REQUEST FOR APPLICATIONS: ABI ASSOCIATE GROUP LEADERS

The African Bioinformatics Institute (ABI) invites applications for its Associate Group Leader (AGL) programme. AGLs are mid-career researchers (<15 years since PhD) who are leading independent bioinformatics research, training, or service groups in Africa. This programme is designed to recognise and support emerging leaders who are strengthening bioinformatics capacity on the continent.

Benefits of being an Associate Group Leader at the ABI

- Recognition as part of a continental network of bioinformatics leaders.
- Opportunities to contribute to shaping ABI's scientific, training, and infrastructure agenda.
- Access to non-financial institutional support, visibility, and networking opportunities through ABI's platforms.

Criteria for evaluating applications:

Applicants must:

- Have a paid position at a university, research institute, public health agency, or similar institution in Africa.
- Lead a small but established group (minimum two staff or students).
- Hold at least one active research grant as principal investigator or co-principal investigator.
- Have a minimum of five, first or senior author peer-reviewed publications in the last five years.
- Demonstrate evidence of African and/or international collaboration.
- Provide a formal institutional letter of support confirming space and administrative support for participation in ABI activities.

Applications must include:

1. Completed application form.
2. Curriculum vitae.
3. Institutional letter of support.

Deadline 31 January 2026

Applications will be assessed using a scoring rubric (0–4 scale) considering leadership, funding track record, publications, collaboration, and commitment to capacity building. Diversity of applicants (geography, gender, discipline) will also be considered.

Scoring Rubric for Reviewers (0–4 scale per criterion)

The following rubric will be used as a guideline for scoring applications

Criterion	0	1	2	3	4
Academic & Professional Background *(Years of relevant experience are provided as a guideline. The focus should be on the quality and attributes of that experience rather than duration alone.)*	Holds a PhD but has not progressed beyond early post-doctoral roles.	Still building an independent track record; achievements still largely attributed to their prior training environment. 1-3 years experience	Has a proven, growing track record across multiple criteria (publications, funding) but leadership and strategic influence are still developing 4-6 years experience	An experienced researcher. Has a strong, sustained record of achievement. Has supervised junior staff or postdocs and has played a key contributing role in significant projects. 7-10 years experience	An experienced researcher with a strong, sustained record of achievement that demonstrates clear and proven leadership. Has supervised staff or postdocs and co-led or led significant projects. 11-14 years experience
Leadership & Group	No evidence of independent leadership	Leads small projects, leads defined tasks within large projects	Clear independence. Building supportive research environment	Leads ≥2 staff/students, clear independence	Strong, well-established independent group

Funding Track Record	No grants	Co-investigator, no PI role	Small internal funding	Holds small external grants	Multiple external grants as PI/Co-PI
Publications (last 5 years)	<2 papers	2-3 papers, any author order, any journal	4-5 papers, some first or senior author in reputable journals	6-8 papers, several first or senior author	>8 papers, first/last author, high impact journals
Development of Tools & Resources	No development of tools or resources.	Has contributed to the development of tools/resources within a larger project led by others.	Primary developer of a functional tool/resource that is documented and available for use (e.g., in a repository, website).	Developed tool/resource shows clear evidence of adoption beyond own group (e.g., downloads, users, citations, requests).	Tool/resource is widely adopted, cited (become a standard) in the field. Leads to publications, grants, or community recognition.
Collaboration	No collaborations	Ad-hoc collaborations	Regular African OR international links	Both African & international collaboration	Strong network, active in multi-institutional projects
Commitment to Capacity Building	No evidence	Minimal mentorship /training (occasional /informal)	Some mentorship (structured/ formal mentorship of 1-2 students), local training	Regular training, regional involvement	Leadership in capacity-building initiatives