



BRIDGING MINDS

Max Planck Africa one-week educational workshops held in Africa

Through its Africa Initiative, the Max Planck Society is strengthening Africa's role as a global hub for scientific research in the medium and long term. Recognising the continent's young and rapidly growing scientific talent base, the initiative focuses on sustained support for African early-career researchers. A portfolio of complementary programmes addresses successive career stages; ARTEMIS engages graduates and doctoral candidates, Mobility Grants support doctoral and postdoctoral researchers, Partner Groups enable postdoctoral scientists to return to and build research capacity in their African home regions, and the Max Planck–Humboldt Research Units programme supports early-career researchers in sub-Saharan Africa who are establishing or leading independent research groups.

An additional programme format contributes to the education and training of students in Africa. In partnership with African universities, doctoral candidates and postdoctoral researchers from Max Planck Institutes organise intensive workshops of at least one week, hosted on the campus of the partner university in Africa. These workshops are designed and led by Max Planck PhD students and postdoctoral researchers in close collaboration with an African university or research institution that already partners with the respective Max Planck Institute. Focusing on a defined scientific discipline, these workshops combine

advanced training and mentoring for students at African universities that collaborate with Max Planck Institutes. The programme aims to strengthen research skills, deepen subject-specific expertise, and expand participants' international scientific networks and experience.

Aim

The primary aim of this initiative is to bridge educational differences between African students and science education in the Global North. By providing local students and early-career researchers with tools, mentorship, and access to research resources, the programme supports excellence in scientific research within their home countries. Max Planck doctoral and postdoctoral researchers also benefit from the international teaching experience, broadening their academic and cultural perspectives. Workshops are jointly developed with partner universities/research institutions and provide a foundation for lasting collaborations between African and Max Planck early-career researchers.

By creating an initial point of contact, the workshops can serve as an entry point to further engagement, including participation in the ARTEMIS programme and other initiatives targeting early-career researchers in Africa, ultimately fostering a sustainable network of scientific excellence.



Structure of the workshop

The workshop should be designed by Max Planck PhD students in collaboration with the partner university/research institution in Africa, integrating scientific knowledge across all participants while providing a cultural experience organized by the African hosts. The workshop structure will focus on:

- **Core scientific training:** the workshop aims to teach participants the core components underlying their respective fields of science. Providing answers to their scientific questions in an approach different from what the students are accustomed to.
- **Collaborative learning:** students and researchers from diverse backgrounds, alongside the researchers from the Max Planck Society, will work closely with other passionate young scientists. This collaboration encourages active participation in group projects and foster the sharing of ideas.
- **Skills enhancement:** Through the carefully curated sessions, participants will sharpen their academic and professional skills. In combination with some set of planned tasks and challenges in form of team building activity, participants will broaden their scientific understanding and problem solving skills and will be able to apply this in practical settings.
- **Cultural Presentation:** Another core element of the workshop, beyond scientific training and research development, is the promotion of a meaningful cultural exchange between African students, researchers, and their international counterparts. Recognizing that scientific collaboration thrives on diversity, the cultural exchange component seeks to broaden participants' horizons by exposing them to different worldviews, practices, and social norms.

Follow-up programmes

Building on the connections established through the workshops, programmes such as the ARTEMIS Mentorship Programme and the Mobility Grants Programme support sustained collaboration with researchers and institutions.

Application procedures:

Junior researchers from one research field, based at one or several Max Planck Institutes, submit a joint proposal to the Division for International Relations. (email to artemis@gv.mpg.de).

DEADLINE: 13 APRIL, 2026

Documents needed:

- Proposal (1 page scientific background, financial plan and aim of workshop)
- Workshop agenda (1 page)
- Letter of support from Max Planck Director/research group leader for each doctoral student and postdoc at MPG and a letter of support from the collaborating university/research institution in Africa

Funding:

Successful applicants will receive funding of €10,000 to support the organisation of a workshop which should last (minimum) one week. The funding will be provided to cover travel expenses and accommodation of PhD students in Africa as well as local cost at the partner institution.

Once the workshop is over, the Max Planck PhD students submit a short report (max. 2 pages) about the outcome of the workshop and what was achieved.