

TWAS-Sida¹ PhD Scholarship Programme for Climate Research for Students from Least Developed Countries

This programme is funded by Sida 
SWEDISH INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT
COOPERATION AGENCY

Application guidelines

Applicants are strongly advised to read this document carefully to ensure that they fulfil all the requirements and that they are familiar with the general policies and guidelines of the programme.

Applications can only be accepted in English
A version of these guidelines, however, is also available in French.

General information

Sida (<https://www.sida.se/en>) – the Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency – is a government agency. Its mission is part of Sweden's national policy for global development and its activities are funded through Swedish tax revenue. At the international level, Sida works to reduce poverty around the world by allocating resources and knowledge with the aim of making a difference for people in Africa, Asia, Europe and Latin America. To achieve this, it collaborates with actors from civil society and universities, as well as from the public and private sectors.

TWAS (www.twas.org) – The World Academy of Sciences, for the advancement of science in developing countries – is a merit-based science academy, representing the best of science in the South thanks to its members, high-level international scientists. In addition, TWAS operates through its programmes by offering funding opportunities to strengthen the scientific capacity of

¹ TWAS is the acronym of "The World Academy of Sciences for the advancement of science in developing countries". Sida is the acronym of the Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency.

researchers in developing countries. To this end, TWAS and its partners offer over 500 fellowships per year to scientists in the developing world who want to pursue a Ph.D. and postdoctoral research and it allocates almost \$1 million in research grants every year to individual scientists and research groups.

Background and Rationale

“TWAS-Sida PhD Scholarship Programme for Climate Research for students from LDCs” is a new programme aiming to increase the expertise in climate research in the least developed countries through a modern and complete PhD training programme. Indeed, not only the climate crisis is a critical issue for the well-being of future generations, but it also jeopardizes all efforts unpinning the SDGs and Sustainable Development in general. The IPCC (Intergovernmental Panel for Climate Change, www.ipcc.ch) Assessment Reports have provided authoritative evaluations and guidelines for impact and adaptation. However, among IPCC authors, scientists from developing countries are less numerous and Least Developed Countries (LDCs) are very much under-represented.

Eligibility criteria

- Applicants must be nationals of one of the countries in the category of Least Developed Countries (LDCs), as defined by the United Nations (<https://unctad.org/topic/least-developed-countries/list>).
- The maximum age limit for this programme is 40 years of age for male applicants and 45 years of age for female applicants, by December 2022.
- An MSc degree in a field relevant to topics under the umbrella of climate change.
- MSc degree: either already obtained or ongoing; in the latter case, it must be completed by 31 December of the application year.
- Applications from women scientists are especially encouraged.

Components of the programme

➤ TWAS PORTFOLIO OF HOST SUPERVISORS:

The vision of this Climate PhD Scholarship Programme is to go beyond just forming new graduates, aiming to equip candidates with a range of skills to be able to take action in the context of the challenges posed by climatic changes.

TWAS has selected potential host supervisors, which are listed in the TWAS "Portfolio of Host Supervisors". These host supervisors are scientists with appropriate expertise in areas relevant to climate research and climate change.

You can find the TWAS "Portfolio of Host Supervisors" on the following link:
https://onlineforms.twas.org/documents/TWAS_portfolio_host_supervisors.pdf

You must choose your host supervisor from the TWAS "Portfolio of Host Supervisors", keeping in mind that the supervisor has to match the area of interest you choose. Only for the “Sandwich Mechanism”, you can also propose a Collaborating Host Supervisor yourself (for details, see below).

➤ **NEED TO SELECT AREAS OF INTEREST WITHIN THE TWAS PORTFOLIO OF HOST SUPERVISORS:**

Candidates will need to choose a potential host supervisor among those proposed by TWAS in its 'Portfolio of Host Supervisors' based on the areas of scientific research of their interest. Next to each potential host supervisor, their scientific research areas of expertise are indicated; the choice of host supervisor must be made taking into consideration the scientific areas of interest.

Please note that the application on the online platform will collect all the information necessary for the selections. Applicants are not required to contact host supervisors and obtain their prior acceptance. In fact, at the end of the deadline for submission of applications, host supervisors will make selections based on applicants' background, transcripts, and expression of interest.

➤ **STATEMENT OF PURPOSE:**

To apply for this scholarship, candidates need to fill in an application form on an online portal with a series of questions that will require written answers.

Some of the questions in the application form will ask candidates to outline their statement of purpose in regard to this Climate PhD opportunity.

➤ **RESEARCH PROPOSAL:**

Candidates will not have to upload a research proposal, as this will be defined in agreement with the host supervisor, after the selection.

➤ **YOU CAN APPLY FOR TWO POSSIBLE MECHANISMS: FULL-TIME, AND SANDWICH.**

1) FULL-TIME: through this mechanism, you will be registered for a PhD in a host country and will spend the entire period of doctoral research there, obtaining the degree from the host institution. The host institution can be either in an LDC (<https://unctad.org/topic/least-developed-countries/list>) or in another country in the Global South (<https://twas.org/developing-countries-south>). The scholarship may be granted for a maximum duration of 4 years, divided as follows: 3 years of research + 1 year of thesis writing up. **You will have to choose your Host Supervisor (and therefore host institution) among those proposed by TWAS in its 'Portfolio of Host Supervisors' and apply for the full-time mechanism. If selected, you will register at the university at a later time, when awarded (tentatively by March 2023).**

2) SANDWICH: through this mechanism, you will have the chance to spend periods of time during your PhD at another institution with a Collaborating Host Supervisor. This mechanism entails that you are already registered or you will register for a PhD in your home country, which must be an LDC, at a university that you have identified yourself. For the Sandwich mechanism to work there must be an affinity in terms of scientific research between your home supervisor and the Collaborating Host Supervisor. **You should select a Collaborating Host Supervisor among those listed in the TWAS Portfolio of Host Supervisors, available for the Sandwich mechanism.** Then, you will be able to apply for this option and, consequently, you will have two supervisors:

1) the local home supervisor, that you have identified yourself, with whom you will spend most of your study time and with whom the degree is issued;

2) the Collaborating Host Supervisor, with whom you will collaborate and with whom you will spend only some periods of time (e.g.: 1-3 months each year) at another institution.

It is possible and very likely that the institution of the Collaborating Host Supervisor is in a different country than the one where you will be registered, and in fact, you will join him/her in his/her country. The duration, frequency, and periods at the Collaborating Host Institution are defined after the scholarship has been awarded, in the agreement between TWAS/collaborating host supervisor/local supervisor.

The Sandwich Mechanism in more detail:

- You can enroll in the first year of a PhD programme in your home country, which must be an LDC, and set up the Sandwich Mechanism upon award of this scholarship. In this case, the TWAS Scholarship will provide a PhD stipend for 4 years, plus flight to and from the host country, visa, and medical insurance.

- You could also be already enrolled in a doctorate in your home country and set up the Sandwich mechanism for the remaining time of your PhD. In this case, the TWAS scholarship will only cover the stipend for the months at the host institution for the Sandwich Mechanism and the costs of the flight to and from the host country, visa, and medical insurance.

- **You can either propose a Collaborating Host Supervisor yourself, or choose from those TWAS proposes in its 'Portfolio of Host Supervisors'.** In both cases, we strongly recommend that you consult your local supervisor, to ascertain the scientific affinity between the two.

KINDLY NOTE:

For the Sandwich Mechanism, it is important that there is an affinity in terms of the scientific research between the local and the Collaborating Host Supervisor. For this reason, this mechanism works very well precisely if implemented between scientific experts who might already know each other, or have appropriate complementarity between their scientific research areas, and who can collaborate concretely.

Whether you have selected from our Portfolio of Host Supervisors or you have chosen a different one, check with your local supervisor, who should confirm that a collaborative relationship is possible (the local supervisor may suggest a collaborating host supervisor in the light of already existing collaborative relationships).

In both cases (Full-time or Sandwich mechanism), during your application through the online platform, you will also be asked to indicate a backup host institution/supervisor, in case it is not possible to assign you to your first choice. Therefore, when you will consider the possible host supervisors listed in the TWAS Portfolio of Host Supervisors, keep in mind to choose two of them: one for your first choice, and one as a second choice in case of need.

→A table summarizing the two mechanisms (Full-time and Sandwich) is in **Annex 2**.

What is covered by the Scholarship

The scholarship includes a monthly stipend, which is defined on the basis of the cost of living in the host country and the scholarships normally awarded by the host institution. The stipend will cover the cost of food and accommodation for the stay in the country where the PhD research will take place. It also covers a ticket to/from the host country, VISA costs, and health insurance.

The actual amount of the stipend will be indicated in the award letter, and will take into account the criteria mentioned above.

Full-time mechanism.

The scholarship may be granted for a maximum duration of 4 years, divided as follows: 3 years of research + 1 year of thesis writing up.

Sandwich mechanism.

Option a) Should you enroll in the first year of a PhD programme in your home country at an LDC and set up the Sandwich mechanism right away, the scholarship will cover the stipend for the entire 4 years of the PhD, plus flight to and from the host country, visa, and medical insurance.

Option b) Should you be already enrolled by the time of application, or the awarding, in a doctorate in your home country, the scholarship will only cover the stipend for the months at the collaborating host institution and the costs of the flight to and from the host country, visa, and medical insurance.

What is NOT covered by the Scholarship

In general, the scholarship does not cover tuition fees/research/lab/bench costs, unless special negotiations and agreements have been made, as in the case of the institutions listed in the TWAS Portfolio of Host Supervisor, for which TWAS, or the host institution itself, will also cover this cost.

In case you apply for the Sandwich mechanism, and register in your home country (LDC) upon awarding, tuition fees will be covered only if negotiations and agreements are possible between TWAS and the host institution.

Additional aspects that the selected applicants will benefit from

- Publication costs/open access: awardees will be provided with support, whenever possible, to publish in open access journals.
- Special training programmes: in order to make sure that the programme yields well-rounded experts, workshops to build soft skills and increase “SDGs Literacy” (<https://sdgs.un.org/partnerships/sdg-literacy-and-relating-your-research-global-challenges>) will be organized, also in collaboration with the IPCC, which endorses this programme.
- International conference participation: awardees will be provided with allowances, when possible, to attend one conference during the period of the fellowship.

How to apply

Applications must be submitted via the online platform, at the following link

<https://onlineforms.twas.org/apply/202>. Only applications submitted online will be considered.

Please be advised: applicants may apply for only one TWAS/OWSD programme per calendar year.

A tutorial on how to apply on the online platform is available at the link below:

https://onlineforms.twas.org/documents/Applicants_tutorial.pdf

When to apply

The deadline for receiving applications is 5 October 2022 (11:59 Central European Summer Time).

No applications will be accepted after the deadline: therefore, we strongly recommend that you submit your application as early as possible.

Documents you will need

You will fill in the application on the TWAS online platform. Please note that you will be asked to upload the documents listed below, so make sure you have them ready.

Documents required for the application:

- Scan of passport;
- MSc certificate (if yet obtained);
- MSc transcripts (whether you have already obtained the MSc or not; an academic transcript is a list of modules/subjects and the grades you received during your programme of study);
- CV (no more than 5 pages, including publications - if any);
- Two reference letters of scientists familiar with your work/studies (the letter must be on letter-headed paper, signed and dated the same year as the application; please note that your home PhD supervisor cannot be one of your referees);
- Certificate of proficiency in English (• if medium of education was not English: provide evidence of proficiency in English, e.g. standardized test card (TOEFL, IELTS, etc) or a University-issued letter certifying the knowledge of the language; • if medium of education was English: Please write a brief statement indicating what type of education was in English e.g. High school, Bachelor's degree, Master's degree, etc. This statement must be dated and signed by you, the applicant).

In addition to the above, for the Sandwich Mechanism:

- A 'Letter of Support' provided by the local/home supervisor in the institution where you are registered or where you intend to register for the entire PhD;
- Document certifying your registration as a PhD student, *if already registered for a PhD*;
- No objection certificate (only if already registered for a PhD). It should be on the institution's headed paper or stamped with the official stamp and signed by the Director/Head of the institution you can download a sample at the link below:

http://onlineforms.twas.org/documents/Climate_PhD_SAMPLE_REGISTRATION_AND_NO_OBJECTION_CERTIFICATE.pdf

Important recommendations:

Before starting your application on the online platform, please make sure you:

- a) have carefully studied and understood the main mechanisms of this programme: namely both the Full-time and Sandwich options, and the TWAS Portfolio of Host Supervisors;
- b) have carefully studied the list of supervisors in the TWAS Portfolio of Host Supervisors, and have identified both your first and second choice of a host supervisor, for whom you intend to submit your application.

Notification of results

Applicants who are selected for this PhD opportunity should expect to be notified of the outcome of their application by February 2023. Applicants who do not hear from TWAS by this date ought to assume that they were unsuccessful.

PhD start date

The selected applicants will be on-site to begin their doctoral studies around September 2023 and in any case according to the process normally followed at the host institution.

Contact

Should you have any doubts or problems applying for this programme, please contact:
climatephd@twas.org

SAVE THE DATE

Opportunity to ask questions related to your application!

TWAS will hold a webinar on 14 September 2022 at 11 am CET to present the programme and its mechanisms. On that occasion, TWAS will answer any doubts and questions from potential applicants.

You can register for the webinar here

https://unesco-org.zoom.us/webinar/register/WN_Q2I-UqHjQayuan9Ga3Vk2A

Annex 2

The “TWAS-Sida PhD Scholarship Programme for Climate Research for LDC Students” offers the opportunity to apply with two mechanisms: Full-time and Sandwich. The key elements of the two options are summarized in the table below.

	WHAT IT MEANS	HOW TO CHOOSE THE HOST SUPERVISOR
FULL-TIME OPTION	<p>Means you will be registered for a PhD in the host country and will spend the entire period of doctoral research there, obtaining the degree from the host institution. The host institution can be either in an LDC (https://twas.org/least-developed-countries-lDCs) or in another country in the Global South (https://twas.org/developing-countries-south).</p>	<p>You must choose your Host Supervisor among those proposed by TWAS in its 'Portfolio of Host Supervisors', downloadable at the link below:</p> <p>https://onlineforms.twas.org/documents/TWAS_portfolio_host_supervisors.pdf</p>
SANDWICH OPTION	<p>Means that you are registered or you will register for a PhD in your home country (LDC), at a university that you have identified yourself, and will only carry out part of the research in the host country, spending periods (e.g. 1-3 months each year or as necessary) at another institution with a collaborating host supervisor. In this case, therefore, you have two supervisors: the local supervisor, with whom you spend most of your study time and with whom the degree is issued, and the Collaborating Host Supervisor, with whom you spend only some periods.</p>	<p>You can either propose a Collaborating Host Supervisor yourself, or choose from those TWAS proposes in its 'Portfolio of Host Supervisors', downloadable at the link below:</p> <p>https://onlineforms.twas.org/documents/TWAS_portfolio_host_supervisors.pdf</p> <p>In both cases, we strongly recommend that you consult your local supervisor, in order to ascertain the affinity in terms of scientific research areas between the two supervisors.</p>

Please be advised that the table is not exhaustive and that before applying you are required to read carefully about the two mechanisms above in these guidelines.