Owing to scientific and economic changes in a number of developing nations, OWSD has intensified the focus of its programme and has selected a group of countries in which science and technology are significantly lagging.

The immediate effect of this selection is that, effective from 2017, OWSD PhD Fellowships are open to candidates from 66 scientifically and technologically lagging countries.

Formerly, OWSD had a list of eligible countries which included all Least Developed Countries (LDCs) and any additional countries in sub-Saharan Africa. With this new selection, some countries in Africa are no longer considered low income and are no longer eligible for fellowships support. Some new countries outside Africa have been added.

### Africa
- Angola
- Benin
- Burkina Faso
- Burundi
- Cameroon
- Central African Republic
- Chad
- Comoros
- Congo
- Côte d'Ivoire
- Dem Rep Congo
- Equatorial Guinea
- Eritrea
- Eswatini, Kingdom of 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
- Tanzania
- Togo
- Uganda
- Zambia
- Zimbabwe

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

### Arab Region
- Djibouti
- Palestine (West Bank & Gaza Strip)
- Sudan
- Syrian Arab Republic
- Yemen

### Latin America & the Caribbean
- Bolivia
- Guatemala
- Honduras
- Paraguay
- El Salvador
- Haiti
- Nicaragua