



THE ELSEVIER FOUNDATION

**Call for applications for the  
2026 OWSD-Elsevier Foundation Awards  
for Early Career Women Scientists in the Developing World**

**‘Sustainable, Affordable, and Reliable Energy’**

The call for applications for the **2026 OWSD-Elsevier Foundation Awards for Early Career Women Scientists in the Developing World** is **now open**. **Deadline** for submitting applications is **31 August 2025**.

All **applications must be submitted [online](#)**. In order to help you prepare, you can see our **application guidelines [here](#)** for your reference.

The official language for the application is **English**.

If you are submitting any supporting documents (such as residency certificate, degree certificate, etc.) in a language which is not English, you must attach an (informal) translation into **English**. **Documents in other languages with no accompanying English translation will not be considered.**

### **Eligibility**

The applicant must be a woman who has received her **PhD in a scientific discipline within the previous ten years** (date of PhD certificate must be no earlier than 10 years prior to application deadline) and whose current scientific research is related to the area of **sustainable, affordable, and reliable energy**.

Given that from 2022-2026 the awards will 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 **sustainable, affordable, and reliable energy** and to achieving the [SDG7 \(Affordable and clean energy\)](#).

The application can include, but is not limited to, references to the [SDG7 target areas](#), e.g. ensuring universal access to affordable, reliable and modern energy services; increasing substantially the share of renewable energy in the global energy mix; doubling the global rate of improvement in energy efficiency; enhancing international cooperation to facilitate access to clean energy research and technology, including renewable energy, energy efficiency and advanced and cleaner fossil-fuel technology; promoting investment in energy infrastructure and clean energy technology; and expanding infrastructure and upgrading technology to supply

modern and sustainable energy services for all in developing countries, in particular least developed countries, small island developing States, and land-locked developing countries.

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:** 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 and the Pacific:** Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Bhutan, Cambodia, Kiribati, Lao People's Dem. Rep., Mongolia, Myanmar, Nepal, Solomon Islands, Sri Lanka, Tajikistan, Timor-Leste, Tuvalu, Vanuatu.

**Latin America and the Caribbean:** 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.
- Citizens of an eligible country who have not been able to live or work in that country due to active conflict may still exceptionally apply for the award.

- Although anyone having lived and worked at least 5 of the last 15 years in an eligible country may be considered, this award is intended to recognize the achievements of women scientists who have had to overcome challenging circumstances in developing countries. Therefore, candidates currently living and working in these countries or with longer presence in these countries may be given priority.

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 in doubt about your eligibility, please contact [owsd@owsd.net](mailto:owsd@owsd.net).

## Prize

- Cash prize of USD 5,000.
- All-expenses-paid trip to attend a relevant international conference.

The 5 awards will be distributed as follows: one for each of the four regions of the developing world (Africa, Arab region, Asia & the Pacific and Latin America & the Caribbean), plus an additional “floating” award for an outstanding candidate from any of these regions.

## Applications

Applications for the 2026 awards are invited from women scientists who have made significant contributions in the area of sustainable, affordable, and reliable energy, whose research is linked to the [SDG7 \(Affordable and clean energy\)](#), and have lived and worked for at least 5 years in an [eligible STLC](#).

Applications must be made [online](#), in English, and must include:

- Official documentation proving 5 years’ residency in an eligible STLC.  
The following documents can be submitted as proof of residence as long as the name of the applicant (as written in the online form) appears clearly: statement from the local police office or municipality, population registry office, rental agreement, utilities bills, employment contract. This list is not exhaustive and alternative documents can be considered. Please write to [owsd@owsd.net](mailto:owsd@owsd.net) if you are not sure about the eligibility of your documents.
- Evidence on how your research contributes to advancing the [SDG7 \(Affordable and clean energy\)](#).
- Motivational statement of no more than 2500 characters describing why you should be selected for this award, the excellent quality of your research, greatest achievements of your scientific career, impact of your work locally/regionally/internationally, and where relevant, any persona/professional challenges you have faced and overcome given your context (for ease, we recommend that you prepare this beforehand and copy-paste into the text box).
- PhD certificate

- Curriculum vitae
- Full list of publications
- At least 2 reference letters (reference letters must be prepared on official letterhead and should be written and signed by senior scientists familiar with your research).

The deadline for submission of applications for the 2026 OWSD-EF Awards is **31 August 2025**.

Application guidelines and a sample application form can be found [here](#).

## Selection

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.

Since 2020, the selection committee has been held online in order to incorporate a broad pool of experts based in the developing world, as well as local experts based in Trieste, Italy, 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), and experts from UNESCO science programmes. The Selection Panel is chaired by the OWSD Coordinator with full administrative support from the OWSD Secretariat.

Assessment will be based on the applicant's achievements in her scientific field, with additional attention paid to evidence of leadership skills, initiative and innovation, as well as to the candidate's involvement in capacity building, outreach and civic contribution. Research that demonstrates the use of innovative techniques or methodologies (especially with regard to sustainable development), an awareness of the [importance of sex and/or gender considerations in research methodology and content](#) and/or interdisciplinary collaboration may be prioritised.

Successful candidates will be informed of their selection no later than **31 December 2025**.

## Contact

OWSD Secretariat  
[owsd@owsd.net](mailto:owsd@owsd.net)