



## RULES AND REGULATIONS

### 2026 L'ORÉAL-UNESCO FOR WOMEN IN SCIENCE PROGRAMME – SUB-SAHARAN AFRICA (UNIFIED)

#### 1. Introduction

The L'Oréal-UNESCO For Women in Science Sub-Saharan Africa program aims to promote and encourage the participation of young African women in science. Starting in 2026, the program officially merges the previously separate South African National and Sub-Saharan Regional programs into a single, unified initiative.

This program identifies and rewards young talented researchers in formal sciences, life and environmental sciences, material sciences, engineering sciences and technological sciences across 49 countries in the region (see Appendix).

#### 2. General Conditions of Eligibility Applicants must meet the following criteria:

##### a. For Doctoral Students

- **Nationality:** Having the nationality of one of the 49 countries in the Sub-Saharan African region (including South Africa).
- **Location:** Being enrolled in a doctoral school and carrying out research in a laboratory in any of the 49 countries in the region.
- **Research Status:** Conducting research in one of the scientific fields listed in Appendix 2.
- *Note: Students in their first year of PhD are not eligible.*

## **b. For Post-doctorates**

- **Nationality:** Having the nationality of one of the 49 countries in the Sub-Saharan African region (including South Africa).
- **Location:** Being enrolled in a post-doctorate in a research laboratory or an institution in any of the 49 countries in the region.
- **Academic Cut-off:** Have defended their thesis after February 2021 (5-year window). If the applicant has children, this deadline is brought forward by one year per child.
- **Timing:** Must have started the post-doctorate before the opening date of the call for applications.
- **Research Status:** Conducting research in one of the scientific fields listed in Appendix 2.

Candidates who have already been supported by one of the national or regional programs L'Oréal-UNESCO For Women in Science are not eligible.

## **2. Selection Criteria:** The jury evaluates candidates based on three pillars:

- **Quality of Application:** Excellence of the academic record, quality of publications, and explicit letters of recommendation. The applicant must:
  - Demonstrate how the training or the practical and theoretical knowledge acquired within the host organization contribute to the work of the current research.
  - Valorize the excellence of the academic record (number, quality and impact of publications, conference presentations, patents, etc.).
  - Include the research summary formulated in clear terms in 200 words maximum.
  - Include exemplary and explicit letters of recommendation.
  - A motivation letter including her background and why she applied for this grant.

- Origin (s):
  - Letter from the thesis director (thesis director (for doctorate) / laboratory director (for post-doctorate))
  - Letter of acceptance from the laboratory reception team for the year 2026- 2027
  - If possible, from a peer in the research area of the thesis and / or postdoctoral project (which is not part of the environment close to the candidate).
  
- Content:
  - Recognition of the scientific quality and the importance of the work carried out and envisaged in the research work (originality, scientific scope, even economic and social scope). It is important to show how the candidate really contributed. The focus is not the institution's work, but the Young Talent's personal contribution to scientific advancement.
  - Appreciation of the human qualities of the researcher, of her autonomy, inventiveness, creativity and ability to interact in an efficient, productive, caring way with others (sharing, listening, mentoring, etc)
  
- **Scientific Excellence in Research:** Novelty, methodology, and the potential for the research to advance knowledge on the African continent.
  - The research describes the research plan, including the methodology, as well as the scope, novelty and possible repercussions of the research.
  - A detailed description of a maximum of two pages (including the references). Justified text, Times New Roman font, size 12 with single spacing.
  - Relevant and well prepared, the description illustrates an innovative and creative spirit.

- The research work must contribute to advance knowledge in the candidate's research area, as well as to promote scientific work and collaborations in the country, over the African continent and abroad.
- The research project should include a brief description of the candidate's commitments to education, teaching and mentoring activities, and/or to the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) more broadly.
- **Communication & Mentoring:** The candidate's ability to promote science to young people and their commitment to the UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).
- **Fluency in the English language is desirable:**
  - To be able to fully benefit from the training in "Management and Leadership", provided in English
  - To be able to fully benefit from the media exposure through the various side events (interviews, etc.) organized during the FWIS week and throughout the year

**4. Endowments: Definition and Use** For this edition, 38 endowments will be awarded. To ensure fairness across the newly unified program, all grants are standardized:

- **Doctoral Category:** € 10,000 (or local currency equivalent).
- **Post-doctoral Category:** € 15,000 (or local currency equivalent).
- Awards are paid directly to beneficiaries by the Fondation L'Oréal through UNESCO - as part of the L'Oréal-UNESCO For Women in Science 5 partnership - after the regional award ceremony and following receipt of the documents required for the bank transfer.
- Each beneficiary must inquire about the taxation linked to this endowment. The endowments are non-renewable. They can be combined with other allowances: other donations, prizes, and funding for doctorates and post-doctorates.

**Use of Funds:** The endowments are intended for the researchers themselves and must be exclusively devoted to the promotion of research in their country, or of the researcher in a professional framework. Some examples of use:

- Purchase of computer equipment or advanced equipment. It is understood that the endowments must in no case replace the responsibilities of the laboratory towards its researchers. As a result, endowments cannot be used to purchase basic laboratory equipment.
- Travel in the country or abroad to meet experts and/or create collaborations.
- Funding to attend conferences, congresses, training courses / knowledge acquisition,
- etc.
- Financial support for childcare i.e. to attend conferences and congresses.
- Purchase of scientific articles.

**5. Application Requirements** Applications are made exclusively through [www.forwomeninscience.com](http://www.forwomeninscience.com). A complete file must include:

- **CV (1-2 pages):** Including training, publications, and dissemination actions.
- **Research Summary:** A summary of research work in 200 words maximum (intended for a panel of scientific experts),
  - A detailed description of the research work of 2 pages maximum, including the references (Text justified, Times New Roman font, size 12 with single spacing)
  - An application will be considered complete if it contains a detailed description of the research project and its methodology. If animal experiments are carried out as part of the submitted research project, these experiments must be described in detail. **The necessity of the animal experiments or the lack of alternatives must be justified.**
- **Budget:** An estimated budget detailing the expenditure envisaged to support the coherence and realism of the research work. This budget must not exceed € 10,000 for doctoral students and € 15,000 for post-doctoral researchers (in the form of a table with projected expenses). If the estimated budget is less than the amount allocated, the excess may be spent after the year following the Prize (there is no limited time for its use).

- **Letters of recommendation:** At least two letters of recommendation, each assessing the quality of the CV, the originality of the project and mentioning the relationship and human dimensions of the candidate.
- **Publications List (from the most recent to the oldest):**
  - *Doctoral:* 2 publications (articles, patents, or oral communications).
  - *Post-doc:* 2 most important scientific publications.

To note:

- Incomplete files or files received after the deadline, as well as applications which do not meet the conditions set out above, will not be taken into consideration.
- The jury is subject to a duty of confidentiality with regards to documents entrusted to them.

## 6. Selection

The candidates will be preselected by a committee of experts and then presented to an independent jury made up of eminent researchers from the African continent.

The evaluation grid and the coefficients associated with each criterion are included as **Appendix 3**.

The jury's decision cannot be appealed. It can neither be disputed nor subject to explanations or justifications.

The results will be communicated by telephone and email to the 38 beneficiaries following the jury's deliberations. They must remain confidential until the awards ceremony.

## 7. Collaborative actions for the awardees

The selected awardees commit to:

- Continue the research work for which the Sub-Saharan Africa, L'Oréal- UNESCO For Women in Science endowment was obtained.
- Carry out the expenses detailed in the estimated budget of the application file.
- Write a report on the research work, subject of the endowment, to be submitted to the Fondation L'Oréal in the year following the awarding of the endowment.

- Participate in the “Management and Leadership” training, as well as in the award ceremony to be held in one of the 49 African countries covered by the Program (still to be confirmed), in principle in November 2026.
- Agree to be asked to participate in L’Oréal *For Girls in Science* program, which aims to inspire young high school girls to pursue careers in science.
- *Participation in these events is mandatory, transportation and accommodation costs for beneficiaries from all countries will be covered by the Fondation L’Oréal.*

## 8. Communication

The selected laureates will communicate about the endowment under the name “L’Oréal-UNESCO For Women in Science - Sub-Saharan Africa - Award”.

The selected laureates will be photographed, filmed and interviewed for non-commercial purposes related to the communication of the L’Oréal-UNESCO For Women in Science program and the For Girls in Science program.

These photos, videos and texts may be used for written and audiovisual publications, allowing dissemination to French, African and international media written image right authorization will be signed by each of the selected Young Talents and included in the contract / Letter of Agreement related to the endowment.

## 9. Estimated timetable

- **Launch of Call:** 2nd March 2026
- **Closing of Call:** 15th May 2026
- **Expert Review:** June 2026
- **Final Jury Selection:** July 2026
- **Ceremony:** November 2026 (Location to rotate within the 49 countries).

## 10. Rules

Participation in the call for applications for the Sub-Saharan Africa L’Oréal-UNESCO For Women in Science program implies acceptance of these regulations.

## 11. Contact us

For any questions relating to the regulations, please consult the online FAQ on the platform [www.forwomeninscience.com](http://www.forwomeninscience.com)

**List of  
scientific  
areas**

\*This classification of disciplines is based on the *Revised field of Science and Technology (FoS) Classification in OECD Frascati Manual* and adapted to the L'Oréal-UNESCO FWIS Programme

**FORMALSCIENCES**

<b>MATHEMATICS</b>	<b>COMPUTER &amp; INFORMATION SCIENCES</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Applied mathematics</li> <li>- Pure mathematics</li> <li>- Statistics and probability</li> <li>- Biomathematics</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Computer sciences</li> <li>- Information science</li> <li>- Bioinformatics</li> <li>- Artificial intelligence (AI)</li> </ul>

<b>CHEMISTRY</b>	<b>PHYSICS</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Biochemistry</li> <li>- Analytical chemistry</li> <li>- Colloid chemistry</li> <li>- Material chemistry</li> <li>- Inorganic chemistry</li> <li>- Macromolecular chemistry</li> <li>- Medicinal chemistry</li> <li>- Nuclear chemistry</li> <li>- Organic chemistry</li> <li>- Physical chemistry</li> <li>- Electrochemistry (dry cells, batteries, fuel cells, corrosion metals, electrolysis)</li> <li>- Nanomaterials</li> <li>- Phytochemistry</li> <li>- Polymer science</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Acoustics</li> <li>- Astronomy (including astrophysics, space science)</li> <li>- Atomic (physics of atoms, Moessbauer effect)</li> <li>- Mechanics</li> <li>- Molecular and chemical physics: collision, interaction with radiation</li> <li>- Optics (including laser optics and quantum optics)</li> <li>- Physical chemistry</li> <li>- Condensed matter physics (including formerly solid-state physics, superconductivity)</li> <li>- Fluids and plasma physics (including surface physics)</li> <li>- Particles and fields physics</li> <li>- Solid state physics</li> <li>- Molecular physics</li> <li>- Nuclear physics</li> <li>- Theoretical physics</li> <li>- Magnetic resonances</li> <li>- Thermodynamics</li> </ul>

**PHYSICALSCIENCES**

9

**LIFE AND ENVIRONMENTAL SCIENCES**

BIOLOGICAL SCIENCES	BASIC MEDICINE	CLINICAL MEDICINE	HEALTH SCIENCES	HEALTH BIOTECHNOLOGY	EARTH & RELATED ENVIRONMENTAL SCIENCES	AGRICULTURE SCIENCES
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Biochemistry</li> <li>- Bioengineering</li> <li>- Cell biology</li> <li>- Reproductive biology</li> <li>- Extremophile biology</li> <li>- Evolutionary biology (Anthropology, Archeobiology)</li> <li>- Human biology</li> <li>- Marine biology, freshwater biology, limnology</li> <li>- Molecular biology</li> <li>- Theoretical and mathematical biology</li> <li>- Biophysics</li> <li>- Biotechnology</li> <li>- Stem cells</li> <li>- Chronobiology</li> <li>- Cryobiology - Ecology</li> <li>- Embriology and Developmental biology - Enzymology</li> <li>- Epigenetics</li> <li>- Ethology</li> <li>- Genetics and heredity</li> <li>- Immunology - Metabolism</li> <li>- Biochemical research methods</li> <li>- Microbiology</li> <li>- Mycology</li> <li>- Neuroscience</li> <li>- Paleontology</li> <li>- Cell physiology</li> <li>- Biodiversity conservation</li> <li>- Radiobiology</li> <li>- Plant sciences, botany</li> <li>- Symbiosis - Virology</li> <li>- Zoology, Ornithology, Entomology, Behavioral sciences biology</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Anatomy and morphology</li> <li>- Medicinal chemistry</li> <li>- Human genetics</li> <li>- Immunology</li> <li>- Neurosciences (including psychophysiology)</li> <li>- Pathology</li> <li>- Pharmacology and pharmacy</li> <li>- Physiology (including cytology)</li> <li>- Toxicology</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Allergy</li> <li>- Andrology - Anesthesiology</li> <li>- Respiratory systems</li> <li>- Surgery</li> <li>- Dentistry, oral surgery, and medicine</li> <li>- Dermatology and venereal diseases</li> <li>- Endocrinology and metabolism (including diabetes, hormones)</li> <li>- Gastroenterology and hepatology</li> <li>- Geriatrics and gerontology</li> <li>- Hematology</li> <li>- Peripheral vascular disease</li> <li>- Critical care medicine and Emergency medicine</li> <li>- General and internal medicine</li> <li>- Obstetrics and gynecology</li> <li>- Oncology</li> <li>- Ophthalmology</li> <li>- Orthopedics</li> <li>- Otorhinolaryngology</li> <li>- Pediatrics</li> <li>- Psychiatry</li> <li>- Radiology, nuclear medicine, and medical imaging</li> <li>- Rheumatology</li> <li>- Cardiac and Cardiovascular systems</li> <li>- Transplantation</li> <li>- Urology and nephrology</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Epidemiology</li> <li>- Infectious diseases</li> <li>- Occupational health - Tropical medicine</li> <li>- Nutrition, Dietetics</li> <li>- Parasitology</li> <li>- Public and environmental health</li> <li>- Sport and fitness sciences</li> <li>- Substance abuse</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Biomaterials (as related to medical implants, devices, sensors)</li> <li>- Health-related biotechnology - Forensic science</li> <li>- Technologies involving identifying the functioning of DNA, proteins (gene-based diagnostics and therapeutic interventions, pharmacogenomics, gene editing and recombinants)</li> <li>- Technologies involving the manipulation of cells, tissues, organs, or the whole organism (assisted reproduction)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Contamination &amp; waste management</li> <li>- Ecology</li> <li>- Geochemistry and geophysics</li> <li>- Physical geography</li> <li>- Geology</li> <li>- Geosciences, multidisciplinary</li> <li>- Meteorology and atmospheric sciences</li> <li>- Mineralogy</li> <li>- Oceanography, Hydrology, Water resources</li> <li>- Paleontology</li> <li>- Climatic research</li> <li>- Soil science</li> <li>- Environmental sciences</li> <li>- Volcanology</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Agriculture</li> <li>- Agronomy, plant breeding and plant protection</li> <li>- Agricultural biotechnology and food biotechnology - Agricultural chemistry</li> <li>- Livestock cloning, marker assisted selection, diagnostics (DNA chips and biosensing devices for early/accurate detection of diseases)</li> <li>- Animal husbandry</li> <li>- Agricultural engineering</li> <li>- Horticulture, viticulture</li> <li>- Fishery</li> <li>- Phytopathology</li> <li>- Animal and dairy science</li> <li>- Soil science</li> <li>- Veterinary science</li> <li>- Forestry</li> <li>- GM technology (crops and livestock)</li> <li>- Biomass feedstock production technologies, biopharming</li> </ul>

## ENGINEERING SCIENCES AND TECHNOLOGY

CIVIL ENGINEERING	ELECTRICAL, ELECTRONIC & INFORMATION ENGINEERING	MECHANICAL ENGINEERING	CHEMICAL ENGINEERING	ENVIRONMENTAL ENGINEERING
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Civil engineering</li> <li>- Architecture engineering</li> <li>- Construction engineering, Municipal and structural engineering</li> <li>- Transport engineering</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Detection devices (radar, sonar, lidar) - Automation and control systems</li> <li>- Computer hardware and architecture</li> <li>- Communication engineering and systems</li> <li>- Electrical and electronic engineering</li> <li>- Microelectronics</li> <li>- Robotics and automatic control</li> <li>- Telecommunications</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Aerospace engineering</li> <li>- Audio engineering, reliability analysis</li> <li>- Nuclear related engineering (nuclear physics to be in Physics)</li> <li>- Mechanical engineering</li> <li>- Applied mechanics</li> <li>- Thermodynamics</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Chemical engineering (manufacture, production plants)</li> <li>- Chemical process engineering</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Mining and mineral processing</li> <li>- Environmental and geological engineering, geotechnics</li> <li>- Marine engineering, sea vessels</li> <li>- Ocean engineering</li> <li>- Petroleum engineering, (fuel, oils), Energy and fuels</li> <li>- Remote sensing</li> </ul>
MATERIAL ENGINEERING	MEDICAL ENGINEERING	ENVIRONMENTAL BIOTECHNOLOGY	INDUSTRIAL BIOTECHNOLOGY	NANOTECHNOLOGIES
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Ceramics</li> <li>- Composites (including laminates, reinforced plastics, cermets, combined natural and synthetic fibre fabrics; filled composites)</li> <li>- Materials engineering</li> <li>- Paper and wood</li> <li>- Coating and films</li> <li>- Textiles including synthetic dyes, colours, fibres</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Medical engineering</li> <li>- Artificial Intelligence assisted devices</li> <li>- Medical laboratory technology (including laboratory samples analysis; diagnostic technologies)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Bioremediation, diagnostic biotechnologies (DNA chips and biosensing devices) in environmental management</li> <li>- Environmental biotechnology</li> <li>- Environmental biotechnology related ethics</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Bioprocessing technologies (industrial processes relying on biological agents to drive the process) biocatalysis, fermentation</li> <li>- Bioproducts (products that are manufactured using biological material as feedstock)</li> <li>- Biomaterials, bioplastics, bioderived bulk and fine chemicals, bio-derived novel materials - Industrial biotechnology</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Nano-materials (production and properties)</li> <li>- Nano-processes (applications on nano-scale)</li> </ul>