Grant call: Strengthening no-fee open access publishing in Africa

EIFL, AJOL (African Journals Online) and WACREN (the West and Central African Research and Education Network) invite **African organizations** - legal entities that own open access (OA) journals that do not charge any fees for either authors or readers (often referred to as Diamond OA journals), and where editorial teams are based - to participate in this call for proposals, funded by Wellcome.

1. Aim of the Call for proposals

To enhance the quality and strengthen the sustainability of Diamond OA publishing in Africa.

Organizations can apply for support for a single Diamond OA journal or more than one Diamond OA journal they publish. We also invite applications from organizations hosting journal platforms that include Diamond OA journals.

We acknowledge the diversity of needs that each organization will have. Below are some examples of activities that may be of interest, but organizations are free to suggest their own activities for enhancing the quality and/or sustainability of their Diamond OA journal operations.

* Improving editorial management and peer review processes; capacity building of editors and reviewers;
* Reinforcing research integrity and publication ethics, strengthening open science practices as a mechanism for promoting transparency, reusability, reproducibility and trustworthiness of research results (e.g. if applicable, data availability statements, open peer review practices, etc.);
* Improving journal production and publishing, infrastructure and technical support, enhancing online publishing workflows;
* Measures to enhance the journal’s discoverability, visibility and impact, and community engagement;
* Measures to ensure long-term sustainability;
* Developing strategic partnerships: collaborating with other journals, libraries, research institutions, and infrastructure providers for sharing of resources and platforms and promotional activities;
* Other activities to strengthen not-for-profit, scholarly OA publishing models that do not charge fees to authors or readers, and do not depend on article processing charges (APCs) or similar per-unit charges; and to support the development of such models led by public research organizations.

**Maximum funding available per project proposal:**

* If you are applying for a single journal, the requested amount must not exceed 20,000 USD
* If you are applying for more than one journal or a journals hosting platform, the requested amount must not exceed 30,000 USD

**Project duration:** The project should be no longer than 12 months, starting from September 2025.

**Deadline:** Applications must be received by the deadline of **23:59 UTC on 6 June 2025**.

2. Guidance

**2.1 Eligibility criteria**

* Applications can only be submitted by African organizations - legal entities, e.g. universities, research institutes, learned/academic societies and other public non-profit institutions registered in Africa that own Diamond OA journals and where editorial teams are based, and / or manage platforms that host Diamond OA journals.
* An organization may submit a maximum of one application.
* In the application and budget, the organization must demonstrate co-funding during the project implementation period. This could be existing financial contributions (e.g. journal operating expenses) and in-kind contribution/s.
* An organization applying should also demonstrate the ability to sustain a Diamond OA model when the project funding ends.
* Funding will only be granted to journals that are OA and that are not charging any article submission, processing or any other charges to authors.

**Journals should comply with the following eligibility criteria:**

1. The journal has an ISSN (print or eISSN), which is clearly displayed on the journal website and can be checked in the ISSN registry.

2. The journal has published at least five articles a year for the last two years (2023-2024).

3. The journal has a regular schedule of publication, either issue by issue or via continuous publication.

4. All information provided on the journal website is up-to-date.

5. The journal does not charge fees to authors for publishing or to readers for reading; has been operational as a Diamond OA journal for at least two years (starting from 2023) and is operational at the time of application.

6. The journal has its own dedicated URL and a homepage that is accessible from any location.

7. The information about the mission (e.g. in a journal mission statement), aims and scope, as well as the languages in which manuscripts can be submitted is displayed on the journal website.

8. The journal publishes scholarly content and contains original research articles and the criteria for acceptance of manuscripts are defined and publicly available on the journal website.

9. The journal has an editorial board (with editorial board members from more than one institution) and may also have other editorial bodies. The composition of the editorial bodies is publicly displayed (i.e. with the editorial team names, functions and roles; affiliations) on the journal’s website, as well as on any platforms hosting the journal’s content.

10. Manuscripts submitted to the journal pass peer review by at least two peer reviewers in order to be published. The information about the peer review process is publicly displayed on the journal website.

11. Clear and detailed author guidelines are publicly available on the journal website. They include at least:

* An explanation of the types of manuscripts that a journal will consider.
* A detailed style guide (that includes referencing style).
* A description of how to submit an article.
* **Platforms hosting Diamond OA journals should comply with the following eligibility criteria. Please note that the journals hosted on these platforms should comply with the journal eligibility criteria listed above.**
  + The platform hosts more than one Diamond OA journal, with up-to-date content.
  + The platform is owned and managed by a non-profit entity.
  + The information about the mission and scope of the platform (e.g. institutional, disciplinary, national, regional, continental etc.) and at least the basic acceptance criteria for journals are displayed on the platform.
  + The platform hosts OA scholarly journals.
  + Each journal has a unique landing page (URL).
  + The full text of journal articles is available on the platform (i.e. hosted on the same domain as the platform).

**​2.2. Non-eligible costs**

* Construction or reconstruction costs of buildings or premises;
* Fees for editors, peer reviewers and editorial boards (please note, that fees for editorial assistants and other editorial support, as well as copyediting and proofreading, typesetting and other production and technical support services are eligible);
* Furniture;
* Printing of hard copies of journals;
* Overheads as a fixed percentage of project costs;
* Expenses incurred before the grant agreement is signed are not eligible.

3. Application Procedure

**3.1 Requirements**

**3.1.1 What is required to submit?**

* A complete and signed project application form and budget and work plan. We accept proposals in English, French and Portuguese. Download the forms from here -
  + Project application form: [English](https://www.eifl.net/sites/default/files/resources/202411/application_form_2025.docx), [Français](https://www.eifl.net/sites/default/files/resources/202411/fr_application_form.docx), [Português](https://www.eifl.net/sites/default/files/resources/202411/pt_application_form.docx" \t "_blank)
  + Budget and work plan form: [English](https://www.eifl.net/sites/default/files/resources/budget_and_workplan_template_en.xlsx), [Français](https://www.eifl.net/sites/default/files/resources/budget_and_workplan_template_fr.xlsx), [Português](https://www.eifl.net/sites/default/files/resources/budget_and_workplan_template_pt.xlsx" \t "_blank)
* A letter signed by the head of the applying organization confirming that funding received for recurrent costs (ongoing expenses) of the journal/s or platform that will need to be maintained beyond the end of the project will be sustained by the applicant organization. Recurrent costs could include ongoing remuneration of staff hired by the project (if the position is needed after the project period), in-kind support, and any other ongoing costs needed to continue to publish the Diamond OA journal/s supported by the project.

Please note that a legally authorized representative of the applicant organization should sign the project application form.​

**3.2 Submission of project proposals**

Applications are accepted via our [online application submission system](https://esms.eifl.net). See [here](https://youtu.be/oDO_Lm3PD4Y) a short tutorial about the call and how to submit your project proposal.

All project proposals must be submitted by **23:59 UTC on 6 June 2025**.

Please note the following:

* Late applications will not be considered.
* Only applications submitted via the online submission system will be accepted.

**3.3 Assessment**

Proposals will be peer reviewed by an international panel.

Proposals will be assessed based on excellence of approach and outcomes, including the quality of the proposal, the feasibility of the project plan and the budget, the ability of the organization to sustain Diamond OA journal/s/platform and the expected project impact.

**3.4 Key Dates**

* **6 June 2025:** Proposal deadline
* **August 2025:** Call outcome
* **September 2025:**Project start date

If you have questions, please do not hesitate to contact us at [oa@eifl.net](mailto:oa@eifl.net).

**You can download this information about the grant call in docx format here.**

We have scheduled five online sessions where you can ask questions you may have about this call for proposals:

* **Monday, May 19 at 9:00 UTC:** [registration link](https://us02web.zoom.us/meeting/register/13sGlK1MRjKbtm0CQRqDvA)
* **Wednesday, May 21 at 9:00 UTC:** [registration link](https://us02web.zoom.us/meeting/register/pI9obuGaSC6b_PXe8atiMg)
* **Thursday, May 22 at 10:00 UTC:** [registration link](https://us02web.zoom.us/meeting/register/1Q7QkaC0QbOttfJgyINGcg)
* **Friday, May 23 at 9:00 UTC:**[registration link](https://us02web.zoom.us/meeting/register/IHZ1S1sDReWNVAZk1bItxQ)
* **Tuesday, May 27 at 9:00 UTC:** [registration link ​](https://us02web.zoom.us/meeting/register/A_s5_dcPQbyVCXqWA7d_lQ)

4. Useful links

* See [17 projects that received financial support within a similar call last year](https://www.eifl.net/eifl-action-gallery?combine=OA-AFRICA-GRANTEE&field_topic_tid_1=275&field_country_tid_1=All).
* See our guide: [Quality in Diamond Open Access Publishing: Guidelines, policies and templates](https://www.eifl.net/resources/eifl-guide-quality-diamond-open-access-publishing)