

Australia-Africa Universities Network Partnership & Research Development Fund - Guidelines (Deadline 23 November 2015)

The Australia-Africa Universities Network (AAUN) is a consortium of Australian Universities, working with African partner universities to sustain research and education collaboration and leadership across areas of priority for Australia and Africa; and to marshal Australian and African expertise as an equal partnership to address challenges both continents face.

PRDF Changes and Guidelines for 2015-16

Changes affecting the PRDF availability and research project allocations have occurred at several levels during 2014-15. The Government made reductions to Africa related budgets and to our relevant Departments. The Education budget for such research is eliminated. The Public Health allocation was not from government and is now spent. The mining allocation which was joint is now not relevant as the IM4DC contract has been completed, and a new entity not yet developed. These restrictions may or may not improve in the next financial year.

We have continued support from environmental and food research agencies. We will focus the 2015-16 call for applications on a few proposals in food and nutrition security, or in related aspects higher education, at a maximum of \$10K per project. We expect to be able to fund 5-6 projects, subject to confirmation of some further funding. There are 16 current projects in progress from the two earlier, annual calls.

Applications are invited from:

- (i) 1-2 existing programs where the progress reports show major advance and limited additional funds would strengthen bids for funds to major international agencies and governments. Only projects that have submitted reports are eligible to apply.
- (ii) 1-2 projects arising from the AAUN workshops in Pretoria in May and in Canberra in August 2015

Potential applicants are encouraged to write first with a brief outline case (1 page max) to aaun.events@sydney.edu.au by **9 November 2015**, so that your time is not wasted. The deadline for subsequently invited proposals is **Friday 23 November 2015**.

NOTE: Projects funded in 2015 do not need to report until a year after receiving funding, and so are not eligible to apply again in this round.

What is the AAUN Partnership & Research Development Fund (PRDF)?

The PRDF offers catalytic grants of an average of \$AUD 10,000 to foster partnership in the network, including new members, and support planning workshops and research collaborations, that address distinct mutual challenges.

The PRDF provides one year of catalytic seed funding with the firm expectation that funded projects will be excellent, build specialist teams, achieve impact and be sustainable through the early identification of additional external funding.

What can PRDF funds be used for?

PRDF funds may cover the costs of exploratory research initiatives, targeted workshops, faculty exchanges and the formation of collaborative networks, among other activities. Applications that incorporate a research mobility component for early career researchers and postgraduate students are encouraged.

The PRDF will **not** cover salaries or salary supplementation, equipment depreciation, scholarships, course fees and bench fees.

Am I eligible to apply?

The PRDF is open only to academic staff (faculty members) at AAUN member universities (see <http://aaun.edu.au/membership/>). Applications must first be approved for submission through an internal review at the principal investigator's university to ensure strategic alignment and support. Applications are submitted to AAUN through the AAUN Secretariat (Africa or Australia) (see information at the end of this document).

Proposals must engage at least three AAUN member universities (with involvement from African AND Australian Universities). The collaboration can include non-AAUN universities and external partners but must be led by and have an

active core of AAUN member universities. In the spirit of the network, activities organised through the proposals should be open to all AAUN members. It is a priority for AAUN to engage newer members in the PRDF.

Applicants are encouraged to identify cash or in-kind support for the project from institutions involved, leveraging AAUN support where possible.

What are the criteria for assessment?

Applications will be assessed against the following criteria:

- **Impact** – the proposal is of high quality and addresses a distinct research problem for Australia and Africa. The proposal is likely to have significant impact in discovery, application or policy.
- **Relevance to AAUN Goals** – the proposal aligns with AAUN strategic objectives and addresses a high priority area in the listed areas.
- **Sustainability** – the proposal will build longer term international relationships based on genuine commitment by the research partners, and provide a plan for attracting continuing external funding.
- **Teamwork** – the proposal involves a team of researchers across relevant disciplines and regions. Proposals that include early-career researchers and PhD students are particularly encouraged and an outline of how this integration will be achieved should be provided.
- **Outcomes** – the proposal results in academic publications/dissemination, external funding, policy options in the reasonable future.

Applications will need to be accompanied by:

- Letters of support from AAUN partner universities confirming official institutional support and specifying any cash or in-kind contributions.
- Letters of support from external partners, also identifying cash and in-kind contributions.
- Proposal budget outlining key areas of expenditure (1 page maximum).
- CVs of principal investigators (1 page maximum each).

How do I apply?

Applications along with all accompanying documents must be submitted through the AAUN Secretariat (Africa or Australia) (see information at the end of this document) no later than 5pm AEST on **23 Nov 2015**. Applications that are incomplete or received after the closing date will not be considered.

Applications will be assessed and ranked by a selection committee from Australia and Africa. The outcomes of the AAUN Research Development Fund will be notified before **25 January 2016**.

What are the financial and reporting obligations?

Allocated funds will be deposited in local currency via bank transfer to the Principal Investigator's nominated university account. Awarded funding should be expended within 12 months. Any unspent funds at the conclusion of the 12-month award period may be returned to the AAUN.

Awardees will be required to submit a report to AAUN at the conclusion of the 12-month award period and a second report 4 years after the date of the award. This reporting is essential in assisting AAUN to track outcomes in order to demonstrate productivity and return on investment. AAUN will send a report template and a reminder by email at these intervals. Awardees who fail to submit satisfactory reports will be ineligible to apply for future AAUN funding.

If successful, how does AAUN expect to be acknowledged?

Any initiatives funded by the PRDF must adequately credit AAUN, including the display of the AAUN logo. Any publications resulting from a PRDF-funded project must acknowledge AAUN as a supporter or participant. Principal Investigators are welcome and encouraged to participate in AAUN initiatives and events as they arise, including AAUN forums, workshops and AGM, AAUN Annual Report etc.

Contact information

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