



A MILESTONE FOR PHD FELLOWSHIPS

AFTER A SERIES OF NEW AGREEMENTS WITH THE CHINESE ACADEMY OF SCIENCES AND OTHER PARTNERS, TWAS HAS MORE THAN DOUBLED ITS PHD FELLOWSHIPS FOR STUDY IN SEVEN COUNTRIES.



For developing countries working to build their strength in science and engineering, one basic factor is among the most important: a strong corps of PhD scientists. Not only do they conduct research that solves human problems and drives economic growth, but they also become teachers and mentors, provide advice to policymakers and build international networks.

Now, under new agreements with the Chinese Academy of Sciences (CAS) and other partners,

TWAS has doubled the number of PhD fellowships it offers to more than 300 per year. The growth represents a significant expansion of PhD opportunities offered by TWAS for early-career scientists from the developing world.

- The agreement with CAS, reached early this year, creates the biggest single PhD fellowship programme in TWAS's portfolio. Up to 140 early-career scientists per year from the developing world will travel to China for PhD study and research at



University of Chinese Academy of Sciences (UCAS) and CAS institutes.

- Under a new programme starting this year, up to 30 students annually from the developing world will be able to pursue full-time or 'sandwich' programme PhD studies at the COMSATS Institute of Information Technology (CIIT) in Pakistan. In addition, the COMSATS

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agreement provides for 30 post-doctoral fellowships and 30 visiting scholar posts per year at CIIT institutions and laboratories.

- An agreement between the World Meteorological Organization (WMO) and TWAS will support up to 10 PhD fellowships per year focused on weather, climate and water-related hazards.

“The TWAS PhD fellowships programme will serve the needs of developing countries in bringing up their own scientific capabilities, especially in those areas which are crucial to social and economic development”, said Bai Chunli, president of both CAS and TWAS.

on to become policymakers and science diplomats. Certainly, these fellowships will contribute to the long-term prosperity and health of millions of people in many nations.”

TWAS currently has PhD programme partners in Brazil, China, India, Kenya, Malaysia, Mexico and Pakistan. In addition, it has programmes for postdoctoral researchers and visiting scholars in Iran and Thailand. TWAS also has struck recent agreements for post-doctoral research and visiting scholars with Universiti Putra Malaysia and Pakistan’s National Centre for Physics. Currently, TWAS offers more than 500 fellowships of all sorts per year.

to start their academic career training in the CAS universities and institutes,” he said. “On return to their home countries, those young researchers will be fulfilling their ambitious scientific pursuits and contributing to their home countries and people.”

Added Murenzi: “We are excited and deeply gratified by this expanded partnership with the Chinese Academy of Sciences, and we look forward to working together on a programme that will bring benefits to young scientists today and long into the future.”

The new President’s Fellowship is open to students in natural sciences for PhD study at



“Our goal is to build science capacity in the developing world, and every scientist and engineer with a PhD is a part of the foundation”, said Romain Murenzi, the Academy’s executive director. “With these agreements, we are creating a new generation of researchers and college professors with excellent training. Some will go

Bai announced the new CAS-TWAS President’s Fellowship Programme shortly after assuming the TWAS presidency, during a 6 February visit to the Academy’s headquarters in Trieste, Italy.

“In the next five years, up to 700 young, talented students from Africa, South America and Asia will be provided with new opportunities

UCAS. TWAS will provide travel and visa expenses for up to 50 students, while their tuition and a monthly payment for housing and living expenses will be covered by CAS.

The new agreement with COMSATS will allow up to 30 students each year to pursue their PhD at one of CIIT’s seven campus-



TWAS Executive Director Romain Murenzi (seated left) and Tan Tieniu, CAS's deputy secretary-general and director-general of its Bureau of International Cooperation, shake hands after signing the new fellowship agreement. Bai Chunli, president of both CAS and TWAS, stands directly behind them, surrounded by TWAS staff.

es in Pakistan, either full-time or in a ‘sandwich programme’ with the student’s PhD programme based at another university. CIIT will provide the tuition fee and a monthly payment for living expenses, while TWAS will cover international travel and visa costs.

“We see these fellowships as our contribution to the TWAS

objective of development of human resources for building up science capacity in developing countries”, said CIIT Rector S.M. Junaid Zaidi. “We value our partnership with TWAS in this endeavour and would like to share our resources with other developing countries in the spirit of South-South cooperation. Interaction of our scientists with researchers from other developing countries through these, as well as the postdoctoral and senior research fellowships, will generate mutually beneficial cross-fertilization of ideas and sharing of experiences.”

The agreement with the WMO, a United Nations specialized agency, creates a venture to build science capacity in least-developed and developing nations that are more vulnerable to weather-related risks

and the effects of climate variability and change.

“The ever-evolving need for expertise in weather-, climate- and water-related sciences requires more resources and broader partnerships to nurture young scientists”, said WMO Secretary-General Michel Jarraud. “The agreement between WMO and TWAS will help build capacity in the human resources we need to face current and future global challenges.”

For more than a half-century WMO has, through its fellowships programme, cooperated with partners in building and sustaining a critical mass of experts in national meteorological and hydrological services and mitigation of natural disasters in developing countries. ■

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