



THE ELSEVIER FOUNDATION

Eligibility and Evaluation Criteria

2024 OWSD-Elsevier Foundation Awards for Early Career Women Scientists in the Developing World

'Water, sanitation and hygiene'

Eligibility

Applicants must be women scientists in the Early Career stage (**within ten years of earning their PhD degree**), whose current scientific research is related to the area of **water, sanitation and hygiene**.

Given that from 2022 the awards are focusing on better respond to the call for action set forth by the [United Nations Sustainable Development Goals \(SDGs\)](#), applicants must demonstrate how their research contributes to advancing knowledge in the area of **water, sanitation and hygiene** and to achieving the [SDG6 \(Clean water and sanitation\)](#).

The application can include, but is not limited to, references to the [SDG6 target areas](#), e.g. universal and equitable access to safe and affordable drinking water; access to adequate and equitable sanitation and hygiene for all; improvement of water quality by reducing pollution, eliminating dumping and minimizing release of hazardous chemicals and materials; increasing water-use efficiency and ensuring sustainable withdrawals and supply of freshwater to address water scarcity; implementing integrated water resources management at all levels; and protecting and restoring water-related ecosystems.

The OWSD-Elsevier Foundation Awards are offered to women in Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM). Applications from women in Social sciences, Humanities, Arts or other are NOT eligible.

Eligible STEM fields:

- Agricultural Sciences
- Astronomy, Space and Earth Sciences
- Biological Systems and Organisms
- Chemical Sciences
- Computing and Information Technology
- Engineering Sciences
- Mathematical Sciences
- Medical and Health Sciences (including Neurosciences)
- Physics
- Structural, Cell and Molecular Biology

Any combination of these fields (i.e. interdisciplinarity) is acceptable.

In addition, the applicant must have **lived and worked for at least 5 of the last 15 years*** in one of the [66 scientifically and technologically lagging countries \(STLCs\)](#) listed here:

Africa region: Angola, Benin, Burkina Faso, Burundi, Cameroon, Central African Republic, Chad, Comoros, Congo, Côte d'Ivoire, Dem. Rep. Congo, Equatorial Guinea, Eritrea, Ethiopia, Gambia, Ghana, Guinea, Guinea-Bissau, Kenya, Lesotho, Liberia, Madagascar, Malawi, Mali, Mauritania, Mozambique, Niger, Rwanda, Sao Tome and Principe, Senegal, Sierra Leone, Somalia, South Sudan, Swaziland, Tanzania, Togo, Uganda, Zambia, Zimbabwe

Arab region: Djibouti, Palestine (West Bank & Gaza Strip), Sudan, Syrian Arab Republic, Yemen

Asia & Pacific region: Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Bhutan, Cambodia, Kiribati, Lao People's Dem Rep, Mongolia, Myanmar, Nepal, Solomon Islands, Sri Lanka, Tajikistan, Timor-Leste, Tuvalu, Vanuatu

Latin America & Caribbean region: Bolivia, El Salvador, Guatemala, Haiti, Honduras, Nicaragua, Paraguay

*Please note:

- The 5 years of residence in the eligible country do not have to be consecutive.
- Applicants can be citizens of any country, provided that they fulfil the above residence requirement.

Preference will be given to those candidates not currently (or within the last three years) in receipt of [The World Academy of Sciences \(TWAS\)](#) awards, fellowships or grants. Please note that OWSD Early Career Fellows and Alumnae are not eligible for these Awards.

If you have doubts about your eligibility, please contact owsd@owsd.net.

Evaluation

Above all, the Selection Panel is looking for candidates who have made significant contributions in the area of 'Water, sanitation and hygiene' whose research is linked to the [SDG6 \(Clean water and sanitation\)](#).

The selection committee will be looking for excellent science of relevance to and with a demonstrable impact in the developing world. Innovative techniques or methodologies (especially with regard to sustainable development) will be favourably considered. Applications that demonstrate an awareness of [the importance of sex and/or gender considerations in research methodology and content may be prioritised](#).

Additionally, researchers are encouraged to demonstrate interdisciplinary collaboration within the natural sciences, but also with the social sciences and humanities.

Assessment is based on the applicant's achievements in her scientific field and specially in the contributions of her work to the achievement of the above mentioned SDGs. Additional attention is paid to evidence of leadership skills, initiative and innovation, as well as to the candidate's involvement in capacity building, outreach and civic contribution.

1. Scientific merit

This will include an assessment of:

- current research and/or scientific activities;
- relevance of the research (e.g. how related to [SDG6 \(Clean water and sanitation\)](#), awareness of gender/sex issues and differences, evidence of impact on community);
- quality of the applicant's publications;
- awards, grants and/or prizes received;
- collaborations with other scientists on research papers and projects;
- participation as invited speaker or chair at scientific or academic events.

Maximum marks for scientific merit are 50 (i.e. 50% of total marks).

2. Leadership, initiative and innovation

Evidence of these skills includes involvement in the organization of workshops, conferences or other academic events. Membership of academies, societies and other organizations is very relevant, especially if the applicant is a member of the Board or Executive Committee, or head of a team or association. Membership of an OWSD national chapter's executive committee (and the relevant duties carried out) can also be included here. The applicant's links with industry (e.g. registered patents) and the use of innovative technologies, techniques or methodologies will also be highly valued.

Maximum marks for leadership, initiative and innovation are 15.

3. Capacity building

Evidence of capacity building includes running active MSc or PhD training programmes; involvement in developing or providing resources for students and young researchers; participation in mentoring or supervision activities. Involvement in relevant activities of OWSD national chapters can also be included here.

Maximum marks for capacity building are 15.

4. Outreach and civic contribution

Here the Selection Panel will be looking for the applicant's engagement with local communities; involvement in volunteering initiatives, as well as participation in public talks for non-scientific audiences and visits to schools. Involvement in relevant activities of OWSD national chapters can also be included here.

Maximum marks for outreach and civic contribution are 15.

5. Challenging circumstances bonus

A full bonus of 5 points will be awarded to women scientists from or working in high risk or very adverse environments (e.g. countries in conflict, sites of natural disaster).

Bonus for challenging circumstances is 5.

Grading Summary:

Scientific merit	50
Leadership, initiative and innovation	15
Capacity building factors	15
Outreach and civic contribution	15
Challenging circumstances bonus	5
Total	100

For more detailed guidelines and a sample application please go [here](#).

Selection

Each year, there is a total of five awards: the highest ranking candidate from each of the four OWSD regions (see above) plus an additional “floating” award to a fifth candidate from any of these regions.

The competition will be judged by a distinguished panel of specialists in the appropriate research areas and who are aware of the challenges facing women scientists in developing countries.

Traditionally, the selection committee has met in person at the OWSD Secretariat based in Trieste, Italy and we have been able to draw on a broad range of expertise from this 'City of Science', including the International Centre for Theoretical Physics (ICTP), the University of Trieste, Elettra Sincrotrone, The International School for Advanced Sciences (SISSA) and the International Center for Genetic Engineering and Biotechnology (ICGEB). Since 2020, due to the COVID-19 pandemic and the impossibility of holding face-to-face meetings, we had the opportunity to draw on a broader pool of experts based also in the developing world. The Selection Panel is chaired by the OWSD Coordinator with full administrative support from the OWSD Secretariat.

Winners will be informed of their selection no later than 31 December 2023.