

Selection Criteria and Assessment Framework

Applications will be assessed by a selection panel using the following criteria.
Applications will be scored out of **100 points**.

1. Career Stage and Professional Development Benefit (25 points)

This sponsorship aims to support individuals who are likely to benefit most from international exposure and networking opportunities.

Preference will be given to:

- Graduate students (Masters and PhD candidates).
- Early-career researchers (typically within 10 years of highest qualification).
- Early-career professionals working in soil science, sustainable agriculture, environmental management, or related disciplines.
- Applicants who demonstrate that conference participation will significantly contribute to their professional development.

Scoring Guide

Score	Description
21-25	Graduate student or early-career applicant with professional development benefit.
16-20	Strong career development benefit clearly demonstrated.
11-15	Moderate benefit.
6-10	Limited benefit demonstrated.
0-5	Little evidence of professional development benefit.

2. Presentation Quality and Conference Contribution (20 points)

Preference will be given to applicants actively contributing to the conference program.

Priority order:

1. Accepted oral presentation.
2. Accepted poster presentation.
3. Attendee without a presentation.

Consider:

- Relevance of the work to conference themes.
- Potential contribution to scientific discussion.
- Innovation and significance of the work.

Scoring Guide

Score	Description
16-20	Accepted oral presentation of high relevance.
11-15	Poster presentation accepted.
6-10	Attendance without presentation but strong justification.
0-5	Limited evidence of conference contribution.

3. Access to Opportunities and Financial Need (20 points)

The program seeks to support delegates who have limited access to international conferences and professional development opportunities.

Consider:

- Demonstrated financial need.
- Availability of institutional support.
- Access to national or international travel funding.
- Previous attendance at international conferences.
- Geographic and institutional isolation.
- Limited opportunities for professional development within the applicant's country or region.

Scoring Guide

Score	Description
17-20	Significant financial need and very limited access to international opportunities.
13-16	Moderate financial need and limited opportunities.

Score	Description
9-12	Some support available but attendance would still benefit from sponsorship.
5-8	Significant alternative support available.
0-4	Little evidence of financial need or limited opportunity.

4. Potential Impact and Knowledge Sharing (15 points)

Consider:

- Likely impact on the applicant's organization, institution, profession, or community.
- Commitment to sharing conference outcomes.
- Potential to develop ongoing collaborations.
- Potential contribution to soil science capacity development within the applicant's country.

Scoring Guide

Score	Description
13-15	Exceptional impact and dissemination plan.
10-12	Strong impact potential.
7-9	Moderate impact.
4-6	Limited impact described.
0-3	Minimal evidence of impact.

5. Professional Engagement and Leadership (10 points)

Preference will be given to applicants who demonstrate active engagement in professional, scientific, agricultural, environmental, or community organizations.

Consider:

- Membership in national soil science societies.
- Membership in agricultural, environmental, or scientific associations.

- Participation in professional networks.
- Leadership positions in professional organizations.
- Contributions to outreach, extension, mentoring, or community activities.

Scoring Guide

Score	Description
9-10	Strong leadership and active involvement in professional associations.
7-8	Active member of one or more relevant organizations.
5-6	Some professional engagement.
3-4	Limited engagement.
0-2	No evidence provided.

6. Likelihood of Attendance (10 points)

Consider:

- Valid passport or passport application in progress.
- Realistic plan for obtaining a visa, where required.
- Credible plan to fund travel and accommodation.
- Institutional approval for attendance.

Scoring Guide

Score	Description
9-10	Highly likely to attend if sponsored.
7-8	Minor outstanding arrangements.
5-6	Attendance feasible but uncertain.
3-4	Significant barriers remain.
0-2	Low likelihood of attending.

Diversity and Portfolio Considerations

Following scoring, the panel may make final selections to ensure the sponsored cohort reflects the objectives of the program.

The panel should seek to achieve:

- Gender balance across selected delegates.
- Representation from a diverse range of developing countries and regions.
- Participation from both low-income and lower-middle-income countries.
- A mix of graduate students, early-career researchers, and early-career professionals.
- Representation from universities, research institutes, government agencies, NGOs, extension services, and industry.
- Broad representation across conference themes and technical disciplines.

Where applications receive similar scores, preference should be given to:

1. Graduate students and early-career applicants.
2. Applicants with accepted oral presentations.
3. Applicants from countries with limited access to international scientific meetings.
4. Applicants demonstrating strong financial need.
5. Applicants who are active members of local, national, or regional soil science, agriculture, or environmental associations.
6. Applicants from geographic regions not otherwise represented within the selected cohort.
7. The gender that is underrepresented within the selected cohort at the time of final selection.

Recommended Funding Categories

Total Score	Recommendation
85-100	High Priority for Sponsorship
70-84	Recommended for Sponsorship
60-69	Reserve List
Below 60	Not Recommended

Guiding Principle: The sponsorship program is intended primarily as a capacity-building initiative. Selection should therefore prioritise applicants who have limited opportunities to participate in international conferences, who are likely to derive substantial professional benefit from attendance, and who can subsequently contribute to strengthening soil science and sustainable agriculture within their home countries and regions.