

AFRICAN UNION		UNION AFRICAINE
الاتحاد الأفريقي		UNIÃO AFRICANA

African Union Research Grants

Open Call for Proposals -2018

Guidelines for Grant Applicants

Reference: [HRST/ST/AURG-II/CALL2/2018]

Deadline for submission of proposals: 22/05/18 1700 Hours GMT+3

	<p>Ref: DCI-PANAF/2015/307-078</p>	
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NOTICE

The African Union Research Grants programme is financed through the Financing Agreement between the European Commission and the African Union Commission DCI-PANAF/2015/307-078) under the Pan-African Programme (PanAf), based on Regulation (EU) No 233/2014 establishing a financing instrument for development cooperation (DCI) for the period 2014-2020.

The programme is an innovative way to deploy and to improve science and technology research so that it contributes to Africa's poverty reduction, economic growth and social development efforts.

The programme responds to the implementation of Africa's Science Technology and Innovation Strategy -2024 (STISA-2024) priority one and the EU-Africa Research and Innovation Partnership focusing on food and nutrition security and sustainable agriculture.

This Guideline for the Grant Applicants, developed by the Department of Human Resources, Science and Technology, will facilitate and assist prospective applicants to complete the Grant Application Form in order to access the research grants. Applicants are requested to read this document carefully.

This is an open Call for Proposals, where all documents are submitted at one stage (Concept Note and full proposal). However, in the first instance, only the Concept Notes will be evaluated. Thereafter, for the applicants whose Concept Notes have been pre-selected, evaluation of the full proposal will be carried out. Further to the evaluation of the full proposals, an eligibility check will be performed for those which are provisionally selected. This check will be undertaken on the basis of the supporting documents requested by the African Union Commission as the Contracting Authority and the signed "Declaration by the Applicant" sent together with the application.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

1. THE AFRICAN RESEARCH GRANTS PROGRAMME	5
1.1 BACKGROUND	5
1.2 OBJECTIVES OF THE PROGRAMME AND PRIORITY ISSUES.....	6
1.3 FINANCIAL ALLOCATION PROVIDED BY THE CONTRACTING AUTHORITY	7
2. RULES FOR THIS CALL FOR PROPOSALS.....	9
2.1 ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA.....	9
2.1.1 <i>Eligibility of applicants: who may apply?</i>	9
2.1.2 <i>Partnerships and Eligibility of Partners</i>	10
2.1.3 <i>Eligible Actions: Actions for which an application may be made</i>	11
2.1.4 <i>Eligibility of costs: costs which may be taken into consideration for the grant</i>	14
2.2 HOW TO APPLY AND THE PROCEDURES TO FOLLOW	17
2.2.1 <i>Application form</i>	17
2.2.2 <i>Where and how to Submit the Applications</i>	18
2.2.3 <i>Deadline for submission of Applications</i>	20
2.2.4 <i>Further information for the Application</i>	20
2.3 EVALUATION AND SELECTION OF APPLICATIONS	21
2.4 SUBMISSION OF SUPPORTING DOCUMENTS FOR PROVISIONALLY SELECTED APPLICATIONS	25
2.5 NOTIFICATION OF THE AUC'S DECISION	26
2.5.1 <i>Content of the decision</i>	26
2.5.2 <i>Indicative time table</i>	26
2.6 CONDITIONS APPLICABLE TO IMPLEMENTATION OF THE ACTION FOLLOWING THE CONTRACTING AUTHORITY'S DECISION TO AWARD A GRANT	27
LIST OF ANNEXES.....	28
GRANT APPLICATION SUPPORTING DOCUMENTS	28

1. THE AFRICAN RESEARCH GRANTS PROGRAMME

1.1 BACKGROUND

The African Union Commission (AUC) is committed to ensure that science and technology in Africa contributes to its sustainable development efforts. The Act establishing the Union recognizes the need for Africa to embark on an ambitious strategic science and technology development programme, aimed at contributing to the wellbeing and improved quality of life for the African citizens. To this end the establishment of the African Union in 2002 was accompanied by the setting up the AUC with a special Department of Human Resources, Science and Technology to drive this strategic programme. This has further generated tremendous momentum in deploying science as a tool for development in Africa.

The AUC created a Conference of Ministers in charge of Science and Technology (AMCOST) as a platform for the Union to periodically deliberate on science and technology issues. In 2005, the AUC through the AMCOST successfully developed Africa's Science and Technology Consolidated Plan of Action (CPA) to secure our competitive advantage and to leverage on our capabilities and capacities by focusing our research and development to respond to our challenges and needs.

The CPA was reviewed after over five years of its implementation, resulting to the adoption of the Science, Technology and Innovation Strategy for Africa 2024 (STISA 2024) during the Heads of States Summit in Malabo, Equatorial Guinea in June 2014 (African Union Executive Council decision **EX.CL/839(XXV)**). STISA 2024 replaces the CPA as the continental reference document that places science, technology and innovation at the epicenter of Africa's social and economic development.

The STISA-2024 was developed during an important period when the African Union is simultaneously developing an African Union 2063 Agenda and the merging of the ministerial conferences of Education and Science and Technology under one Specialized Technical Committee (STC) on Education, Science and Technology (STC-EST) in view to drive Africa's social and economic development and accelerate the transition of African countries to innovation-led, knowledge-based economies.

The Agenda 2063 on the other hand recognizes Science, Technology and Innovation as one of the major drivers and enablers for achieving development goals of the African Union and its Member States. The Agenda articulates that Africa's sustained growth, competitiveness and economic transformation will require investments in new technologies and innovations including in the areas of education, health and bio-sciences, agriculture, and clean energy.

STISA-2024 will address the aspirations that are identified under the Agenda 2063 and link the achievements realized under the CPA implementation and the current and future opportunities in recognising Science, Technology and Innovation (STI) development in the African continent. It is a decade strategy (1st decade incremental strategy) that is designed to address Africa's challenges with the ultimate goal of contributing significantly to the African Union vision. STISA-2024 responds to the demand for STI from various impact sectors.

Furthermore, within the framework of the EU-Africa dedicated partnerships on Human development,

in which the EU-Africa High level policy dialogue (HLPD) serves as key mechanism for implementation of the Joint Africa EU Strategy (JAES) (adopted during the EU-Africa summit in Lisbon in 2007 and further reaffirmed in 2014 during the EU-Africa summit in Brussels). In 2013, the EU-Africa HLPD agreed amongst others, that investments in STI are vital to identify and deal with pressing global societal challenges such as climate change, affordable renewable energy, infectious diseases and food security.

The quest African Union Commission to exploit and utilize Africa's existing scientific excellences, promote greater participation and involvement of African scientists, researchers and institutions in implementing of the CPA (now STISA-2024) and other partnership initiatives designed the **African Union Research Grant Programme**.

The Programme is financed through the Financing Agreement between the European Commission and the African Union Commission (DCI-PANAF/2015/307-078) under the Pan-African Programme (PanAf) based on Regulation (EU) No 233/2014 establishing a financing instrument for development cooperation (DCI) for the period 2014-2020. It is based on the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union (TFEU), which establishes the fight against poverty as the primary objective of EU development policy and refers to the European Consensus on Development (2006/C 46/01) [24.02.2006], the 'Agenda for Change'.

The African Union Commission through its Department of Human Resources, Science and Technology is the Contracting Authority of the Programme.

The implementation strategy for the grants is through (highly encouraged) the creation of partnerships (research networks) for regional and sub-regional co-operation and of inter-institutional co-operation in Africa via setting up of consortia of scientists with minimum participation of at least three organizations out of which a majority should be from Africa with at least two different African countries. Additional partners could come from elsewhere (section 2.1.1).

This call for proposal puts in context lessons learnt during the previous calls for proposals funded through the 10th EDF (African component of the ACP Research Programme for Sustainable Development), and it serves as vehicle to drive continental priorities as articulated within the Africa's Science Technology and Innovation Strategy-2024 adopted by the African Union Executive Council decision EX.CL/839(XXV) and the Priority area 3 on Human development of the EU-Africa partnership under the implementation mechanisms of the EU-Africa HLPD for STI.

In view of all the above, the research actions for this call for Proposals will focus on the thematic area: **Food, Nutrition Security and Sustainable Agriculture (FNSSA)** with a focus on **Agriculture and food systems for nutrition**.

1.2 OBJECTIVES OF THE PROGRAMME AND PRIORITY ISSUES

This programme will seek to deploy Science, Technology and Innovation (STI) in the Agricultural sector as tool for Africa's sustainable economic growth, wealth creation, and food and nutrition security, as well as for political stability and specifically:

- to support collaborative Research and Innovation (R&I) activities that address critical issues facing African countries and contribute to the sustainable development of African countries and the fight against poverty, while respecting ethical and gender issues;
- to develop the capacity of the African Union Commission (AUC) to design, implement and monitor R&I funding programmes and establish the basis for a credible and reputable African framework programme for R&I that could attract additional funds from other sources, e.g. African Union (AU) Member States and other partners and donors;
- to enhance intra–regional and North-South scientific collaboration and research that contributes to Africa’s sustainable development.

The **Specific objective** of this Call for Proposals is to award grants to finance research projects that aim to Eradicate Hunger and Ensure Food and nutrition security. It is highly envisaged that the deployment and the improvement of science and technology research in this challenging area will effectively contribute to Africa’s poverty reduction strategies, economic growth and social development efforts.

Expected Results

The impact and expected results on the specific objectives of this Call for Proposal addressed by the main axis research actions will ensure a connection between research and people’s lives through:

- Enhanced Food, Nutrition Security and Sustainable Agriculture to reduce hunger and improve well being

Priority areas

The African Union Research Grants II - 2nd Call for proposal for 2018 distinctly focuses on one of the socio economic development priorities sectors expressed within the Africa’s Science Technology and Innovation Strategy -2024 (STISA-2024) and also related to the focus area defined within the EU-Africa High Level Policy Dialogue Initiatives on STI

- (1) **Agriculture and food systems for nutrition**, within the broader theme of Food, Nutrition Security and Sustainable Agriculture (FNSSA)

More details on these focus areas are given in Section 2.1.3 of this Guidelines.

1.3 FINANCIAL ALLOCATION PROVIDED BY THE CONTRACTING AUTHORITY

The overall indicative amount made available under the AURG-II 2nd Call for Proposals (2018) is USD 9,000,000 for research actions that seek to address **Agriculture and food systems for nutrition**, within the broader theme of Food, Nutrition Security and Sustainable Agriculture (FNSSA).

Information on the eligibility of applicants, their partners, types of actions and costs, is provided in Section 2.1 of this guide lines.

Size of grants

Any grant awarded under this Call for Proposals must fall between the following minimum and maximum amounts:

- minimum amount: USD 500,000.00
- maximum amount: USD 1,000,000.00

Any grant awarded under this Call for Proposals must fall between the following minimum and maximum percentages of total eligible costs of the action

- Minimum percentage: 50% of the total eligible costs of the action.
- Maximum percentage: 80% of the total eligible costs of the action (see also section 2.1.4).

Within these margins, the exact applicable percentage is determined by the applicant only – the applicant is free to choose within the above range.

In no event shall the Contracting Authority's contribution exceed 80% of the total accepted costs.

The balance must be financed from the applicant's or partners' own resources, or from sources other than African Union financing.

2. RULES FOR THIS CALL FOR PROPOSALS

These guidelines set out the rules for the submission, selection and implementation of actions financed under this Call, in conformity with the provisions of the **African Union Commission Grants Management Manual** (available on the Internet at this address: <http://au.int/aurg>).

2.1 ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA

There are three sets of eligibility criteria, relating to:

- applicant(s) which may request a grant (2.1.1), and their partners(2.1.2);
- actions for which a grant may be awarded (2.1.3);
- types of cost which may be taken into account in setting the amount of the grant (2.1.4).

2.1.1 Eligibility of applicants: who may apply?

(1) In order to be eligible for a grant, applicants must:

- be legal persons¹**and**
- be nationals² of African Union Member States, EU Member States, **and**
- be directly responsible for the preparation and management of the action with their partners, not acting as an intermediary **and**
- be registered locally in (or have a memorandum³ of understanding in relevant research areas, with) an eligible African country prior to the publication of this call for proposals **and**
- have at least a three-year record in the formulation and/or implementation of research activities in Africa for which they will have to provide the relevant legal documents **and**
- be able to demonstrate their experience and capacity to manage activities corresponding in scale and complexity to those for which a grant has been requested **and**
- have stable and sufficient sources of finance to ensure the continuity of their organisation throughout the implementation of the proposed action **and**
- belong to consortia of scientists as explained under 2.1.2 (2) - composition of partnerships. **and**

¹ Legal persons are Institutions and not natural persons

² Such nationality being determined on the basis of the organisation's statutes which should demonstrate that it has been established by an instrument governed by the national law of the country concerned. In this respect, any legal entity whose statutes have been established in another country cannot be considered an eligible local organisation, even if the statutes are registered locally or a "Memorandum of Understanding" has been concluded

³ A Memorandum of Understanding needs to be signed with a ministry/governmental body, having an effect equivalent to local official registration

- belong to at least one of the following categories:
 - (a) National or regional science and technology organizations, research institutions, universities, government ministries or public institutions dealing with scientific research including regional science and technology institutions, with separate legal status, not belonging to any national system but formally recognised by one of the eligible countries; or
 - (b) Established science and technology networks provided that: all network members and the network headquarters are located in eligible countries; the network has a legal status; the network is applying in its own right; and the network has been registered for a minimum of two years;

(2) Potential applicants may not participate in calls for proposals or be awarded grants if:

- they are in any of the situations which are listed in Section 3.3.1.2 of the ‘**African Union Commission Grants Management Manual**’, available from the following Internet address: <http://au.int/aurg>)

In part B section 7 of the grant application form (“Declaration by the applicant”), applicants must declare that they do not fall into any of these situations.

2.1.2 Partnerships and Eligibility of Partners

(1) Partnerships

- The Applicant must act as the lead organization in a partnership and, if selected, as the contracting party (the ‘Beneficiary’)
- Applicants must operate within a partnership and act with partner organisations as specified hereafter. Established research networks and regional bodies are considered partnership in themselves if their composition meets the below criteria

(2) Composition of partnerships - (consortia of scientists)

- Partnerships must involve at least three organisations out of which 2 should be national of Africa, from at least two different African countries. The number of African partners in a partnership should be a majority and this majority is only reached when the number of African partners in a partnership is greater than the number of non-African partners. There is no upper limit to the number of members in a partnership; however it is highly recommended that partnership should not exceed 5. A partnership should be composed in such a way as to allow for the achievement of project objectives in the most efficient manner. Those proposals having partners from the different African Union Regional Economic Communities (RECs) have an added advantage.
- Established African research networks and regional or inter-state bodies/organisation are considered partnership in themselves and do not have to form alliances with other organizations

for the purpose of this programme, if their membership fulfils the conditions stated above for partnership and they meet the criteria for eligibility of applicants (2.1.1).

(3) Partners

These are the Applicants' partners participating in designing and implementing the Action. Each member of a partnership must have a precise and clearly identified role in the planning and execution of the project activities in the proposal. Even though the AUC will conclude the contract with the Applicant only, all partners should actively participate and contribute at different stages of the implementation of the project. The Applicant and its partners should draw up an agreement defining the technical and financial rights and obligations of each partnership member. A clear written allocation of tasks and responsibilities and a balanced distribution of costs will contribute to the partnership's success. The contracting authority may request for all ***signed partnership agreements identifying the roles, responsibilities and budget allocation for each partner institution*** at the time of awarding to successful applicants.

The costs the partners incur are eligible in the same way as those incurred by the Beneficiary of the grant referred to in Section 2.1.4 below.

The partners must satisfy the same eligibility criteria as the Applicants referred to in Section 2.1.1 above. **Proposals, which fail to comply with these principles, will be rejected by the Evaluation Committee.**

The following are not partners and do not have to sign the “partnership statement”:

(4) Associates

Other organizations (institutions) may be involved in the action. Such associates play a real role in the action but may not receive funding from the grant with the exception of per diem or travel costs. Associates do not have to meet the eligibility criteria referred to in Section 2.1.1 and under section 8 of the AUC Grants Management Manual. The associates have to be mentioned in Part B Section IV- “Associates of the Applicant, participating in the Action” of the Grant Application Form.

(5) Subcontractors

The grant beneficiaries have the possibility to award contracts to subcontractors. Subcontractors are neither partners nor associates, and are subject to the procurement rules set out in Annex IV to the standard grant contract which is in line with the AUC procurement procedures. Private institutions could be subcontractors.

2.1.3 Eligible Actions: Actions for which an application may be made

(1) Definition of an Action

An action (or project) composed of a set of activities, is a proposal that responds to the specific objectives of the programme.

(2) Duration

The planned duration of an action may not be less than 24 months nor exceed 36 months. Only eligible costs incurred during this period will be recognized for funding. All Actions have to be completed within the execution period mentioned above, except for cogent reasons under which extension must be officially requested by the applicant and granted by the contracting authority.

(3) Priority sector : Agriculture and food systems for nutrition

The topic for this current call is drawn from the roadmap towards the Research and Innovation Partnership on Food, Nutrition Security and Sustainable Agriculture (FNSSA) prepared through the High Level Policy Dialogue on Science, Technology and Innovation between the EU and Africa with the advice of an Expert Working Group. This call priority also addresses the first priority of Africa's Science Technology and Innovation Strategy 2024 (STISA-2024). In view of the vast scope of needs in Agriculture, and the urgent call to eradicate hunger and malnutrition in Africa, 2018 call focuses on aspects of research and innovation in FNSSA in Africa through collaborative research within Africa and with Europe.

Projects actions should seek to contribute to the transformation of Africa into an innovation led and knowledge based economy with a clear demonstration of involvement of youths and women as game changers in the implementation. Project proposals around this general theme should seek to connect research, innovation to the society at large. In particular Research projects that offer solutions and promote innovation are encouraged. Those projects that have received earlier grants from the AURG (2010, 2012, and 2016) and are close to completion stage are encouraged to apply.

Twinning with projects established through ERAfrica, the ERANET COFUND or the CGIAR and other relevant schemes is encouraged.

Projects actions should also aim to produce and facilitate access to food with higher nutritional value and health benefits for a growing population, while reducing the environmental impact of agriculture and its demand for ecosystem services. Interest in actions listed below will be funded.

- Research on improved food value chains so as to deliver and make accessible more nutritionally rich food to consumers with minimal loss of nutritional value, little wastage and a high level of safety
- Research to improve the nutritional value of crops and animal products, through advances in breeding and biotechnological innovation, such as biofortification (improved mineral and vitamin levels in various highly productive crop lines).
- Research on sustainable and innovative technologies used for food processing, packaging and storage, post-harvest handling, and technologies that add values to agricultural produce and their accessibility will be funded.

(4) Location

The majority of the Action must take place in African Countries eligible to this call for proposals.

(5) Types of actions

- The type of research action referred to as the main axis in this programme, which may be financed under this call for proposal must relate to the overall and specific objectives, purpose and expected results of the programme specified in section 1.2.

(6) Types of activity

The types of activity which may be financed as part of an action are, inter alia:

- Research activities including data-collecting through desk and field research, stakeholders consultations and field visits and any other activity necessary for a proper implementation of the proposed research project;
- Development and implementation of a proper management system for the proposed action;
- Preparation and implementation of a communication and visibility plan (with the corresponding budget given in Budget submitted) in line with the communication and visibility procedures laid down under Article 6 of the General Conditions of the Standard Grant Contract
- Laboratory equipment needed for the empirical processes;
- Preparation and implementation of a monitoring and evaluation (M&E) plan (with the corresponding budget given in Annex III: Budget) for monitoring the proposed action and to carry out periodical evaluations;
- Participations of up to three project members which are comprised of the lead applicant and partner institutions to attend an annual 1 to 2 days stakeholders meetings organized by the contracting authority, in principle in Addis Ababa (with the corresponding budget for flights and per diems given in Annex III: Budget, clearly identified);
- Publication / dissemination of the outcome of the research project to stakeholders in the continent.
- Project Proposals could accommodate minor capacity building components if there are weaknesses and activities that can be foreseen for facilitating the implementation of the project.

(7) Ineligible actions

The following types of **actions** are ineligible:

- Actions that conflict, either directly or indirectly, with the policies of the African Union or which may be linked with a prejudicial image;
- Actions concerned only or mainly with individual sponsorships including participation in workshops, seminars, conferences, congresses;
- Actions concerned only or mainly with individual scholarships for studies or training courses.

(8) Number of applications and grants per applicant

- In order to provide equal opportunities to the widest number of eligible applicants to participate in this Call for Proposals, an applicant may submit only one proposal with the same partner institution(s)
- An Applicant can only be awarded one grant under this Call for Proposals, according to the AUC Grants Management Manual point 8.3.5 (h)
- An applicant may at the same time be partner in another application.
- Partners may take part in more than one application.

2.1.4 Eligibility of costs: costs which may be taken into consideration for the grant

Only "eligible costs" can be taken into account for a grant. The categories of costs considered as eligible and non-eligible are indicated below. The budget is both a cost estimate and a ceiling for "eligible costs". Note that the eligible costs must be based on real costs based on supporting documents (except for subsistence costs and indirect costs where flat-rate funding applies).

Recommendations to award a grant are always subject to the condition that the checking process which precedes the signing of the contract does not reveal problems requiring changes to the budget (for instance arithmetical errors, inaccuracies or unrealistic costs and other ineligible costs). The checks may give rise to requests for clarification and may lead the African Union Commission to impose modifications or reductions to address such mistakes or inaccuracies. The amount of the grant and the percentage of co-financing as a result of these corrections may not be increased.

It is therefore in the applicant's interest to provide a **realistic and cost-effective budget**.

(1) Eligible direct costs

To be eligible under the Call for Proposals, costs must comply with the provisions of article 14 of the General Conditions to the Standard Grant Contract) (see Annex E of the Guidelines).

The total estimated eligible cost is the cost that is deemed necessary by the applicant for the

completion of the proposed project.

Note that taxes, including VAT will only be accepted as eligible costs when the Beneficiary (or, where applicable, its partners) can show it cannot reclaim them. Taxes shall in such case be included in the Budget of the action under the heading “Taxes”.

Staff costs

- Staff costs shall mean any payment made to a person attached to a member of the partnership or working on a regular or recurrent basis for the project.
- Staff costs shall be calculated on the basis of the actual salary/fee of the employee/service provider, multiplied by the number of months/days to be spent on the project. This calculation shall include all the normal charges paid by the employer, such as social security contributions and related costs, but shall exclude any bonus, incentive and profit-sharing arrangements or running costs.

Subcontracted costs

- Overall project management, for which the Applicant will be responsible, cannot be subcontracted. It is suggested that the involvement of subcontractors only take place if necessary for the implementation of the project and for services which cannot be secured through the project partners. No projects should be controlled by subcontractors or be driven by commercial purposes.
- The costs for subcontracted services – including consultancy services – must be listed in the table ‘Budget for the Action’ (see Annex III, headings 5 &6). In addition, financial details concerning the subcontracted activities (rates, number of days/months, outputs, etc.) must be developed as necessary in the ‘budget justification’.

Proposals, which fail to comply with these principles, will be rejected by the Evaluation Committee.

Participation in stakeholders meetings

Applicants must foresee, and make appropriate budget allocation for, the participation in the **stakeholders meetings and visibility activities**, an amount of \$3,000 per institution in the consortium, per annum, in budget line 2.3 in the table “Budget for the Action” (see Annex III).

(2) Contingency reserve

A contingency reserve not exceeding 5% of the direct eligible costs (excluding taxes) may be included in the Budget of the Action. It can only be used with the **prior written authorization** of the AUC.

(3) Eligible indirect costs (overheads)

The indirect costs incurred in carrying out the action may be eligible for flat-rate funding fixed at not more than 7% of the estimated total eligible direct costs (excluding taxes). Indirect costs are eligible provided that they do not include costs assigned to another heading of the budget of the standard grant contract. The applicant may be asked to justify the requested percentage before contracting. However, once the flat-rate has been fixed in the special conditions of the standard grant contract, no supporting documents need to be provided.

(4) Contributions in kind

Contributions in kind⁴ are not considered actual expenditure and are not eligible costs. The contributions in kind may not be treated as co-financing by the Beneficiary.

Notwithstanding the above, if the description of the action as proposed by the Beneficiary foresees the contributions in kind, such contributions have to be provided.

(5) Ineligible costs

The following costs are not eligible:

- debts and debits service charges;
- provisions for losses or potential future liabilities;
- interest owed;
- costs declared by the beneficiary and covered by another action or work programme;
- purchases of land or buildings, except where necessary for the direct implementation of the action, in which case ownership must be transferred to the final beneficiaries and/or local partners, at the latest by the end of the action;
- currency exchange losses;

⁴Contributions in kind are provision of goods or services that do not actually represent cash expenditure from the beneficiary.

By contributions in kind we mean the provision of goods or services to the grant beneficiary free of charge by a third party. Contributions in kind do not, therefore, involve any expenditure for the beneficiary and are not entered in his accounts. Consequently, contributions in kind can never appear in the budget of the action as an eligible cost.

Voluntary work is considered as in-kind contribution. However staff involved in the project implementation and management but already regularly paid by the grant beneficiary or his partners is not in-kind contribution. However, formal proof of the costs involved is needed (e.g. salary slips/work time documentation/timesheets).

All contributions which do not represent actual expenditure (be it equipment, materials, lands...) are considered as contribution in kind and not eligible costs

Staff costs with actual salary/fee is not a contribution in kind but a direct cost and shall be eligible.

- taxes, including VAT., Notwithstanding, these may be considered as costs of the Action for the purpose of co-financing where the Beneficiary (or the Beneficiary's partners) can prove it cannot reclaim them. In such cases, the cost should be included in the Budget under the heading "ineligible costs". Please note however that for the purpose of co- financing, taxes are the only ineligible costs that will be considered within the total costs of the Action.
- credit to third parties

2.2 HOW TO APPLY AND THE PROCEDURES TO FOLLOW

2.2.1 Application form

- Applications must be submitted in accordance with the instructions on the Concept Note and the Full application form included in the Grant Application Form annexed to these Guidelines (Annex A).
- Applicants must apply in **English**.
- The application form must be completed carefully and as clearly as possible so that it can be assessed properly
- Any error or major discrepancy related to the points listed in the instructions on the Concept Note or any major inconsistency in the application form (e.g. the amounts mentioned in the budget are inconsistent with those mentioned in the application form) may lead to the rejection of the application.
- Clarifications will only be requested when information provided is unclear, thus preventing the African Union Commission from conducting an objective assessment.

Please note that:

- Only the completed Grant Application Form and the annexes (e.g. Budget, Logical Framework) that are attached to these Guidelines – **will be considered valid** and will be transmitted to the evaluators and assessors. It is, therefore, of utmost importance that these documents contain all relevant information concerning the Action. No supplementary annexes should be submitted.
- Applicants must keep strictly to the format of the application and fill in the paragraphs and the pages in order.
- The information provided must explain the proposed Action in a concise and complete manner.
- Applicants must provide the budget with round figures with two decimals.
- No additional and unrequested information must be included.
- Hand-written applications will not be accepted.

2.2.2 Where and how to Submit the Applications

(1) Where to send:

Applications must be submitted in a sealed envelope by registered mail, courier service or by hand-delivery (a signed and dated certificate of receipt will be given to the deliverer) at the address below:

Postal Address:

Programme Management Unit
African Union Research Grant
Department of Human Resources, Science and Technology
African Union Commission
Roosevelt Street
P. O. Box 3243
Addis Ababa, Ethiopia

Hand Delivery Address

Programme Management Unit
African Union Research Grant
Department of Human Resources, Science and Technology
c/o The Registry Service Unit
African Union Commission
Roosevelt Street
Addis Ababa, Ethiopia

(2) How to send:

Applications must be submitted in both a **paper** and an **electronic** version in a standard text (Microsoft Word) and calculation (Microsoft Excel) format:

Paper version

One (1) original and two (2) copies in A4 or letter size, **each separately bound and inserted together in one envelope, must contain** the following completed documents, for which the Annexes A, B and III of these Guidelines **must be used**:

- Grant Application Form: Annex A (Part A: Concept Note, and Part B: Full Application Form),
- Budget: Annex III (worksheet 1 'Budget', and worksheet 2 'Sources of funding'),
- Logical Framework : Annex B
- The 'Checklist' and the 'Declaration by the Applicant' (Part B Section VI respectively Section VI of the Grant Application Form) must be **stapled and enclosed separately in the same envelope**.

Electronic version

A copy of the above-mentioned documents, containing **exactly the same information**, must also be provided in electronic format (USB flash disc/flash memory/thumbdrive) and enclosed in a separate envelope.

Each of the three components of the application (Grant Application Form, Budget and Logical Framework) must be submitted in a separate electronic file. **Please do not split the Grant Application Form into several different files.**

Part A (Concept Note) and Part B (Full Application Form) must be separated. Note that applicants will be disqualified if both sections are lumped together in one electronic file.

To facilitate the processing of applications, the electronic version must be provided in Microsoft Word and Excel formats.

The envelopes containing the Paper Version and the Electronic Version of the application must be inserted in one outer envelope sealed that must bear the following labels:

(a) In the middle part of the envelop back

To: Programme Management Unit
African Union Research Grant
Department of Human Resources, Science and Technology
African Union Commission
Roosevelt Street
P. O. Box 3243
Addis Ababa, Ethiopia

(b) In the left side of the envelop back

[Insert the title of the Call for Proposals “African Union Research Grants”]

[Insert the reference number of the Call for Proposals “HRST/ST/AURG-II/CALL2/2018”/

(c) In the right side of the envelop back

From: [Insert the **Full Name, Contact and E-mail Addresses** of the Applicant] and add the following note [“**Not to be opened before the opening session**”]

Please note that:

- Applicants must verify that their application is complete by filling in the ‘Checklist’ and signing the ‘Declaration by the Applicant’ (Part B Section V and VI of the Full Application Form respectively). **Incomplete Applications may be rejected.**
- The ‘Declaration by the Applicant’ (Part B Section VI of the Grant Application Form) must bear **original signatures and stamps**. The person to sign this should be authorized to act on behalf of the partnership submitting the proposal. At the same time, the sheet ‘The Applicant’ (Part B Section II of the Grant Application Form) must identify the contact person to whom

any requests for clarification or further information could be addressed.

Please note there are two declarations to be submitted, one for concept note another for full application.

- The ‘Description of Partners’ (Part B Section III of the Grant Application Form) has to be filled in either **by the partners themselves or by the Applicant** on the basis of the information provided by the partners.
- All partners, with the exception of the Applicant, have to sign a ‘Partnership Statement’ (Part B Section III of the Grant Application Form). The person to sign this should be the person legally authorized to represent the partner institution.
- Faxed or scanned copies of signed Partnership Statements will be accepted, but Applicants may be subsequently asked to replace them with originals.
- Applicants who belong to the categories of organizations ‘b’ as mentioned in Section 2.1.1 and who act as partnerships in themselves do not have to complete the above ‘Description of Partners’ and ‘Partnership Statement’.

Please also note that:

- **Applications sent by any other means (e.g. by fax or by e-mail) or delivered to other addresses will be rejected.**

2.2.3 Deadline for submission of Applications

The deadline for the submission of applications to the address stated in Section 2.2.2 above is **22nd of May 2018**, as evidenced by the date of dispatch, the **postmark or the date and the hour of the disposal slip(17:00 Hours, Addis Ababa time (+3 GMT)** at the latest in case of hand-deliveries). **Any application submitted after this deadline, or in the case of delayed postal delivery, received after the Opening and Administrative check process, will be automatically rejected.**

(See indicative time table under section 2.5.2)

2.2.4 Further information for the Application

- Questions related to the completion of the Grant Application Form must be received by e-mail, post or fax **no later than 21 days before the deadline for the submission of proposals** to one of the address/es listed below:

(i) **E-mail address:** [research-info@africa-union.org]

(ii) **Postal address:** Programme Management Unit of the
African Union Research Grant
Department of HRST
African Union Commission
P. O. Box 3243
Addis Ababa, Ethiopia

- Replies will be given no later than 11 days before the deadline for the submission of proposals, and the AUC has no obligation to provide further clarifications after this date.
- In the interest of equal treatment of applicants, the AUC cannot give a prior opinion on the eligibility of an applicant, a partner, an action or specific activities.

Questions that may be relevant to other Applicants, together with the answers, will be published on the Programme's Website: <http://au.int/aurg>. It is therefore highly recommended to regularly consult the above-mentioned website in order to be informed of the questions and answers published.

2.3 EVALUATION AND SELECTION OF APPLICATIONS

Applications will be examined and evaluated by the Contracting Authority with the possible assistance of external assessors. All actions submitted by applicants will be assessed according to the following steps and criteria.

If the examination of the application reveals that the proposed action does not meet the **eligibility criteria** stated in paragraph 2.1.3 above, the application shall be rejected on this sole basis.

STEP 1: OPENING SESSION AND ADMINISTRATIVE CHECK

The following will be assessed:

- The submission deadline has been respected. If the deadline has not been respected the application will automatically be rejected.
- The Application Form satisfies all the criteria specified in points 1-5 of the Checklist (section 6 of part B of the grant application form). If any of the requested information is missing or is incorrect, the application may be rejected on that **sole** basis and the application will not be evaluated further.

Following the opening session and the administrative check, the Contracting Authority will send a letter to all applicants, indicating whether their application was submitted prior to the deadline, informing them of the reference number they have been allocated and whether they have been recommended for further evaluation.

STEP 2: EVALUATION OF THE CONCEPT NOTE

The evaluation of the Concept Notes that have passed the first administrative check will cover the relevance of the action, its merits and effectiveness, its viability and sustainability. The Contracting Authority reserves the right not to undertake the evaluation of the Concept Notes whenever considered justified (for example when a less than expected number of applications are received) and to go straight to the evaluation of the corresponding full applications.

Please note that the scores awarded to the Concept Note are completely separate from those given to the Full Application.

The Concept Note will be given an overall score out of 50 points in accordance with the breakdown provided in the Evaluation Grid below. The evaluation shall also verify the compliance with instructions provided in the guidance for Concept Note, part A of the grant application form.

The evaluation criteria are divided into headings and subheadings. Each subheading will be given a score between 1 and 5 in accordance with the following assessment categories: 1 = very poor; 2 = poor; 3 = adequate; 4 = good; 5 = very good.

	Scores	
	Sub-score	
1. Relevance of the action	Sub-score	15
1.1 Relevance of the action needs and constraints of the country/region to be addressed in general, and to those of the target groups and final beneficiaries in particular.	5	
1.2 Relevance to the priorities and objectives mentioned in the Guidelines.	5(x2)*	
2. Effectiveness and Feasibility of the action	Sub-score	25
2.1 Assessment of the problem identification and analysis.	5	
2.2 Assessment of the proposed activities (practicality and consistency in relation to the objectives, purpose and expected results).	5(x2)*	
2.3 Assessment of the role and involvement of all stakeholders and, if applicable, proposed partners.	5(x2)*	
3. Sustainability of the action	Sub-score	10
3.1 Assessment of the identification of the main assumptions and risks, before the start up and throughout the implementation period.	5	
3.2 Assessment of the identification of long-term sustainable impact on the target groups and final beneficiaries.	5	
TOTAL SCORE		50

*the scores are multiplied by 2 because of their importance

Once all Concept Notes have been assessed, a list will be established with the proposed actions ranked according to their total score.

Firstly, only the Concept Notes which have been given a score of a minimum of 12 points in the category "Relevance" as well as a minimum total score of 30 points will be considered for pre-selection.

Secondly, the number of Concept Notes will be reduced in accordance to the ranking to those whose sum of requested contributions amounts to twice the available budget for this Call for Proposals, taking into account the indicative financial envelopes foreseen.

STEP 3: EVALUATION OF THE FULL APPLICATION

The following will be assessed:

- The full application form satisfies all the criteria specified in points 1-8 of the Checklist (Section 6 of part B of the grant application form). If any of the requested information is missing or is incorrect, the application may be rejected on that **sole** basis and the application will not be evaluated further.

An evaluation of the quality of the applications, including the proposed budget, and of the capacity of the applicant and its partners, will be carried out in accordance with the evaluation criteria set out in the Evaluation Grid included below. There are two types of evaluation criteria: selection and award criteria.

The selection criteria are intended to help evaluate the applicants' financial and operational capacity to ensure that they:

- have stable and sufficient sources of finance to maintain their activity throughout the period during which the action is being carried out and, where appropriate, to participate in its funding;

- have the management capacity, professional competencies and qualifications required to successfully complete the proposed action. This also applies to any partners of the applicant.

The award criteria allow the quality of the applications submitted to be evaluated in relation to the set objectives and priorities, and grants to be awarded to actions which maximise the overall effectiveness of the Call for Proposals. They enable the selection of applications which the Contracting Authority can be confident will comply with its objectives and priorities. They cover such aspects as the relevance of the action, its consistency with the objectives of the Call for Proposals, quality, expected impact, sustainability and cost-effectiveness.

Scoring:

The evaluation criteria are divided into sections and subsections. Each subsection will be given a score between 1 and 5 in accordance with the following guidelines: 1 = very poor; 2 = poor; 3 = adequate; 4 = good; 5 = very good.

Evaluation Grid

Section	Maximum Score
1. Financial and operational capacity	20
1.1 Do the applicant and, if applicable, partners have sufficient experience of project management ?	5
1.2 Do the applicant and, if applicable partners have sufficient technical expertise ? (notably knowledge of the issues to be addressed.)	5
1.3 Do the applicant and, if applicable, partners have sufficient management capacity ? (including staff, equipment and ability to handle the budget for the action)?	5
1.4 Does the applicant have stable and sufficient sources of finance ?	5
2. Relevance	25
2.1 How relevant is the proposal to the objectives and one or more of the priorities of the call for proposals? Note: A score of 5 (very good) will only be allocated if the proposal specifically addresses at least one priority . Note: A score of 5 (very good) will only be allocated if the proposal contains specific added-value elements, such as promotion of gender equality and equal opportunities...	5 x 2
2.2 How relevant to the particular needs and constraints of the target country/countries or region(s) is the proposal? (including synergy with other AUC initiatives and avoidance of duplication.)	5
2.3 How clearly defined and strategically chosen are those involved (final beneficiaries, target groups)? Have their needs been clearly defined and does the proposal address them appropriately?	5 x 2
3. Methodology	25
3.1 Are the activities proposed appropriate, practical, and consistent with the objectives and expected results?	5
3.2 How coherent is the overall design of the action? (in particular, does it reflect the analysis of the problems involved, take into account external factors and anticipate an evaluation ?)	5
3.3 Is the partners' and/or other stakeholders' level of involvement and participation in the action satisfactory?	5
3.4 Is the action plan clear and feasible?	5
3.5 Does the proposal contain objectively verifiable indicators for the outcome of the action?	5
4. Sustainability	15
4.1 Is the action likely to have a tangible impact on its target groups?	5
4.2 Is the proposal likely to have multiplier effects ? (including scope for replication and extension of the outcome of the action and dissemination of information.)	5

4.3 Are the expected results of the proposed action sustainable : - financially(<i>how will the activities be financed after the funding ends?</i>) - institutionally(<i>will structures allowing the activities to continue be in place at the end of the action? Will there be local “ownership” of the results of the action?</i>) - at policy level (where applicable) (<i>what will be the structural impact of the action — e.g. will it lead to improved legislation, codes of conduct, methods, etc?</i>)? - environmentally (if applicable) (<i>will the action have a negative/positive environmental impact?</i>)	5
5. Budget and cost-effectiveness	15
5.1 is the ratio between the estimated costs and the expected results satisfactory?	5
5.2 Is the proposed expenditure necessary for the implementation of the action?	5 x 2
Maximum total score	100

Note on Section 1. Financial and operational capacity

If the score is less than 12 points for section 1, the application will be rejected.

Note on Section 2. Relevance

If the total average score is less than 20 points for section 2, the application will be rejected.

Provisional selection

Following the evaluation, a table listing the applications ranked according to their score and within the available financial envelope USD 9,000,000.00 will be established as well as a reserve list following the same criteria.

Please note that:

- If, in addition to the partnership preference stated in Section 2.1.2 of these Guidelines, two applications attain the same score, the one with the higher score on the ‘Relevance’ criteria will be given a higher ranking.
- The scores awarded in this phase are completely independent from those given to the Concept Note of the same application

STEP 4: VERIFICATION OF ELIGIBILITY OF THE APPLICANT AND PARTNERS

The eligibility verification, based on the supporting documents requested by the AUC (see section 2.4) will **only** be performed for the applications that have been provisionally selected according to their score and within the available financial envelope.

- The Declaration by the applicant (Section VI of part B the grant application form) will be cross-checked with the supporting documents provided by the applicant. Any missing supporting document or any incoherence between the Declaration by the applicant and the supporting documents may lead to the rejection of the application on that sole basis.
- The eligibility of the applicant, the partners, and the action will be verified according to the criteria set out in sections 2.1.1, 2.1.2 and 2.1.3.

Following the above analysis and if necessary, any rejected application will be replaced by the next best placed application in the reserve list that falls within the available financial envelope, which will then be examined for the eligibility of its applicant and the partners.

2.4 SUBMISSION OF SUPPORTING DOCUMENTS FOR PROVISIONALLY SELECTED APPLICATIONS

Applicants who have been provisionally selected or listed under the reserve list will be informed in writing by the AUC. They will be requested to supply the following documents in order to allow the AUC to verify the eligibility of the applicants and their partners:

- (1) The statutes or articles of association of the applicant organisation⁵ and of each partner organisation. Where the Contracting Authority has recognized the applicant's eligibility for another call for proposals under the same budget line within 2 years before the deadline for receipt of applications, the applicant may submit, instead of its statutes, copy of the document proving the eligibility of the applicant in a former Call (e.g.: copy of the special conditions of a grant contract received during the reference period), unless a change in its legal status has occurred in the meantime.⁶
- (2) Where the grant requested exceeds USD500 000, an external audit report produced by an approved auditor, certifying the applicant's accounts for the last financial year available. This obligation does not apply to international organisations. This obligation does not apply to public bodies.
- (3) Copy of the applicant's latest accounts (the profit and loss account and the balance sheet for the previous financial year for which the accounts have been closed)⁷.
- (4) Legal entity sheet (see annex C of these Guidelines) duly completed and signed by the applicant, accompanied by the justifying documents which are requested therein. If the applicant has already signed a contract with the Contracting Authority, instead of the legal entity sheet and its supporting documents the legal entity number may be provided, unless a change in its legal status occurred in the meantime.
- (5) A financial identification form conforming to the model attached at Annex D of these Guidelines, certified by the bank to which the payments will be made. This bank must be located in the country where the applicant is registered.

The supporting documents requested must be supplied in the form of originals or photocopies of the said originals. However, the Legal Entity Sheet and the Financial Identification Form must always be submitted in original.

Where such documents are not in one of the official languages of the African Union, a translation into English or French of the relevant parts of these documents, proving the applicant's eligibility,

⁵ Where the applicant and/or (a) partner(s) is a public body created by a law, a copy of the said law must be provided

⁶ To be inserted only where the eligibility conditions have not changed from one call for proposals to the other.

⁷ This obligation does not apply to natural persons who have received a scholarship, nor to public bodies nor to international organisations. It does not apply either when the accounts are in practice the same documents as the external audit report already provided pursuant to section 2.4.2.

must be attached and will prevail for the purpose of analyzing the application.

Where these documents are in an official language of the African Union other than English or French, it is strongly recommended, in order to facilitate the evaluation, to provide a translation of the relevant parts of the documents, proving the applicant's eligibility, into English or French.

If the abovementioned supporting documents are not provided before the deadline indicated in the request for supporting documents sent to the applicant by the Contracting Authority, the application may be rejected.

Based on the verification of the supporting documents, the Evaluation Committee will make a final recommendation to the AUC, which will decide on the award of grants.

2.5 NOTIFICATION OF THE AUC'S DECISION

2.5.1 Content of the decision

- Applicants will be informed in writing (normally by e-mail) of the AUC's decision concerning their application and the reasons for the decision.

Applicants who disagree with the outcome of the evaluation assessment may petition to the AUC directly. The AUC must reply within 90 days of receipt of the complaint.

2.5.2 Indicative time table

	DATE	TIME*
Deadline for request for any clarifications from the AUC	2nd May , 2018	1700 Hours GMT+3
Last date on which clarifications are issued by the AUC	12 th May, 2018	-
Deadline for submission of Application Form	22 May, 2018	1700 Hours GMT+3
Information to applicants on the opening & administrative checks and concept note evaluation (step 1)	June 2018*	-
Information to applicants on the evaluation of the Full Application Form (step 2)	July 2018*	-
Notification of award (after the eligibility check) (step 3)	October 2018*	-
Contract signature	October/November 2018*	-

***Provisional and indicative date.** All times are in the time zone of the country of the African Union Commission (Ethiopia)

This indicative timetable may be updated by the Contracting Authority during the procedure. In such case, the updated timetable shall be published on internet at the AUC website <http://au.int/aurg>

2.6 CONDITIONS APPLICABLE TO IMPLEMENTATION OF THE ACTION FOLLOWING THE CONTRACTING AUTHORITY'S DECISION TO AWARD A GRANT

Following the decision to award a grant, the Beneficiary will be offered a contract based on the Contracting Authority's standard contract (see Annex E of these Guidelines). By signing the Application form (Annex A of these Guidelines), the applicant declares accepting, in case where it is awarded a grant, the Contractual conditions as laid down in the Standard Grant Contract.

Implementation Contracts

Where implementation of the action requires the Beneficiary to award procurement contracts, it must award the contract to the tenderer offering the best value for money, that is to say, the best price-quality ratio, in compliance with the principles of transparency and equal treatment for potential contractors, care being taken to avoid any conflict of interests. To this end, the Beneficiary must follow the procedures set out in Annex IV of the Contract, in line with the AUC procurement procedures.

LIST OF ANNEXES

GRANT APPLICATION SUPPORTING DOCUMENTS

Annex A: Grant Application Form

Annex B: Logical Framework

Annex C1: Legal Entity Sheet- Private

Annex C2: Legal Entity Sheet - Public

Annex D: Financial Identification Form

Annex E: Grant Contract – Special Conditions

Annex I: Description of the Action

Annex II: General Conditions

Annex III: Budget for the action

Annex IV: Procurement Procedures

Annex V: Request for payment

Annex VI-a: Interim Narrative Report

Annex VI-b: Final Narrative Report

Annex VI-c: Financial Report

Annex VII: Expenditure Verification

Annex VIII: Pre-Financing Guarantee