September 8, 2023

CALL FOR PROPOSALS: AFRICAN CHRONOMETRIC DATING FUND 2023-24

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 a maximum of 4-5 dates per application round. The rationale for each date must be well-explained in the application. If the reasoning for a particular date is not convincing, that date may be excluded from a successful award.

The deadline for applications is December 15, 2023 (no exceptions). Applications will be reviewed by members of the Applications and Education Subcommittee. Applicants will be notified of their award status by **March 15th, 2024.** 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 BIEA. For awardees, if your membership expires before samples are shipped for dating, it will need to be renewed.

Submit applications to chronofund@safarchaeology.org. Receipt of submissions will be confirmed by return email, within a few days. Please contact us directly if you do not receive a confirmation.

We encourage all potential applicants to contact Emma Loftus (emma.loftus@lmu.de) as early as possible prior to submitting their application, to discuss potential issues related to their application.

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 dating 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 as early as possible, within a few weeks of the award. We do not provide funds for samples that the applicant hopes to obtain in the next period of fieldwork. Dates will be analyzed at a discounted rate at the Poznan

AMS Radiocarbon Laboratory (link). ACDF will make payments for the awarded dates directly to the dating laboratory. Dates that require specialist protocols may be considered by the committee but will require additional justification.

- The ACDF cannot provide funding for sample shipment and applicants are responsible for shipping the samples themselves, at their own expense.
- 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. Please consider the timing of your permit applications when making your application to ACDF.

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. **To which relevant organization(s) do you belong?**

   ☐ Society for Africanist Archaeologists (SAfA)

   ☐ PanAfrican Archaeological Association (PAA)

   ☐ British Institute in Eastern Africa (BIEA)

3. **Brief description of the archaeological project for which funding is being requested.** (300 words maximum)

4. **Brief description of the questions your new chronometric dates will help to answer.** Report any dates already available for these contexts/sites/periods in a table. 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)

5. **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.

6. **Answers to the following specific questions:**

a. How many chronometric dates are being requested (see table below)?

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' (part of the original one) should anything happen to your samples during shipping.

Complete the following table for each requested sample (add rows as needed).

Sample ID	Sample Material	Sample context	Expected significance	Expected age range and reason for estimate
	Type of sample, including any species information (particularly if any aquatic or marine contribution)	Stratigraphic position or association, as precise as possible.	Explain for each date – consider how different 14C results might affect the overall interpretation of your study (i.e. older vs. later, long vs. short chronologies, etc.). You may mention here the relative significance of each date for the overall application.	Very approximate – can be based on cultural association.

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

c. 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. Both section and plan drawings must be provided that show the locations of the planned radiocarbon samples. 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.

d. 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)

<u>Reporting Requirement</u>

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, or about the application process, from applicants and awardees (emma.loftus@lmu.de).

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 (links to the PDF documents in French and English are available here) These tutorials will provide useful information and help to strengthen your application.

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 (login required), 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.