly merit-based.

The all-important selection criteria are the academic excellence of the main applicant, the team members, and the project proposal. Additionally, what will be taken into account is the required experience and capability to conduct the research project as a team, the fit of the proposed topic with MIASA's umbrella topic and its more specific sub-topics, and the interdisciplinarity of the project.

The selection process involves three steps:

1. Eligibility check: In order to be eligible for application, candidates must fulfil all of the eligibility criteria listed in the eligibility section below.
2. Peer review by external experts: In the second stage, the eligible proposals are forwarded to external experts who evaluate the research project and the CVs.
3. Final selection by the MIASA Academic Advisory Board.

Decisions about the fellowships will be announced by the end of March 2020.

## **Eligibility**

In order to be eligible, candidates must fulfil the following eligibility criteria:

- Eligible for application are groups of four (minimum) to six junior and senior

researchers from all countries after completion of their PhD in a relevant discipline of the Humanities or the Social Sciences.

- Junior researcher: completed PhD plus up to six years post-doctoral experience at the time of the application deadline (Time off for family or medical reasons or non-academic professional activities is not counted towards these six years)
- Senior researcher: completed PhD plus a minimum of six years post-doctoral research experience or a tenured professorship or equivalent permanent position at the time of the application deadline.
- The application will be submitted by a single person, who will also serve as the convenor and organizer of the IFG. Eligible for the role of convenor/organizer are a senior researcher (more than 6 years after completion of their PhD) or an experienced early career researcher (4-6 years after completion of their PhD) based at an institution in Sub-Saharan Africa or in Germany at the time of the application deadline.
- Applicant groups must propose a research project that matches MIASA's umbrella topic, and ideally one or more of the following more specific sub-topics: sustainable democracy, peace and conflict management, environmental transformation, migration and displacement, restitution of cultural objects, human rights research.
- Applicant groups must submit the complete application dossier by the specified deadline. Incomplete or late applications will not be considered. Formatting rules have to be observed. Page limits may not be exceeded.
- The proposal must meet the standards of academic English in international research.

## Contact

NOTE: It is required that researchers interested in an application for an IFG contact MIASA via [miasa@frias.uni-freiburg.de](mailto:miasa@frias.uni-freiburg.de) in advance to preparing an application.