

PhD scholarship available at *icipe* to work on the tomato leafminer, *Tuta absoluta*

Closing date for applications: 22nd February 2019



icipe is offering a **PhD project** working on the micro-lepidopteran moth of South American origin, the tomato leafminer, *Tuta absoluta*, that represents the dominant and most serious pest of tomato. The project is designed to address constraints due to *T. absoluta* through validation of EPF-based biopesticides, screening of endophytes and implementation of applications of proven IPM strategies to suppress the pest.

For more information on *icipe* go to <http://www.icipe.org/>

Combating *Tuta absoluta* (Meyrick), an invasive pest of key Solanaceous vegetables for food and nutritional security

Agriculture is a vital tool for sustainable development in Africa. Specifically, horticultural sub-sector generates more jobs, with vegetable production providing market opportunities for smallholder growers. Tomato besides being both a subsistence and cash crop, is highly nutritious and provide good amounts of minerals, antioxidants and vitamins. Despite the socio-economic importance of this crop, it is constrained by numerous biotic and abiotic factors, ranking high among the former are arthropod pests, a problem that was further compounded by the recent invasion by *Tuta absoluta*. The pest causes yield losses of up-to 100% jeopardizing livelihoods of millions of growers. Furthermore, the pest has expanded its host range to some indigenous Solanaceous vegetables thus intensifying the problem in Africa. The current project is designed to address constraints due to *T. absoluta* through validation of EPF-based biopesticides, screening of endophytes and applications of proven IPM strategies to suppress the pest in East-Africa and beyond.

Applicant requirements specific for project:

- Recent MSc graduate in Microbiology/Entomology
- BSc degree in Biological Sciences, with a minimum of 2nd Class Upper division degree or equivalent
- Should be a national of an African country
- Maximum age of 35 years
- Knowledge in chemical ecology will be an added advantage

Work place

The PhD position is based at *icipe*'s Duduville Campus Nairobi, Kenya.

Eligibility

Applicants must be nationals of sub-Saharan African countries. Qualified female candidates and candidates from less privileged regions or groups are especially encouraged to apply. The Master's degree must have been completed less than ten years ago at the time of application. Preference will be given to applicants with a maximum age of 36 years (men) or 40 years (women) by 31st December 2019.

Completed application form and accompanying supporting documents must be submitted latest by 22 February 2019.

Funding

The PhD projects are funded through a research grant from the African Union Research Grants (AURG) and will be jointly supervised by scientists from *icipe* and the university in which the student will register. The scholarships will cover all costs of the PhD programme, including travel, living expenses, medical insurance, university fees and all research and training costs.

Timeline

3 year doctoral training by research;

start: 1st April 2019

Successful candidates will develop a full proposal and register with a university after they commence their PhD programme at *icipe*.

How to apply

Full instructions and online application: [APPLICATION](#)

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Questions

In case of any questions regarding the PhD positions or your application, kindly contact: Ms. Vivian Atieno, Capacity Building Officer, Capacity Building and Institutional Development Programme, *icipe*, vatieno@icipe.org, Tel: +254 20 863 2272

We look forward to receiving your application.