



PanAfrican
Archaeological
Association



October 17, 2022

CALL FOR PROPOSALS: AFRICAN CHRONOMETRIC DATING FUND 2022-23

The African Chronometric Dating Fund (ACDF), an initiative of the Society for Africanist Archaeologists (SAfA), the PanAfrican Archaeological Association (PAA), and the British Institute in Eastern Africa (BIEA), encourages applications from scholars seeking to improve regional radiocarbon chronologies within the African continent.

Each applicant is eligible to apply for funding up to a maximum of \$2,000 (USD) for radiometric dating.

The deadline for applications is December 15, 2022 (no exceptions). Applications will be reviewed by members of Applications and Education Subcommittee. Applicants will be notified of their award status by **March 15th, 2023**. The number of awards made during each cycle will vary, and will depend on the funding currently available to the African Chronometric Dating Fund. If an applicant is awarded funds, the person must be or become a member of one of the three supporting organizations: SAfA, the PAA or the BIEA.

Eligibility requirements

- The applicant must be a citizen of an African nation. The highest priority will be given to archaeologists (whether professionals or students) currently resident in Africa. If the applicant is a student, the supervisor must submit a letter or email supporting the application. We may also provide funds to African nationals who are currently students or postdoctoral fellows at universities outside Africa, but only if the applicant has first tried to obtain funding for radiocarbon from elsewhere. If the applicant has tried and failed to obtain such support, then the supervisor must confirm this in their supporting statement.
- The sample(s) must be ready for shipping to a dating laboratory at the time of the application. We do not provide funds for samples that the applicant hopes to obtain in the next period of fieldwork.
- If required by the relevant national and / or local antiquities or heritage organization responsible for the archaeological record of the country in question, the applicant must have a permit for (a) export and/or (b) destructive analysis of the sample(s). This must be confirmed in the application, and if no such a permit is required, this must be explained in the application.

Application Procedure

All applications should be emailed to chronofund@safarchaeology.org. Please attach two pdf documents: a current CV and one document containing answers to the following questions:

- 1. Applicant name, current position, institution, and email address.**
- 2. Brief description of the archaeological project for which funding is being requested.** (300 words maximum)
- 3. Brief description of the questions your new chronometric dates will help to answer.** List any dates already available for these contexts/sites/periods. Why are new dates necessary? If this is a stratified site, the stratigraphic relationship of each sample to those already dated should be discussed. How will the information gleaned add to our understanding of regional chronologies? (500 words maximum)
- 4. What is (very roughly) the expected age of the sample(s)?** This can be approximate, e.g., 30,000 to 20,000 BP, early Holocene, Early Iron Age. If the expected age falls within one of the long plateaus in the radiocarbon calibrations curve (e.g., 0-300 BP, 2350-2550 BP) we are unlikely to approve the request for radiocarbon dating, but might possibly approve a request for OSL dating if a strong case is made.

5. Answers to the following specific questions:

a. How many chronometric dates are being requested?

Information should include what materials are to be dated (e.g., wood charcoal, ostrich eggshell, pottery, etc.) and by which methods? Short-lived or annual plant samples, and / or bone and teeth will have the highest priority for dating, if available. The mass of each sample should be provided. The websites of radiocarbon laboratories provide guidelines for the recommended mass to submit by the type of material, but it is always a good idea to provide more than the recommended amount, as a substantial fraction can be lost to pretreatment. This applies particularly to bone. It is also ideal to retain a 'sister sample' should anything happen to your samples during shipping.

b. Provide a budget outlining cost per date.

The ACDF cannot provide funding for sample shipment, and will make payments directly to the dating laboratory. The ACDF will only support dating undertaken at an academic research facility rather than a commercial laboratory. Applicants are welcome to make their own laboratory suggestion and a corresponding budget for review by the Applications & Education Subcommittee.

c. Do you anticipate any complications arising from the materials selected, e.g., old wood effects, marine and terrestrial aquatic reservoir effects?

d. Describe the archaeological contexts of your samples.

Here we expect a brief description of the site, and of the stratigraphic context of the sample(s) within the site. A section and or plan drawing must be provided. Photographs may also be included. If the samples come from storage (e.g., a museum) then the applicant must provide copies of excavation notes or publications that document the exact context of the sample. Dating of samples from poorly documented excavations will not normally be funded.

e. Are you confident that these are reliable contexts, in the sense that the materials to be dated are clearly associated with specific depositional events?

The applicant must discuss whether the context has any evidence of post-depositional disturbance. We will not fund the dating of surface samples. Applicants should review the SAfA web tutorial on stratigraphic contexts.
(400 words maximum)

Reporting Requirement

A brief report (~2 pages) is due to the Applications & Education Subcommittee within 1 year of receiving dates. Applicants will be ineligible for additional funding until this report is completed. The report should provide details about the dates obtained and their contribution to improving regional chronologies. The report should also specify where these dates are, or will be, published in a forum accessible to the African archaeological community, such as *Nyame Akuma*, *Azania: Archaeological Research in Africa*, *West African Journal of Archaeology*, *South African Archaeological Bulletin*, *PECAN*, *Libyca*, *Archéo-Nil*, *African Archaeological Review*, *Studies in the African Past*, *Journal of African Archaeology*, and *Sudan & Nubia*. Original reports from the dating lab(s) must be attached.

Useful Information

The African Chronometric Dating Fund will be happy to answer questions about chronometric dating from applicants and awardees. Guidelines for the reporting and interpretation of dates are provided through a series of PowerPoint tutorials on radiocarbon dating by David Killick and interpreting stratigraphic contexts by Bernard Clist. A third tutorial on other chronometric dating techniques will be available soon. Please contact the Applications & Education Subcommittee at chronofund@safarchaeology.org with any further queries.

Additional basic scientific information can be found at:

1. The Oxford Radiocarbon Accelerator Unit's homepage: <https://c14.arch.ox.ac.uk/dating.html>. They likewise provide a free calibration program, OxCal, that can be accessed here: <https://c14.arch.ox.ac.uk/calibration.html>.
2. The CALIB homepage: <http://calib.org/> where there are links to a free online and downloadable radiocarbon calibration program for MS Windows, a manual (<http://calib.org/calib/manual/index.html>), a marine reservoir correction database (<http://calib.org/marine/>) and other information.