

AAP Transforming Institutions Strategic Funding Invitation for Proposals 2021

The Alliance for African Partnership (AAP) seeks proposals from AAP consortium members and their partners for activities which directly address AAP's *Transforming Institutions* pillar (transforming institutions to be better able to participate in sustainable, equitable, and research-driven partnerships that make a broader impact on transforming lives). Successful applicants will receive **seed funding** to develop international strategic partnerships with universities, institutions of higher education and research, and/or organizations in the public or NGO sectors. Travel can include any of the following—within Africa, to Africa from external locations, to the US, or to other locations outside of Africa. Virtual engagement is highly encouraged, and proposals that include in-person travel or meetings should provide a contingency plan in case circumstances prevent traveling or meeting in-person (COVID contingency plan including a budget). **Proposed partnerships should focus specifically on institutional strengthening and capacity development. This could include projects that aim to build institutional strengths; to contribute to individuals' capacity development which will lead to institutional strengthening; to plan for new units or institution-wide initiatives; and/or to pilot new approaches to research support, teaching or outreach that can eventually be scaled up across the institution(s).**

Some examples of the types of programs that could fall under this funding initiative: developing plans or programs to improve institutional research management structures, building capacity of administrative units or leaders, improving structures for outreach and research dissemination, creating new and innovative curricula or pedagogical approaches in priority areas, or strengthening student service units focused on career services and/or entrepreneurship. **Proposals that solely focus on research topics unrelated to institutional capacity development and do not directly address how the work contributes to institutional strengthening will not be considered.**

Guidelines

Proposals may be submitted in one of the following three project categories in support of institutional strengthening and capacity development:

1. **Exploratory Projects** to support initial-stage partnership development. This funding is meant for new partnerships that have not previously worked together.
2. **Proposal Development Projects** to support partners to develop a proposal in response to a specific funding opportunity.
3. **Pilot Workshop Projects** to support short-term training activities or workshops.

We highly encourage projects that incorporate South-South collaboration. This has been identified as an AAP priority and will be factored into the selection process. We also encourage collaboration across Francophone and Anglophone countries/consortium members.

Proposals that address building the administrative capacity of universities (e.g., research management, finance, fundraising and advancement, career services, communications and publishing, governance and leadership, etc.) will also receive priority in review.

Funding can cover travel and/or associated meeting or workshop costs. The budget may also cover salary/fringe expenses up to \$5,000 USD. AAP will consider proposals up to a maximum of **\$20,000 USD** requested funds (not including cost share). Proposals should include a combined 20% cost share contribution across all the partner institutions (with each institution contributing some amount). This contribution could be monetary, in-kind, or a combination of the two.

Eligibility

- Proposals should include co-PIs from each of the partner institutions included in the proposal and must include a PI from MSU and PI(s) from at least one other [AAP consortium member](#) (AAP Consortium members include MSU, Egerton University, Makerere University, University of Dar es Salaam, Lilongwe University of Agriculture and Natural Resources, University of Botswana, University of Nigeria-Nsukka, Université Cheikh Anta Diop, Université des Lettres et des Sciences Humaines de Bamako, University of Pretoria, United States International University – Africa, and ReNAPRI).
- Those who served as a PI (project lead) on a previously funded AAP Transforming Institutions Strategic Funding project are not eligible to lead a proposal for this competition but may participate in the proposed project as a team member.
- Faculty members may only be listed (as PI or as team member) on one proposal submitted to AAP for each round of funding.

- **AAP will work with teams once awarded to verify a timeline for when activities will be completed. (Teams should aim to carry out projects between October 1, 2021 and August 15, 2022).**

Evaluation Criteria

Criteria that will be used to evaluate the proposals includes:

- Evidence of a shared vision and mutually beneficial interests among the partners as well as a joint commitment to the success of the proposed partnership
- Clarity of the connection of proposed activities to AAP's *Transforming Institutions* pillar
- Demonstrated integration of gender, equity, and inclusion principles
- Quality of short-term outputs/outcomes of proposed activities
- Potential for a sustained, productive partnership; quality of long-term impacts of proposed activities
- Potential for leveraging significant external funding

Indicators used to evaluate the outputs/outcomes of completed projects include:

- Evidence of continued productive collaboration among partner institutions around transforming all organizations involved in the partnership
- The number and quality of institutional improvements that stem from the partnership activities
- Symposia or conferences held to disseminate work stemming from the partnership activities
- Collaborative grant applications submitted and awarded
- Collaborative research publications completed
- Other measures of institutional transformation as proposed by the implementing teams

A follow-up report including data on these criteria will be required 30 days after the program end date.

Partnership Activities

Proposed partnerships should center on capacity building activities, including external funding proposal development and dissemination of outputs, that contribute to transformation at all partnering institutions. Proposed activities should ultimately lead to potential long-term collaborations among the partner institutions. Follow-on funding may be allocated for continued support to develop these partnerships depending on the outcomes of the initial budget and availability of funds.

Partnership Funding

Transforming Institutions partnership funds will provide *partial support* of travel, meeting, and workshop costs for AAP consortium faculty members and their partners. The Co-PIs' colleges, faculties and/or departments will be expected to contribute to the costs of the proposed activities to ensure that the commitment to long-term partnering is shared by these units. A total of 20% match (monetary and/or in-kind) is required with contributions from all partners. These awards should ultimately result in the development and submission of a collaborative funding proposal (including partner institution faculty) for external funding as well as having positive impacts on other indicators of institutional transformation.

Proposal Requirements

Proposals should include:

1. Narrative (not to exceed five pages) which addresses specifically:
 - The activities being proposed for this funding. Please include a description of the activities, the role of each partner, and the timeline. Applicants must also include a COVID contingency plan for any in-person meetings or travel
 - The proposed topics or issues that the activities will address
 - A general description of the partners and individuals who will take part in the project
 - The history of partnership among those involved and the potential for sustained future engagement

- A description of the partners' shared vision and how each partner will benefit from the proposed activities
 - Considerations taken for gender, equity, and inclusion (in terms of the team members and the project activities)
 - How the activities will contribute to transforming all the institutions included in the partnership. Please describe the objectives of the activities, the anticipated short-term outcomes of the project, and their relation to the institutions' needs
 - The anticipated longer-term outcomes and impact of the proposed activities
 - Identification of external funding opportunities that could support the proposed research/activities in the future
2. Written endorsements from the applicants' deans, department chairpersons, or supervisors committing to a total minimum of 20% matching funds and a description of any monetary or in-kind contributions from partner institutions.
 3. Proposed itemized budget. Please use the [provided budget template](#).

Submitting a Proposal

Please submit proposals via our [online submission form](#). Be sure to include all required documents listed above (proposal narrative, letters of endorsement, proposed budget—with COVID contingency budget included—using the provided template).

Submission deadline: August 2, 2021 (11:59pm EDT)

Questions

Please contact Amy Jamison at jamisona@msu.edu or +1-517-884-2127 with any questions.