Working together to address the Sustainable Development Goals through strong Africa-UK research collaborations

ARUA – UKRI GCRF Partnership Programme for Capacity Building

Invitation to submit proposals from the ARUA Centres of Excellence
Closing date: 30 April 2019 (16:00 BST time)

I. Summary

The recently announced partnership between the Global Challenges Research Fund (GCRF), funded through UK Research and Innovation (UKRI) and the African Research Universities Alliance (ARUA) has two main objectives:

- To build significant capacity for science and research across African universities;

- To provide opportunities for African research teams and GCRF grant-holders to co-create new projects that build on current investments by GCRF and ARUA.

The partnership between ARUA and UKRI builds on the shared commitment to research addressing the Sustainable Development Goals and to capacity building for research in Africa. It aligns with key pillars of the GCRF strategy: to promote challenge-led disciplinary and interdisciplinary research for development, and to build equitable collaborations to strengthen capacity for research, innovation and knowledge exchange in both the UK and developing countries. The focus of the programme is on capacity building and developing African-African teams, networks and connections. The support should help ensure that connections are established to enable groups to be well placed to develop competitive bids to opportunities that come up.

This invitation to submit proposals is the first of two planned activities under the partnership. The Partnership Programme aims to build research capacity within the ARUA Centres of Excellence using a hub-and-spoke model to enhance research capacity in a theme and region. The hub will be the ARUA university that hosts the Centre of Excellence, and they will be

expected to work with other universities (spokes) in the field/region to increase networking and capacity building outside the hub and to develop collaborations across African universities. The spoke universities should include non-ARUA universities and to enable regional capacity building must not all be located inside the country of the hub university.

Therefore, the UKRI invites one proposal from each of the approved ARUA Centres of Excellence (CoEs) to apply under this call through an 'Invitation to Submit' in Je-S. This proposal should be led by the Centre Director, who can apply for a UKRI contribution of up to £600k over a three year period for a capacity building hub-and-spoke model that will support activities for researchers, workshops, networking and interactions with research projects. The £600k includes a maximum of 20% for indirect costs through the host university; direct costs will be funded at 100%.

As ARUA's contribution to this Partnership Programme for Capacity Building, the hub and spoke universities (that is the host and partner universities) for each of the ARUA CoEs are expected to provide the salary costs for the academic members of the CoEs, including for the Director, along with the $50k per annum cash contribution commitment already made to ARUA.

Background

The GCRF is a five-year £1.5 billion funding stream, announced as part of the Government's 2015 spending review. It forms part of the UK's Official Development Assistance commitment, to support cutting-edge research which addresses the problems faced by developing countries.

Engaging with pan-African organisations has been identified as a priority for GCRF, given the predominance of low income countries within the continent. As part of this there is a focus on capacity building and equitable partnerships.

ARUA is an emerging alliance of research-intensive universities across Africa, bringing together sixteen of the region's leading universities to significantly expand and enhance the quality of research carried out in Africa. In order to help address the region's development challenges ARUA has established and invested in 13 CoEs. These centres are focal points for aggregating their leading researchers to undertake collaborative research in priority areas. They also work regionally to support capacity building at less research intensive universities. The current 13 CoEs map onto the SDGs or specific aspects within them. ARUA has made a commitment to provide substantial funding towards the CoEs for salary and core budget support. A major expectation of ARUA is that the CoEs will be major vehicles for enhanced Collaborative PhD training, where the students are attached to various research projects, and also that part of the funding from this partnership will be used by the CoEs for this aim in a timely manner. These centres therefore provide an ideal basis for a partnership programme focused on capacity building between ARUA and GCRF.

The CoEs each operate in one of the 13 priority thematic areas that ARUA has adopted, and are interdisciplinary in nature. The thematic areas are:

Climate Change	Poverty and Inequality
Food Security	Unemployment and Skills Development
Energy	Notions of Identity
Water Conservation	Good Governance
Materials Development and Nanotechnology	Urbanisation and Habitable Cities
Non-Communicable Diseases	Migration and Mobility
	Post-Conflict Societies

II.   Aim of the ARUA-UKRI Partnership Programme

The Partnership Programme will provide funding, subject to satisfactory proposals, for the ARUA CoEs to develop their research capacity and deliver the following activities, through a hub and spoke model:

- Seek to bring together the leading researchers from Africa and elsewhere in order to generate a critical mass of interdisciplinary researchers capable of working collaboratively to tackle Africa's most crucial development challenges through their work
- Pursue partnerships worldwide with a view to engaging African researchers with global networks that assist them to achieve global competitiveness
- Strengthen capacity-building for research in Africa by enabling researchers of high international repute and very promising research students to come together for periods of time
- Work collaboratively to help develop capacity in less research intensive universities in the region and theme.
- Provide appropriately high-quality environments for significantly expanded postgraduate and postdoctoral training
- Provide opportunities for African researchers to work on large-scale problems over long periods of time
- Seek to develop an interactive relationship with the wider community including with other universities, African governments, industry and NGOs.
- Develop close links with research projects on-going in their theme, and carry out activities together to enable the Centres of Excellence to be well placed to respond to funding opportunities.
- Help to generate a global recognition of African research capabilities and contribution to knowledge

III.   Funding available

The Partnership Building for Capacity Building with ARUA Centres of Excellence Call aims to build capacity at ARUA's 13 CoEs. The CoEs will be

the basis for a hub-and-spokes model to support researchers, workshops, networking, researcher exchange and interactions with research projects. UKRI aims to support awards over three years for up to £600k for each CoE, subject to proposals reaching the required quality threshold, up to a total of £8m. For the ARUA contribution the host university will provide salary support, including for the Director drawn from their renowned academics, and the additional $50k cash per annum cash contribution already committed through ARUA. The Director of a CoE must be a highly accomplished and internationally recognized researcher. Leading the CoE as its Chief Academic/Researcher is required to be the main function of the Director. The Director will be responsible for leading and submitting a proposal to this call.

IV. Call Guidance

Partnership Programme for Capacity Building with ARUA Centres of Excellence
Closing date: 30 April 2019 (16:00 UK time)

As part of the Global Challenges Research Fund (GCRF), UK Research and Innovation invites one proposal from each of the ARUA Centres of Excellence (CoEs) to apply under this call through an 'Invitation to Submit' in Je-S.

Applicants can apply for up to £600k over a fixed three year period (1 September 2019 – 30 August 2022) for a capacity building hub-and-spoke model that will support researchers, workshops, networking, small scale scoping activities and interactions with research projects.

For the ARUA contribution to this Partnership Programme, the host university is expected to provide salary costs for the CoEs, including for the Director, along with annual cash support towards the core budget. A funding agreement will be set up with each host university to confirm their and UKRI contributions. The Director should lead the application as Principal Investigator. Each Centre of Excellence will be required to establish an Advisory Board that should meet twice per year of the award and will provide independent advice and to review progress under the award.

1. Eligibility

This call is a targeted funding opportunity by UKRI and ARUA under the GCRF Partnership Programme, and as the administrators of the call UKRI invites proposals from ARUA's 13 Centres of Excellence.

Under this call, **only** ARUA's approved 13 CoEs are eligible to apply (see ANNEX 1: List of ARUA Centres of Excellence), and only one proposal will be accepted from each CoE, led by the Centre Director as the Principal Investigator (PI).

2. Funding

The Economic and Social Research Council (ESRC) will act as the administering Research Council for awards under this call, working on behalf of, and closely with, the UKRI GCRF team and the other Councils in UKRI, reflecting that this call cuts across all of UKRI and GCRF delivery partners' remits and portfolios. Standard UKRI terms and conditions, plus programme specific additional activites, will apply to the awards issued under this call. This call is being run in partnership with ARUA.

3. Scope

Awards can be used to fund activities within the CoE, drawing in other universities in the region and theme, that are detailed in section III above.

As a guide 70% of the funds should be used for capacity building and networking, 20% maximum for scoping studies, and 10% maximum for administration including support for the Advisory Board. Within this framework activities may include:

- Researcher and PhD student enhancing activities (including secondments, exchanges and travel to UK institutions)
- Research scoping studies
- Workshops and networking
- Other collaborative activities
- 20% indirect costs

Collaborative activities should be widely available and we encourage the involvement of early career researchers and students to help capacity building.

Awards under this call are not a vehicle for supporting single research projects and cannot be used to fund:

- Salary costs and bursaries other than support towards a centre manager (within the 10% maximum ceiling for overall administration costs).
- Consumables
- Items of equipment
- Other research costs – major research projects or equipment costs will not be allowed.

4. Applying

As part of UKRI funding assurance, the CoE host universities will be requested to complete a UKRI Overseas Due Diligence Questionnaire. Please be aware that the host universities may already have been approached and may also be contacted by UKRI at any point during the expert review process. This is in order to expedite our assurance process. In order to be eligible to receive funding as a research partner organisation, **non-UK**

research organisations will need to register with UKRI. To do this, please include a **letter of support from the Pro-Vice Chancellor for research (or equivalent authority) from the COE host university** in the proposal. This letter should summarise the organisation's support for the project, confirm that they are able to meet the eligibility and assurance requirements identified in the table below, and agree to provide information to UKRI when requested. In the letter they should also provide a contact email address for any due diligence enquiries.

Ability to deliver	• provide evidence of a strong track record of maximising the wider impact and value of its research to the benefit of local economies and society; • have a cohort of researchers (normally a minimum of 10) with sufficient capacity to deliver research and a demonstrated track record. This should include a significant number of publications in journals and/or monographs with key academic publishers, and/or other outputs that have been subject to peer review. Journal quality should take into account benchmark measures appropriate to the regional context and research disciplines; • have a track record of staff, while employed at the organisation, leading or co-leading innovative research projects in the previous five years including, if applicable, directing postdoctoral researchers and/or research students; and • have sufficient financial support for research at the organisational level to ensure the availability of essential infrastructure and the long-term sustainability of research activity, as evidenced by research project income across all projects totalling at least £100k pa over the previous three years.
Governance and control	• be a higher education organisation • have a governing board with independent representation appointed to jointly oversee the management of the whole organisation; • have satisfactory processes for preventing, detecting, reporting and responding to allegations of fraud, bribery and corruption; • have satisfactory processes for the effective collection, management, analysis and dissemination of data; • have satisfactory processes in place that meet Research Integrity and Ethics requirements, including processes for dealing with allegations of misconduct; • be subject to an independent annual audit; and • have measures in place to prevent and mitigate conflict of interest which could affect employees or governing board members participation in decision-making.
Financial stability	• be permitted by their country's government to receive funding from foreign sources; • have a bank account that is in its legal name; and that can be reconciled to the finance management system; • have a basic finance management system that can be used to reconcile the bank account, to record all cash and payments ensuring that all transactions can be individually

	• identified and provides suitable storage for supporting documentation; and • have satisfactory procedures in place for making payments for per diem, travel advances or review of receipts and subsequent reimbursement of expenses for approved official travel.
Sub-contract Management	• Ensure there is a policy in place to sufficiently manage sub-contractors including provisions for ensuring their compliance with Research Council terms and conditions.

Applications must be submitted via the Je-S system by 30 April 2019, 16:00 BST.

A single application should be submitted by each ARUA Centre of Excellence.

All applicants named on the Je-S form must be registered as users of the system well before the application is submitted. Please note that the Je-S registration process for overseas Investigators takes up to three weeks, and so the Centre Director is advised to register as early as possible. Guidance on how to create an account is available from the Je-S Helpdesk. Applications cannot be processed if this has not been done.

Je-S Guidance notes for applicants for this Call will be available alongside the Call document of the UKRI website.

5. Submitting a proposal

You should prepare and submit your proposal using the Research Councils' Joint electronic Submission (Je-S) System (https://je-s.rcuk.ac.uk/).

When adding a new proposal, you should select:

Council: the Economic and Social Research Council (ESRC)

Document type: 'Standard'.

Scheme: 'UKRI'.

On the Project Details page you should select: ARUA CoEs PP Capacity Building (Call) (Invite only)

Details of which research organisations have registered to use Je-S are available from http://www.so.stfc.ac.uk/jes/jes1/RODetails(Web).pdf.

Please note that clicking 'submit document' on your proposal form in Je-S initially submits the proposal to your host organisation's administration, not to UKRI. Please allow sufficient time for your organisation's submission process between submitting your proposal to them and the call closing date. UKRI must receive your application by 16:00 BST on 30 April 2019.

6. ODA Compliance

The programme will be funded through the GCRF which is an ODA funding stream. Therefore all purposed activities must be ODA compliant. Applicants will need to provide an ODA compliance statement which should identify:

- The country/countries on the OECD DAC list which will directly benefit from this proposal and whether these countries are likely to continue to be ODA eligible for the duration of the research?
  - o This should include the country that the lead institution is based in and any countries in which partner institutions are based
- How the proposal is directly and primarily relevant to the development challenges of these countries?
  - o Applicants should identify the specific development challenges faced by these countries which will be addressed by the proposed activities where possible providing evidence for example by referencing official statistics or national/regional development plans etc. Applicants should describe how the proposed activities will address these development challenges.
- How do applicants expect that the outcome of their proposed activities will promote the economic development and welfare of a these countries?
  - o Applicants should describe the approach that they will use to ensure that the outputs of the proposed activities will have an impact of the development challenge identified in the proposal.

Safeguarding
UKRI condemns all forms of harm and abuse, including bullying and harassment. We take a zero tolerance approach to harm and abuse to any individual employed through or associated with our programmes in all contexts; whether in humanitarian or fragile and conflict-affected settings, in other field contexts, or within the international or UK research and development community which we fund. We expect institutions to promote the highest standards in organisational culture, and have in place the systems and procedures required to prevent and tackle all incidents of harm and abuse.

Successful applicants will be required to provide a statement on how they will meet/address the safeguarding guidelines before the project can start. The Statement must detail how safeguarding risks will be identified and managed and what policies and procedures will be in place to enable reporting and investigation of allegations if they arise.

UKRI is further developing a cross government safeguarding policy and will come back to successful applicants in regard to the required statement.

ODA transparency
As part of the government's commitment to ODA transparency and in line with ODA reporting requirements, UKRI is responsible for publishing

information about UKRI ODA grants including project titles and summaries via the International Aid Transparency Initiative (IATI) registry, DfID's national statistics and on Gateway to Research. The purpose of publishing information via the IATI registry is to make information about ODA easily accessible to governments, stakeholders and other relevant groups in beneficiary countries. All UKRI funded projects from this programme will be published in this way. Please therefore write your project title and summary in such a way that they are meaningful and accessible to non-specialist audiences, following publication. We would be grateful if you would ensure that the project title and summary are written in plain English and avoid the use of jargon, acronyms, puns and plays on words. Please also make clear in your project title and summary how your project is ODA compliant, for example by identifying the development challenge(s) being addressed, the aims of the project and the beneficiary countries.

7. Guidance on writing proposals

To apply the applicants must submit the following document as attachments via Je-S:

- Case for Support (max 8 pages A$)
- Full academic CV for the Director of the CoE (max 2 pages A4, including publications)
- Justification of Resources (max 2 pages of A4)
- Pathways to Impact (max 2 pages A4)
- Letter of Support from the VC of university hosting the Centre of Excellence outlining and confirming their contribution (max 2 pages A4, upload as 'Proposal Cover Letter')
- Letters of support from each of the spokes universities confirming their support and engagement (max 1 page A4)
- ODA compliance statement (max 1 page A4)
- Cover Letter (max 2 pages A4) – optional (upload as 'Other Attachment')
- Management plan and detailed breakdown of the project workflow (i.e. a Gantt chart)
- Data Management Plan (max 2 pages A4) - optional

Please note: UKRI operate a 'page' restriction policy on attachment length. To ensure no one is disadvantaged by this restriction, the margin size of submitted document attachments should not be reduced from a standard margin (i.e. top/bottom and left/right - 2cm). Unless specified otherwise in Council-specific guidance, a standard 'Arial' or 'other San Serif' font is used, restricted to size 11 or higher.

Please further note: on submission all non PDF documents are converted to PDF. The use of non-standard fonts may result in errors or font conversion, which could affect the overall length of the document. Additionally where non-standard fonts are present, and even if the converted PDF document may look unaffected in the Je-S System, when it is imported into the Research Councils Grants System some information may be removed. We therefore recommend that where a document contains any non-standard fonts (scientific notation, diagrams etc.), the document should be converted

to PDF prior to attaching it to the proposal. Applications not complying with the call requirements may be rejected.

The case for support should include:

- Short summary of the project [circa 4000 characters]
- Project aims and description of how the CoE proposes that the funding under the Partnership Programme will develop their capacity and programmes and deliver activities, through a hub and spoke model, in line with the Partnership Programme Aims as set out in III
- Proposed collaborative activities (i.e. a detailed project description, highlighting the importance, excellence, novelty and development relevance. Applicants should provide a background to introduce the work, as well as a full description of the proposed programme while also identifying any risks and mitigation strategies)
- Ethics
- Work plan
- Statement of added value: Indicate the benefit of the proposed collaboration to UKRI, GCRF, ARUA and the SDGs

8. Assessment process

All applications will be assessed by an independent international expert assessment panel which will make final recommendations for funding. The panel will be made up of experts from non-ARUA partners. Funding recommendations from the panel will be subject to approval by UKRI and ARUA. There will be one review process and a single decision on each proposal. Proposals will have to meet the successfully meet the assessment criteria in order to be funded. Feedback from the panel will be provided to applicants.

It is anticipated that final funding decisions will be communicated to applicants in late July – early August 2019 with successful projects commencing 1 September 2019.

9. Assessment criteria

Proposals will be assessed against the following criteria:

- Relevance and fit to call: Does the proposal demonstrate clear added value from the proposed activities, how well will the proposal create opportunities for the CoE to work with international partners in ways that would otherwise be unavailable, how well the proposal would enhance the competitiveness of the theme, how strong are the CoE's expected knowledge outputs, how does the team propose to engage with research grants and other centres.
- Capability of the team: To what extend does the Director, and the proposed team have the appropriate skills/experience/environment
- Programme of activities, organisation and management: How appropriate are the planned activities and how likely are they to

deliver the aims of the call, are there clear objectives and realistic plans to deliver these, including plans for an Advisory Board, management of the award and CoE, monitoring, evaluation and legacy/sustainability. To what extent does the proposal demonstrate good value for money.

- Likelihood of impact: How likely is the network have significant impact, how appropriate are the identified pathways to impact, is there appropriate engagement with policy/practice/user stakeholders
- Capacity building, partnership and inclusion: To what extent will the Centre use the grant to build capacity, forge new links and dialogues, create strong and enduring, equitable partnerships, how appropriate are the proposed opportunities to engage early career researchers and students.
- Collaboration: How well does the proposal plan to bring in other ARUA and non-ARUA universities and how it plans to enhance existing and planned collaborations.
- Commitment of the host university: Is there clear commitment to provide an enabling environment for the CoE such as office and laboratory space, academic support, support for students, management and leadership, salary costs and financial support (direct and indirect)

10.   Duration

Successful proposals must start on 1 September 2019 and be 36 months in duration.

11.   Additional grant conditions

In addition to the standard terms and conditions for grants, the host university for each successful applicant CoE will be required to sign a Funding Agreement with UKRI confirming their contribution to their CoE(s).

12.   Key dates

February 2019	Call is launched with Invitation to Submit
30 April 2019, 16:00 BST	Call closes
May 2019	Internal checking of applications
Late June- early July 2019	Expert assessment panel meets
Late July - Early August 2019	Funding decision is announced
1 September 2019	Awards start

13.   Call partners

ARUA: http://arua.org.za/

14.   Reporting requirements

All Grant Holders must use researchfish® to record key findings and specific outputs from their awards. Award holders can enter information into researchfish® at any time throughout the year and submit during the annual Submission Period. For further information and updates please see: https://www.ukri.org/funding/information-for-award-holders/research-outcomes1/

Reporting requirements will be agreed Between UKRI and ARUA and each Centre of Excellence will also be required to provide progress reports as requested.

15.   Governance, monitoring and evaluation

A monitoring and evaluation process will be established and jointly run between UKRI and ARUA to ensure that each Centre of Excellence is making satisfactory process.

Each Centre of Excellence will be required to establish an Advisory Board to provide independent advice and to review progress under the award. The Advisory Board should be chaired by the DVC from the host university and include appropriate independent members together with representatives from the host university and associated spoke universities. ARUA and UKRI will also be members of the Advisory Board. The Board will be expected to meet at the beginning of the award and at least twice per annum.

16.   Data sharing notice

UKRI carries out the processing of personal data in accordance with the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR). The information you provide will only be used by UKRI for the purpose of carrying out reviewing and assessment for making a funding decision. By providing your information you are consenting to its use as detailed above.

17.   Contacts

For UKRI and GCRF:

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Staffed Monday to Thursday 8.30am to 5pm and Fridays 8.30am to 4.30pm (excluding UK bank holidays and other holidays). Out of hours: leave a Voice Mail message. When reporting problems by e-mail or telephone, please supply the following information:

- Your name, organisation and user id
- The date and time
- The part of the form or system you were working on when the problem occurred
- The nature of the problem

*Phone calls that cannot be answered during working hours will be redirected after 30 seconds to Voice Mail. The helpdesk will normally return your call within 3 hours.

ANNEX 1: List of ARUA Centres of Excellence

Centre of Excellence	Host University	Director
Climate Change	University of Cape Town	Prof Mark New
Energy	Stellenbosch University	Prof Johann Görgens
Food Security	University of Pretoria	Prof Hettie Schonfeldt
Good Governance	Addis Ababa University	Prof. Zerihun Weldu
Materials, Energy and Nantechnology	University of the Witwatersrand	Prof Lesley Cornish
Migration and Mobility	University of the Witwatersrand	Prof Jo Vearey
NCDs	University of Nairobi	Prof Lucy Irungu
Notions of identity	Makerere University	Prof Buyinza Mukadasi
Post-conflict society	Addis Ababa University	Prof Zerihun Weldu
Poverty and inequality	University of Cape Town	Prof Murray Leibbrandt
Unemployment and skills development	University of Lagos	Dr. Sunday Adebisi
Urbanization and Habitable Cities	University of Lagos	Prof Timothy Nubi
Water conservation	Rhodes University	Prof Tally Palmer