

## Australia-Africa Universities Network Partnership & Research Development Fund Guidelines 2018

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 2018.** Changes affecting the PRDF availability and research project allocations have occurred at several levels during 2017. The Government made reductions to Africa related budgets and to our relevant Departments and agencies. The Department of 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. Consequently, we will focus the 2018 call for applications on **proposals in environment, food and nutrition security, or in related aspects higher education**, at a maximum of \$10K per project. We expect to be able to fund 6-10 projects, subject to confirmation of some further funding. There are 35 current projects in progress, or finished, from the four earlier annual calls.

At our AGM and related discussions in Perth on 5 September 2016, we agreed that PRDF proposals should be framed and provide evidence towards policy options. The most relevant current policy frameworks are:

- The [UN Climate Change Agreements](#)
- The [UN Sustainability Goals](#) with the [AU Agenda 2063](#)
- [The Australian Foreign Policy White Paper \(November 2017\)](#)
- [The ACIAR Ten Year Plan \(February 2018\) – Note that AAUN and ACIAR have formed a 3 year alliance 2018-20](#)

AAUN can also consider research on trade and investment related to the above. Collaborative projects with African Networks such as the African Research Universities Alliance (ARUA) and RUFORUM are welcome.

Applications are invited from:

- (i) Existing programs where the progress reports show major advance and limited additional funds would strengthen bids for funds to international agencies and governments. Only projects that have submitted reports are eligible to apply.
- (ii) New projects, including those arising from the AAUN workshops in Cape Town in December 2017, Perth in September 2017, and the research workshops in Mauritius in January and Nairobi in March 2018.

Potential applicants are encouraged to write first with a brief outline case (1 page max) to [aaun.events@sydney.edu.au](mailto:aaun.events@sydney.edu.au) by **10 April 2018**. The deadline for subsequently invited proposals is **30 April 2018**.

**We expect to announce allocations by 30 June 2018**

### 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](#). 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 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 Australia no later than 5pm AEST on **30 April 2018**. 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.

**Award date:** 30 June 2018.

### **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 an interim report to AAUN after 6 months and a 1-year report at the conclusion of the 12-month award period. A second report will be requested 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:** AAUN Australia Secretariat: A/Prof Grace Liu via [aaun.events@sydney.edu.au](mailto:aaun.events@sydney.edu.au)