



**CSIR**  
Touching lives through innovation

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**Call for Applications: ALC Knowledge Exchange Program support**  
**2024**

The African Laser Centre initiative (ALC) is an **open non-exclusive partnership** to stimulate innovation, research and technology development **in lasers and the applications thereof**, across Africa. In support of this broad objective, the ALC **seeks local, continental and global partnerships** to support this objective. The ALC is also recognized as an **AU-NEPAD Flagship Program**. To enable this objective the ALC has an active ALC Research Collaboration support program, a ALC Training Program that focus on training and conference support specifically to support the organisation of conferences, workshops and topical short course events. The ALC initiative also has a ALC scholarship program for African students to enrol and do post graduate degrees at South African Tertiary Institutions in a laser- and laser applications related research field.

The ALC Knowledge Exchange Program supports the development of centres of expertise in photonics related disciplines across the African continent. The ALC Knowledge Exchange Program (KEP) aims to support the mobility of Doctoral and Masters degree students on short-term exchange visits between South African research institutions and research institutions from the rest of Africa. Under the ALC KEP, researchers and students will be offered financial support to visit a collaborator's laboratory to share or to gain knowledge, capabilities and know-how that will support the development of new capabilities and competencies at research groups across Africa.

The ALC KEP is **NOT** a Research Collaboration support program, and broad research collaboration may be funded under the ALC Research Collaboration Program. The ALC KEP specifically focus on targeted knowledge transfer or knowledge exchange. Applications that are of a general research collaboration nature will not be supported.

The ALC KEP specifically targets South African and African students at Masters or PhD level to visit a collaborator's laboratory to gain experience or to have access to specialised equipment, **with the ultimate objective to grow his or her home research group**. The ALC

KEP therefore specifically will focus on knowledge and technology transfer support between South African and African research groups.

The CSIR Photonics Centre is managing the ALC Program funding allocation from the Department of Science and Innovation in support of the objectives of the Africa Laser Centre.

The CSIR hereby invites applications from researchers in South Africa and across Africa with active collaborations in the field of laser and laser-related applications to apply for financial support for knowledge exchange visits for their students in the 2024 academic year.

### **Eligibility criteria**

- Any researcher / student from a research institution in South Africa or in the rest of Africa with a Doctoral degree and an established track record can apply for support under the program. In the initial phase, the program is focused on Doctoral and Masters candidates for a visiting grant to a host institution for a period of 3 to a maximum of 6 months.
- The application should be completed and signed by the applicant researcher and the host researcher. If the applicant is a student, the application needs to be signed by the student's supervisor.
- One of the institutions applying must be a South African based higher education institution or a South African science council.
- The student nominated as the exchange student needs to be a registered student at the applicant researcher's institution.
- The student nominated for the exchange should have a sound academic record. **A certified copy of the student's full tertiary academic record is required.** Not submitting this will disqualify an application.
- A strong motivation is required by the applicant on the purpose of the Knowledge Exchange, as well as on the abilities of the student nominated. The motivation also needs to cover financial co-investment, as well as in-kind investment that the applicant's institution will make to support the project.
- A letter of invitation and support for the application from the host institution is compulsory. Co-investment, either financial and/or in-kind, from the host institution needs to be highlighted.
- **Applications without institutional co-funding will not be considered.**
- **Applications which are general in nature, and which focus more on research**

**collaboration will not be supported.** The applications needs to focus on a specific nominated student. The nature of the knowledge transfer needs to be clearly articulated and substantiated as opposed to just a research collaboration between two groups.

**What is funded:**

- The grant will be limited to a maximum of R 60 000.
- It can cover one return airplane ticket, accommodation support and/or a subsistence for the period of the grant.
  - Accommodation support is limited to R 7 000 per month.
  - S&T support is limited to R 250 per day.
- Consumables to support experimental work up to the value of R 10 000.

**Proposals will be disqualified if:**

- The applicant's research institution does not contribute financially to the project. There should be a clear indication of the applicant's research institution's financial contribution to the program. No allocation will be made if the application requests all the funding support for travel, accommodation and S&T. It is expected that each of the applicants' research institutions will cover at least one of these expense categories from its own or other funds.
- The proposal describes a general research collaboration between the two institutions, without providing a very detailed program of knowledge transfer for a specific nominated student.

**Expected outputs and outcomes of the program:**

- Outputs:
  - An Exchange visit report, to be submitted within 6 months after the end of the visit.
  - One joint publication from the work conducted.
  - A tutorial lecture on knowledge and experience gained to be presented by the visiting student at his or her home institution after the return from the Knowledge Exchange visit.
- Outcomes
  - An ALC Research Collaboration project in the future.
  - Wider or improved set of capabilities available at the applicants' institution.

- Establishment of a closer collaboration network between researchers on the African continent.

Support for all ALC activities is subject to availability of funding.

**Call launch date: 4 September 2023**

**Closing date for applications: 27 October 2023**

**ALC KEP application forms and templates for final reports are available from the CSIR Photonics Centre**

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