



Call for Applications

The Merian Institute for Advanced Studies in Africa (MIASA) offers

Two Interdisciplinary Fellow Groups (Junior/Senior)

for 4 months each

at the University of Ghana

in the periods February to May and September to December 2021

Application deadline: March 31, 2020, 24 h CET

The Maria Sibylla Merian Institute for Advanced Studies in Africa (MIASA) is dedicated to research in the Humanities and Social Sciences, with 'Sustainable Governance' as its central topic. More specific sub-topics under this umbrella prominently include sustainable democracy, sustainable peace and conflict management and environmental transformation as well as migration and displacement, restitution of cultural objects, and human rights research. Overarching aims of MIASA are working towards a reduction of global asymmetries in knowledge production and bridging the cultural divide between anglophone and francophone Africa. MIASA, established in 2018, serves as a hub for exchange, networking and collaboration amongst leading researchers from Germany, Ghana, the African and European continents and beyond. It is located on the beautiful campus of the University of Ghana at Legon (Accra).

The Institute offers time and space for supporting innovative academic projects in the Humanities and Social Sciences of top international quality. MIASA supports these projects via different kinds of fellowships: individual fellowships, tandem fellowships with one tandem partner from Germany and the other from West Africa, and fellowships as members of so-called Interdisciplinary Fellow Groups. From 2021 until 2026, MIASA will grant some 20 fellowships per year in total.

The present call is for **Interdisciplinary Fellow Groups (IFGs) in the calendar year 2021**: IFGs are MIASA's central instrument fostering original research of top-class international calibre on the central topic 'Sustainable Governance' and its sub-topics. In 2021, MIASA will fund one IFG from February 1 until May 31, and another one from September 1 until December 2021.

An 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.** Two group members serve as the convenors and organizers of the IFG (see also below under *Eligibility* and *Applications*), one of them ideally holding a position at the University of Ghana, or another Ghanaian university or institute. **The group centers 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 required to produce working papers based on their work at MIASA. Members 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.

The thematic proposals that are submitted must address in one way or another MIASA's umbrella topic '**Sustainable Governance**', ideally one or more of the more specific topic areas listed in the first paragraph, adopting an interdisciplinary theoretical or methodological approach.

The fellowships of the IFG members are held for four months in the period from February to May 2021 and September to December 2021. The successful applicants will become MIASA fellows with all the corresponding rights and obligations for the requested funding period. **Key** among the obligations is that MIASA fellows, in general, and IFG members, in particular, are required to spend the bulk of their fellowship in residence at the University of Ghana.

In a strictly merit-based selection process, the IFGs and the fellowships going with them will be awarded to researchers of top academic quality with an innovative and high quality research topic. The ultimate selection on the IFGs will be made by the distinguished international Academic Advisory Board of MIASA.

The fellows' salary costs will be met by MIASA for every full fellowship month on the principle of "no loss, no gain," and 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 to the MIASA fellow upon application to the directorate.

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, Germany. **Note:** A full-time presence of fellows at MIASA for the fellowship period is expected. This is even more important for IFG members. 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.

The Institute supports academic exchange across existing boundaries: between disciplines, between different cultures and countries, between established and younger researchers. Furthermore, MIASA engages in activities opening the research community to society, politics,

and the arts. As MIASA Fellows the members of the IFGs will be part of this community, too, and profit from the lively research environment of the university. **Note**, therefore, that applications for IFGs should indicate, too, how the relevant IFG is planning to contribute to the activities at MIASA and, more broadly, to the academic life at the University of Ghana.

MIASA is committed to inclusion, gender equality, and family friendliness. The MIASA fellowship program thus aims for gender parity, is promoting affirmative action policies, and is striving to provide family-friendly conditions for its fellows.

Eligibility

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. The research topic proposed is required to match 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. The application will be submitted by a single person, who will also serve as the convenor and organizer of the IFG; in the application, a co-convenor should be identified, too. One of the two convenors should be from the University of Ghana, or another Ghanaian university or institute. Eligible for the role of convenor/organizer is a senior researcher (more than 6 years after PhD has been awarded) or an experienced early career researcher (4-6 years after PhD has been awarded) based at an institution in sub-Saharan Africa (preferably Ghana) or in Europe (preferably Germany) at the time of the application deadline. Relevant is the date on the official PhD certificate.

Applications

The application will be submitted by a single person, who will also serve as the convenor and organizer of the IFG throughout the application process and, in the case of success, during its funding period. This main applicant thus applies with a set team consisting of 4-6 members in total (including a co-convenor). **Applications can be submitted both in English and in 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; 24.00h CET.**

Information on the application and selection process (required documents, eligibility criteria, evaluation criteria, timeline and stages of the selection process) is provided in the **Application Guidelines for IFGs.**

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

Selection

The all-important selection criteria are the academic excellence of the main applicant, the team members (including the co-convenor), 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 research

strands, and the interdisciplinarity of the project. A further criterion will be how the teams applying for an IFG are planning to contribute to the activities at MIASA and, more broadly, to the academic life at the University of Ghana.

A highly distinguished international selection committee, MIASA's Academic Advisory Board, will be responsible for the selection of the fellows.

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