

## **Frequently Asked Questions about the APN Research Grants Competition**

### **ELIGIBILITY**

#### **Who can apply for an APN research grant?**

All applicants must be African citizens currently residing in an African country, and either an academic or a policy analyst or practitioner. Women are strongly encouraged to apply.

Academic applicants must hold a faculty or research position at an African university or research organization and have a PhD obtained no earlier than January 2000.

Policy analysts and practitioner applicants must be based in Africa at a regional or subregional institution, a government agency, or a nongovernmental, media, or civil society organization and have obtained at least a Master's degree before January 2011, with at least five years of proven research and work experience in peacebuilding-related activities on the continent.

#### **Can I apply as part of a research group/team?**

No. The APN research grants competition only welcomes proposals from individual applicants.

#### **Is there an age limit?**

No. However, preference will be given to younger and mid-career academics, as well as experienced practitioners and policy analysts. Academic applicants must hold faculty or research positions in African universities or research organizations, and are expected to have a PhD at the time of application obtained no earlier than January 2000.

#### **Am I eligible if I do not hold a PhD?**

Academic applicants must hold a PhD by the time of application, obtained no earlier than January 2000. However, practitioner and policy analyst applicants may apply without holding a PhD so long as they have a Master's degree of no less than 5 years, with at least five years of proven work-related experience, preferably in the area of peacebuilding.

#### **I am an African citizen but I currently hold a faculty position at a university outside Africa. Am I still eligible?**

No. Academic applicants must hold faculty positions at universities in Africa. Practitioner and policy analyst applicants must be based in regional, governmental, and non-governmental organizations in Africa.

**I am a researcher working outside Africa but currently work with a partner at a university in an African country. Are we eligible to apply as a team?**

No. You are not eligible to apply as part of a team.

**I have full-time employment in Africa, but I am temporarily stationed outside Africa. Am I eligible?**

Yes. However, you must supply the APN with a letter of employment in Africa at the time of application as proof of your stationing.

**Will the program support outside scholarships or enrollment in a degree-awarding program at a university?**

No. APN research grants support only APN-specific research and networking activities.

**What disciplines are eligible?**

APN research grants are open to researchers from all disciplines and fields. However, successful proposals will demonstrate a solid grasp of social science literature, tools, and research methodologies, and be focused on an issue related to African peacebuilding.

**I have applied for an APN research grant in the past but was unsuccessful. Am I still eligible to apply?**

Yes. If you have applied for an APN grant in the past and were NOT accepted, you may apply on condition that you meet the academic requirements. The APN strongly encourages those who have not received an APN award to apply.

**I am a former APN grant recipient. Am I still eligible to apply?**

Yes. However, preference will be given to those who are not former recipients.

## **APPLICATION PROCESS**

**How do I apply for an APN research grant?**

Applications must be completed using our online portal: <http://soap.ssrc.org/>. You will be asked to create an online user account and password. We recommend that you fully review the guidelines, eligibility requirements, selection criteria, and application and award timeline before proceeding with an application.

**What are the application requirements?**

All applicants will be required to submit the following:

- 1) Completed Application Form
- 2) Completed Proposal & Bibliography
- 3) Two (2) Reference Letters
- 4) Language evaluation(s) (if applicable)
- 5) Updated CV

If you encounter any difficulties accessing the online portal, please contact APN staff at [apn@ssrc.org](mailto:apn@ssrc.org), or by telephone at (+1) 212-377-2700, ext. 3703.

### **How do I submit my application?**

The APN requires all applications to be uploaded through our online portal: <http://soap.ssrc.org/>. Please ensure that all relevant information is included in your application, as any incomplete application will be automatically disqualified.

### **Should all application materials be submitted at once?**

Yes. The application form, proposal and bibliography, and CV must all be submitted at the same time. Reference letters and language evaluation(s) may be submitted separately, but are required before the deadline.

### **Do I need to submit my application in English?**

Yes, all application materials must be in English.

### **When is the deadline for the 2016 APN Research Grants Competition?**

All applications, reference letters, and language evaluations are due by 5:00pm (EST) on January 15, 2016.

### **Do you have samples of previous proposals that have been awarded grants?**

No. Applicants can, however, consult the SSRC publication “On The Art of Writing Proposals” for advice on writing proposals and preparing project statements (free download available at <http://www.ssrc.org/publications/view/7A9CB4F4-815F-DE11-BD80-001CC477EC70/>).

You may also refer to our lists of past recipients (by year), whose names and project titles are available for viewing:

[2013](#) | [2014](#) | [2015](#)

## **APPLICATION COMPONENTS**

### **How many letters of reference do I need, and whom should I ask to write them?**

You will need two (2) letters of reference. One should be written by your department head or an administrative supervisor of similar standing, while the other should be written by a senior academic or practitioner who is very familiar with your research or work. The APN will accept reference letters written in either English, French, or Portuguese. All other application materials, however, must be submitted in English.

### **Should my references send in their letters on their own, or can I include them in the application that I submit to the APN?**

References must submit their letters on their own directly to the APN through the referee portal (<http://soap.ssrc.org/reference/>).

Confirm the e-mail addresses of your two references and then add them to the “References” section of your application in the APN online portal. **Please make sure these emails are correct. It is your responsibility to notify your referees of the submission date and request.** Your references will be notified via e-mail that you have requested a reference letter and given instructions for submitting their letter online. Materials submitted by your references will then be automatically added to your application. Please note that since letters of reference are to be submitted on their own, kindly encourage those writing your reference letters to submit them by the APN deadline. It is not the APN’s responsibility for late submissions.

### **Do I need to submit a language evaluation?**

Only those applicants conducting research in an officially recognized national language that is different from their own are required to submit a language evaluation. Such an evaluation should be conducted by a qualified evaluator and must test and clearly state the applicant’s level of language proficiency.

If you are conducting research in your own native language, you are not required to submit a language evaluation.

### **Should the language evaluator send in the report of my level of language proficiency, or can I include it in the application that I submit to the APN?**

Language evaluators must submit their evaluations on their own directly to the APN through the relevant portal.

Confirm the e-mail address of your language evaluator and then add the evaluator to the “Language Evaluations” section of your application in the APN online portal. The evaluator will

be notified by e-mail that you have requested an evaluation and given instructions to complete the evaluation report online. Materials submitted by your language evaluator will be automatically added to your application. Since language evaluations are to be submitted separately from your online application, please encourage the language evaluator to submit their evaluation by the APN deadline. It is not the APN's responsibility for late submissions.

**Do reference letters and language evaluations need to be submitted in English?**

Yes, all application materials must be in English.

**Can I send in my application even if my reference letters and language evaluation have not been received?**

Yes. You are strongly advised to upload your completed application well in advance of the deadline. Do not wait for your reference letters and language evaluation to be received by the APN before you submit your completed application. They will be automatically added to your application upon receipt.

**Can my language evaluator(s) be written and tested by my referee?**

No, your reference letters and language evaluators may not be written by the same person.

**Are there formatting requirements for the research proposal?**

Yes. The research proposal, including the bibliography and budget outline, should not exceed ten (10) pages and must be collated as a single document. Proposals must use Times New Roman 12-point font, be double-spaced, and have one-inch margins. All pages must be numbered and have the applicant's name in the upper right-hand corner. Proposals must be uploaded in Adobe Portable Document Format (.PDF).

**Can photographs, charts, and graphs be included in the research proposal?**

Yes, but these must appear within the ten pages allowed for the entire proposal.

**Do I need to submit academic transcripts with my application?**

No, academic transcripts are not required for your application. However, if nominated, the program will request a photocopy of the applicant's highest university degree.

**AWARDING OF GRANTS**

**When will the research grant awards be announced?**

All nominees and waitlisted candidates will be informed about their outcome by no later than May 2016.

### **What are the selection procedures?**

APN research grant applications are reviewed by a selection committee drawn from the APN Advisory Board. Grants are awarded based on established peer-review procedures and standards. The APN Advisory Board is made up of internationally distinguished scholars, policymakers, and practitioners. For a full list of Advisory Board members, please click [here](#).

### **How many grants are awarded?**

Up to fifteen (15) APN research grants may be offered in a given year.

### **What do I do if my application is selected for an APN research grant?**

Once a nominee has been notified, the following documents are required to finalize award processing:

1. An official letter from the grantee's home institution or organization indicating the acceptance of the terms of the grant award and support for the applicant's research project, which must be written on institutional stationery, signed and dated by the relevant head of administration.
2. A photocopy of the grantee's highest university degree.
3. A signed statement by the grantee declaring that all grant research will be completed within the time stipulated and that the grant funding will be used only for research activities proposed in the grant application.
4. Copy of biodata page of passport.

Once these documents have been received and approved by the program, an award letter will be sent confirming award status.

Please note that all selected grantees will be required to submit a detailed budget indicating the funds necessary to complete the proposed research, which is taken into consideration in determining the final grant amount.

You will also be asked to confirm your availability to attend two workshops in June/December 2016.

### **When can I begin my research, if my proposal is selected for funding?**

Grantees are expected to commence research no later than June 2016 and finish by December 2016.

**What is the grant amount?**

APN research grant awards vary depending on the research activities supported but will not exceed \$15,000 for individual research projects.

**What do APN research grants cover?**

APN research grants cover necessary equipment (within reason), books and articles, research/fieldwork-related travel, conference costs and related travel, project design and development support, and editorial and professional/institutional support.

**What do APN research grants NOT cover?**

Grants do not cover university overhead, individual or institutional contributions, salary support, social security, or other insurance programs. They cannot be used for payment on loans, mortgages, or other personal indebtedness and the storage of personal or household effects.

**Does the APN offer administrative support for travel visas and research clearance?**

No. While APN research grants cover visa costs, grantees are responsible for obtaining their own visas, official documentation, and research clearances. Grantees will be responsible for consulting an Institutional Review Board (IRB) on their own and having their proposed research approved before involvement of human subjects may begin.

**If I receive an APN research grant, is it compulsory that I attend the two grantee workshops?**

Yes. Attendance at the APN workshops, for which you will be asked to prepare specific materials and presentations linked to your research, is mandatory. Failure to attend can lead to the termination of your award. These will take place June and December 2016. By applying you understand that, if selected, your presence will be required.

**Do I have to pay my way to attend and participate in the workshops?**

No. The APN will make all necessary arrangements and cover your travel, accommodation and living expenses related to the workshop attendance, and these need not be included in the project budgets. In special circumstances, grantees will be reimbursed for the full costs of independently arranged travel.

**What kinds of outputs or products are expected from APN grantees at the conclusion of their projects?**

Research outputs/products may include, but are not limited to, the following:

- Books
- Policy briefs
- Articles/essays
- Occasional/Working papers
- Newsletters

**Do research grants go directly to grantees or are they channeled through the recipient's university or organization?**

APN research grants are paid directly to the grantees in three separate installments, pending submission and approval of required progress reports at the beginning and towards the end of the project. In addition to the Interim and Final progress reports, grantees are expected to submit a draft publication before the second workshop.

**I am currently applying for several research grants/fellowships. Should I be awarded an APN research grant, can I also accept funding from other sources?**

Yes. However, please note that no awardee may hold two concurrent SSRC fellowships/grants at the same time. Should you receive two different SSRC fellowships/grants simultaneously, you will be asked to forego one of your own choosing.

Current beneficiaries of an SSRC fellowship/grant may apply for an APN grant only if their current award will be completed by the time the APN 2016 grant commences.