



AFRICA-ai-JAPAN Project (Phase 2)
African Union – African innovation – JKUAT AND PAUSTI Network Project
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February 25, 2025

INTERNAL ADVERTISEMENT

AFRICA-ai- JAPAN PROJECT INNOVATION RESEARCH GRANTS (2025/2026)

1. INTRODUCTION

AFRICA-ai-JAPAN Project (Phase 2) is a joint initiative between JKUAT and PAUSTI supported by the Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA). The Mission of the Project is to strengthen capacity of students and staff within JKUAT and PAUSTI. This is the last call of proposal during phase II of the project implementation as the project is coming to an end in Nov 2025 after 5.5 years implementation period.

The project would like to extend invitation for proposals which contribute to Kenya’s national targets, “Vision 2030” and the Big Four Agenda as well as to some of the 17 goals spelt out in “Sustainable Development Goals” by the United Nations. Research proposals can be submitted to one of the following 4 categories: (1) On-going multidisciplinary research project, (2) Single year research projects, (3) Start-up research assistance and (4) Selected research topics. The requirements for each category are explained below;

Category One; Only on-going multidisciplinary research project is invited for this year and such projects are scientific research projects which are interdisciplinary in nature, involving more than 4 different thematic areas and drawn from at least 3 colleges of JKUAT. Inclusion of young researchers (MSc or PhD students) as well as industrial and international research partners is mandatory. This category of projects will be headed by senior experienced researchers, preferably PhD holders and will run for a period of only one year. Periodical self-monitoring assessments are required. The maximum research budget should not exceed **Four Million Kenya Shillings (Ksh. 4,000,000)**. The proposal should have a detailed work plan from May 2025 to the end of February 2026.

Category Two; Single year research projects that are aimed at supporting research proposals approved by four of the Africa-ai-Japan innovation centers namely: *iPIC*, *iCMoB*, *iCB* and *iCCATS*. Such proposals could directly be targeted towards supporting young researchers, including MSc or PhD students. However, the main investigator should be a senior researcher or supervisor of MSc or PhD qualification. The young researcher (MSc or PhD student) should be indicated as a co-researcher. Periodical progress reports signed by the supervisor are required. The Principal Investigator is responsible for technical and financial reporting. The maximum research budget should not exceed **Six Hundred Thousands Kenya Shillings (Ksh.600,000.00)**. The proposal should have a work plan spanning from May 2025 to the end of February 2026.

Category Three; This is a once off start-up research assistance that is designed for young academic staff of JKUAT/PAUSTI, who were awarded PhD degree within the last 3 years (after April 2022). The aim of this category is to kick start post-doctoral research activities of the candidate. Such proposals should include new research ideas, justification, and the expected output of the project. Alignment to Kenya government’s national development strategies and SDGs is critical. Such proposal should be recommended from one of four innovation centres of Africa-ai-Japan: *iPIC*, *iCMoB*, *iCB* or *iCCATS*. Periodical progress reports will be required from each researcher. The maximum research budget should not exceed **Six Hundred Thousands Kenya Shillings (Ksh.600,000.00)**. The proposal should have a work plan spanning from May 2025 to the end of February 2026. Applicants who were previously awarded this category are not eligible to apply.

Category Four; Specially selected research topics are impactful project proposals targeting solving current problems within the society/community or industry. This category targets accelerating economic development towards industrialization based on strong foundation of Science, Technology and Innovation. In this regard,

the project invites researchers to propose highly competitive and impactful research projects at JKUAT in the selected research topics of “**Food and Health**”, “**Energy and Environment**” and “**ICT application in either Food and Health or Energy and Environment**”. The proposal should be aligned to the Bottom-Up Economic Transformation Agenda (BETA 2023-2027) of the Government of Kenya. Proposing researchers should show strong evidence of professional achievement in the related field of specialization. The proposing team should have at least 2 experienced academic staff members and should demonstrate inclusion of postgraduate students (MSc or PhD). Interdepartmental collaborations are encouraged. Periodical research progress assessments are required. The maximum research budget should not exceed **Three Million Kenya Shillings** (KSh. 3,000,000). A clear work plan for the entire project period is needed. The proposal should also have a detailed work plan spanning from May 2025 to February 2026.

The research proposal should be prepared by filling the template provided (see section 3 below) by the AFRICA-ai-JAPAN Project and **the submission deadline is at 5:00 pm on March 28, 2025**.

2. ELEGIBILITY CRITERIA:

The Innovation Research grant is intended for JKUAT/PAUSTI staff and students from the following disciplines:

- i. **Innovation and Prototyping Integrated Centre, iPIC**; Civil Engineering, Mechanical Engineering, Mechatronic Engineering, Agricultural Engineering, Biosystems Engineering, Electrical and Electronics Engineering, Geomatic Engineering or other related disciplines.
- ii. **Innovation Centre for Molecular Biology and Biotechnology, iCMoB**; Biochemistry, Biotechnology, Microbiology, Biology, Aquaculture, Chemistry, Pharmacy, or other life sciences.
- iii. **Innovation Centre for Bio-resources, iCB**; Horticulture, Food Science, Nutrition, Postharvest Technology, Animal Health and Production, Agricultural and Resource Economic or other related disciplines.
- iv. **Innovation Centre for Computer Application and Technological Solutions, iCCATS**; Computer Science, Information Technology and any other related disciplines.

Note:

1. Candidates who hold a grant for postgraduate studies funded by JKUAT or any other organization should give a full disclosure of the current grant to justify the request for additional funding.
2. Priority will be given to proposals with JKUAT/PAUSTI staff as Chief Investigator.
3. Joint proposals with industry collaboration and global partners are encouraged as long as JKUAT/PAUSTI staff is the Chief Investigator.
4. The pathway to impact at community or industrial development is very important.
5. The contact details (email and telephone) of the Chief Investigator should be included.
6. Budget estimate should be clearly indicated and should follow the regulation set by the AFRICA-ai-JAPAN Project.
7. The AFRICA-ai-JAPAN Project reserves the right to terminate sponsoring research projects when irregularity, mismanagement or non-progress are observed.

In case of questions about the eligibility criteria, applicants should contact the AFRICA-ai-JAPAN Project office at jicapausti@jkuat.ac.ke prior to submission of the application.

3. APPLICATION PROCESS

All applicants must fill in the prescribed formats, which will be provided from the AFRICA-ai-JAPAN Project office. Dully filled applications should be received on or before **March 28, 2025 at 1700hrs in soft copies** (Email: jicapausti@jkuat.ac.ke). The applicants must also submit the required information via the following Google Form before the same deadline.

1. Innovation Research Proposal 2025-2026 Category 1 (Multidisciplinary Research Projects):
<https://forms.gle/6vTVSjm6ZG4vHHFv8>
2. Innovation Research Proposal 2025-2026 Category 2 (Single Year Research Project):
<https://forms.gle/tjqXijeh7YmMmutk9>
3. Innovation Research Proposal 2025-2026 Category 3 (Start-up Research Assistance):

- <https://forms.gle/iPtdyK7y1zcJDrNq7>
4. Innovation Research Proposal 2025-2026 Category 4 (Selected Research Topics Project):
<https://forms.gle/TZAusZpbtTijv6BQA>

NB: Only shortlisted candidates will be communicated to and they will be invited to a presentation on their areas of interest for final selection.

Late applications, hand written proposals as well as incomplete applications will not be considered.

For more information on *iPIC*, *iCMoB*, *iCB* and *iCCATS*, please visit:

AFRICA-*ai*-JAPAN Project (Phase 2) Office, JKUAT
P.O Box 62000-00200, Nairobi, Kenya
Engineering Laboratory Building (ELB 213), 2nd Floor RM 213
Website: <http://jkuat.ac.ke/projects/africa-ai-japan/>

Basic Financial Regulation for Innovation Research Grants, 2025/2026

The Japan International Cooperation Agency (hereafter JICA) funds for the Innovation Research activities are subject to audit and transparency. Therefore, it is important that clear budget estimates that comply with JICA's rules and regulations are provided.

1. Responsibility for receiving and supervising budget expenditure

Kindly note that in the case where the spending of funds is not in conformity with the approved budget and the financial report is insufficient (e.g., lack of clear receipts, etc.), the financial supervisor for the research project shall bear all the responsibilities for any loss and unclear expenses.

2. Disbursement of research budget

Budget will be disbursed from the Project Office to each researcher through the Principal Investigator by Cheque. Each PI will open a bank account under "the name of supervisor (JICA 2025/2026)" at Kenya Commercial Bank (KCB), JKUAT Branch. Only funds from JICA can be transacted in the above bank account (no personal funds can be deposited to the bank account), and all the funds must be managed strictly based on this regulation.

All the expenses for each researcher have to be within the approved budget. The balance has to be refunded to the Project Office with the final financial report on/before 28th February 2025.

3. Items NOT covered by the JICA Innovation Research Fund

The grant **does not** support expenditure on the following items: **(1) Food and drink, (2) Airtime for Phone and Internet, (3) Direct Purchasing of any items from outside of Kenya, (4) Fuel cost, (5) Allowance and honoraria except labour cost, (6) Tuition fees, (7) consultancies fees, (8) Subscription fees, (9) Gadgets (PC, Printer, Smartphone, and Tablet).** In addition, **equipment customarily found in JKUAT laboratories may not be supported** by this grant.

4. Expense Items allowed under the JICA Innovation Research Fund

(1) Consumables, reagents, chemicals, tools, and other research materials

ONLY consumables, reagents, chemicals, tools, and other research materials used for this research project can be covered under this expense. The Project Office may directly procure the item if its unit cost exceeds Kshs. 50,000.

(2) Field Trip (Per Diem, Accommodation, and Transportation)

The frequency of field trips should be minimized as much as possible, and the supervisor of each team must travel together with co-researchers and/or students. In addition, this grant does not support international traveling costs at all.

The researchers must submit the technical report within a week after completion of the field trip to the Project office every time. The technical report shall cover the purpose of the trip, duration, destination, and report about activities in the field and lessons learnt/recommendations/way forward, etc.

Unit cost for accommodation and Daily Service Allowance (DSA) shall be guided by JICA regulations on local travel. Concerning transportation, public transport (bus and matatu) shall be used at all times. However, if there is a need to use a taxi, the reason for that option should be indicated in advance. The researchers are advised to keep the receipts all the time, including transport costs.

(3) Casual Labour

Labor costs do NOT support activities such as data collection and analysis but are allowed ONLY on a temporal basis, such as cultivating fields, feeding animals, watering plants, etc. And its hiring period shall be short (a few days or a week). Innovation Research Fund does NOT have a provision for a stipend. Thus, the total cost of hiring casual labour should be **below 15% of the total estimated budget**. The Project Office reserves the discretion to approve budget estimates of casual labour for each project.

When researchers hire anyone for casual labour to support their research activity, they need to specify the reason why they need such support or service, the TORs, and the duration of hire. The payment amount should be in line with the JKUAT rates for casuals.

(4) Publication / Conference

The actual cost for publication and conference shall be remitted to PI's bank account once the Project Office confirms an acceptance letter to PI or co-researcher for the publication. However, for payments outside of Kenya via SWIFT, a transfer may be conducted directly by the Project Office.

(5) Stationery

The purpose of this research grant is capacity development; thus, budget usage for stationery is limited. The total cost for stationery should be **below Kshs. 30,000**.

(6) Laboratory Service outside of JKUAT and out of Kenya

Researchers shall submit a plan at the beginning of research for laboratory services that are provided outside of JKUAT and Kenya. The plan should include the institution, type of test/analysis, why you need to outsource, and so on for official approval by the Project Office.

5. Submission and approval of Budget Breakdown and Gantt chart

The successful awardees will be requested by the Financial Team of the AFRICA-ai-JAPAN Project to submit a Budget Breakdown and Gantt chart with clearly itemized budget lines. Please note that your request should be in line with our financial regulations. The total budget applied for must not exceed the Advertised limit. Any applications exceeding the limit will not be considered.

For more information, please visit.

AFRICA-ai-JAPAN Project Office, JKUAT
P.O Box 62000-00200, Nairobi, Kenya
Engineering Laboratory Building (ELB 213), 2nd Floor RM 213