International Research Management Staff Development Programme - IRMSDP

Call for Expressions of Interest

Background

Overview:
The African Academy of Sciences (The AAS) is a non-aligned, non-political, not-for-profit pan-African organisation whose vision is to see transformed lives on the African continent through science. The AAS’s tripartite mandate is recognising excellence through our highly prestigious fellowship, Affiliates and award schemes, providing advisory and think tank functions for shaping Africa’s Science, Technology and Innovation (STI) strategies and policies and implementing key Science, Technology and Innovation programmes addressing Africa’s developmental challenges.

The Research Management Programme in Africa (ReMPro Africa) is an initiative of The AAS that aims to fill critical gaps in the African research ecosystem to support a vibrant research culture and leadership at universities and research institutions. This was based on findings from scoping studies undertaken in Africa. ReMPro Africa overall aims to transform research management at institutional level by addressing four key interconnected strands, namely: institutional leadership, sustainability, standards and developing individual capacity of research management staff.

ARMA (UK) is the professional membership association for Research Managers and Administrators in the UK. The organisation currently has over 3,000 individual members from around 250 organisations, ranging from universities and funding bodies to the National Health Service and independent research Institutions. It represents research leaders, managers and administrators, offering professional development and opportunities to build networks, knowledge and skills. ARMA also works with UK-wide and international bodies to influence and understand the changing research management agenda, translating the impacts of that change to its members. Most of all, ARMA works to enhance research management as a professional partner in the UK research environment.

The AAS and ARMA are launching the International Research Management Staff Development Programme (IRMSDP) to contribute to the strand on developing individual capacity of research management staff. The programme is focusing on knowledge sharing and the development of tools and resources, created by teams consisting of research management professionals from Africa and the UK.
This call for expressions of interest serves as an invitation to all research management professionals in Africa and UK working in academic and research institutions to lodge applications to participate in the programme which will involve

a) Virtual seminars/workshops  
b) Innovations and project development,  
c) Staff exchange visits to Africa from the UK and vice versa.

Objectives and Expected Outcomes

This is a practical skills and cultural learning programme for both the African and UK African research managers. The aim is not only to build capacity, but to also strengthen collaboration and knowledge exchange among the institutions. We are especially keen to foster South-South and North-North relationships, while at the same time strengthening international ties. We are therefore inviting expressions of interest from groups of research managers and administrators based within the same region.

The programme is also aiming to increase diversity and enhance inclusion of under-represented institutions and groups. We will therefore give greater weighting to proposals from teams that include representatives from multiple and diverse research institutions within a region and individuals from under-represented groups, with a demonstration of sustainable impact.

The main outputs from this programme are expected to be the collaborative resources that will be developed from the ideas and innovations proposed by the various teams. The co-created resources must aim to benefit all members and research management communities of practice. Participants will take part in group-based training and development activities and will be expected to produce short reports on their personal learning journey.

Key Themes
Scoping studies undertaken in Africa have shown that there are critical gaps in the African research ecosystem that need to be addressed to support a vibrant research culture and leadership at universities and research institutions. In their proposals, teams should therefore identify and describe a proposed innovation that the team would seek to develop within the programme and that aligns with one or more of the following themes:

1. Research management support functions and infrastructure  
2. Professional development for research managers and administrators  
3. Funding and collaboration for research  
4. Research uptake and impact

The innovation should address the area of need and seek to deliver greater co-operation, collaboration and knowledge-sharing.

Programme Activities and Timeline

The programme has three main activities:
a) Virtual seminars/workshops to support individual professional development,
b) Innovation development to generate community benefit,
c) Staff exchange visits from the UK to Africa to facilitate relationships and knowledge exchange.

These elements will be implemented against the draft curriculum below.

**Figure 1: Draft Programme Curriculum**

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<th>Event Type</th>
<th>Description</th>
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| **Virtual Orientation & Programme Launch** | - End of September 2020  
  - Time: 3 hours | - A virtual event where teams will be oriented and given more information on the programme, support available and expectations.  
  - Successful UK and African applicants will meet their counterparts in their international team. |
| **Innovation development**         | - October – December 2020  
  - Approx. 10 hours | - Teams will focus on developing their innovations during this period and produce outputs that can be used as resources by the research management community. Examples may include translations, templates, good practice guides, checklists, events or toolkits.  
  - Teams should contribute individual time to progressing their outputs as well as periodic virtual project development meetings to ensure collaboration and progress.  
  - Teams will also discuss what opportunities for dissemination they can identify and create for their exchange visits. |
| **Virtual seminars/workshops**     | - October – December 2020  
  - Approx. 16 hours | - ARMA will provide facilitated seminars and workshops for professional development.  
  - There will be 5 parallel online seminars/workshops organised on themes that will enhance the participants’ professional knowledge and skills.  
  - Participants will have the option of selecting the theme that is best suited to their individual professional development needs. |
| **Virtual orientation – staff exchange** | - November 2020  
  - Approx. 3 hours | - Preparatory event for the staff exchange visits. Participants will be given more information on the expectations and goals of the visits. |
### Staff exchange visits
- January - March 2021
- Max. 1 week/exchange visit

- Teams will carry out exchange visits with an aim of building on their projects, knowledge exchange and learning. Where institutions are geographically distant, members of the team will agree which two institutions will be visited and used as a basis for the exchange.
- Visits should incorporate workshops, other events or promotional activities building on resources that have been developed in the project.

### Periodic reporting on the teams' innovation development
- October 2020 – March 2021

- Teams will be expected to produce short, monthly progress reports on their project development, learning and activities.

### Submission of final reports and outputs
- 23rd April 2021

- Teams submit an end of programme joint reflective report on the experience of the team and overall feedback on the programme;
- The outputs from the innovation development; and
- An individual feedback report on professional development.

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## Benefits of Participation

Participants will be given the opportunity to:

- Take part in tailored professional development activities;
- Co-create community resources through their innovation project;
- Enhance their knowledge and expertise around international collaboration;
- Enhance their national and international professional networks;
- Enhance their personal and institutional profile with key national and international stakeholders including institutions, funders and professional associations; and
- Disseminate and share their learning through a range of activities and events.
Target Group and Eligibility Criteria

Africa applicants
Criteria for Group Individuals
1. Research managers and administrators working at universities and or research institutions in Africa.
2. Hold a permanent or fixed-term contract in an eligible African institution, which must span the duration of the programme.
3. All group individual applicants should have a supporting letter from their institution allowing them to take part in the programme and expressing their support.
4. Successful group individual applicants will be expected to seek membership in or affiliation with their respective Research Management and Innovation Association Central Africa Research and Innovation Association (CARIMA), Eastern Africa Research and Innovation Management Association (EARIMA), Southern Africa Research and Innovation Management Association (SARIMA), Western Africa Research and Innovation Management Association (WARIMA). In instances where a Research and Innovation Management Association (RIMA) doesn’t exist, participants will be added to a mailing list and will be required to join the RIMA once it is up and running.

Group Criteria
1. Be applying as part of a group of up to five research management professionals from multiple research organisations within a region or within a country, so that each group is made up of individuals from different and diverse institutions. Regions are identified in Africa as within one of the areas covered by each professional association (e.g. countries represented within Eastern Africa Research and Innovation Management Association (EARIMA).
2. Each group should be made up of 3 to 5 applicants.
3. All applicants must be able to commit time to the whole programme and activities outlined in the curriculum.

UK applicants
Criteria for Group Individuals
1. Research managers and administrators working in the UK, including universities, funding bodies, NHS R&D departments and independent research institutions.
2. Hold a permanent or fixed-term contract in an eligible UK institution, which must span the duration of the programme.
3. Group individuals should be existing members of ARMA or able to join at the point of application.
4. All group individual applicants should have a supporting letter from their institution allowing them to take part in the programme and expressing their support.

Group Criteria
1. Be applying as part of a group made up of research management professionals from multiple research organisations based within the same region, so that each group is made up of individuals from different and diverse institutions.
2. Each group should be made up of 3 to 5 applicants.
3. All applicants must be able to commit time to the whole programme and activities outlined
Application Process

All applications will be submitted on the Ishango online system [https://aasishango.ccgranttracker.com/Login.aspx?ReturnUrl=%2f](https://aasishango.ccgranttracker.com/Login.aspx?ReturnUrl=%2f) through the Africa or UK application tab.

Teams will nominate one member who will lodge the main application for the entire team, and therefore act as the contact point. The application form will include questions on:

- a) Personal information on the team members including personal profiles;
- b) Information on represented institutions;
- c) Brief overview on the teams proposed innovation/project and its thematic focus;
- d) Information on the team make-up and learning goals; and
- e) Attached supporting letters from the members’ institutions.

In addition, UK participants are requested to fill in the individual Equality, Diversity and Inclusion form here [https://www.surveymonkey.co.uk/r/MB6F5ZR](https://www.surveymonkey.co.uk/r/MB6F5ZR). The form should be filled in individually and not by the team leader. The information gathered will be held securely and in compliance with the relevant data protection legislation. The information will not be shared with reviewers or used in assessment of the applications. It will be used for compliance and monitoring purposes.

Selection Process

Selection to the programme will be through a 5-stage process as set out below. Figure 2. Selection process
Review Committee

All applications will be reviewed by a Review Committee which will include representatives from the AAS, ARMA and other external reviewers. The Committee’s decision will be final.

Reporting requirements and other monitoring and evaluation obligations

- Periodic reports from the teams that will assist in the day-to-day monitoring of the programme
- End of programme joint reflective report on the experience of the team, capturing lessons learnt, as well as reflecting on overall success of the project and the programme.

Expected costs and financial support

Africa Applicants:
The AAS will cover air travel, accommodation, visa costs and local transport costs of African participants.

Ineligible costs
Applicants may not seek funding for
1. Salary contribution
2. Indirect costs
3. Per diem

UK applicants:
This is a funded programme that is targeting research management professionals and institutions seeking to build capacity and skills essential for navigating research cooperation in an international setting. Participants will gain access to a wide range of networks and broaden their knowledge on the context in which academics in their institutions work. They will also gain an opportunity to produce vital resources that can be shared within their institution and community.

The programme will meet the costs for each of the following:

- Virtual seminars and workshops;
- Innovation development;
- Learning and development support;
- Administrative support in accessing ARMA resources for dissemination activities; and
- Opportunities to showcase and disseminate the participants’ outputs to a wider audience, including through ARMA publications and events.
The programme will not meet the following costs:

- Travel and subsistence costs within the UK and international visits to Africa (e.g. flights, accommodation, visas);
- Resources, equipment and materials required to enable participation (e.g. IT equipment and stationery).

We expect that these costs will be met by the participants’ institution. Institutions may access funds such as the GCRF QR funding allocated for international capacity strengthening activities. It is therefore important that applicants secure authorisation and confirmation from their institutions regarding financial support prior to lodging an application.

We recognise that not all institutions receive GCRF QR funds or equivalent. We are therefore offering the opportunity to apply for additional financial support for individuals in some instances.

Where a participant is employed by an institution that receives less than £100k of GCRF QR funding, they will be eligible to apply for up to 100% of additional costs.

Where a participant is employed by an institution that receives between £100k and £250k of GCRF QR funding, they will be eligible to apply for up to 50% of additional costs.

Where a participant is employed by an institution that receives in excess of £250k in GCRF QR funding, they will not be eligible.

In addition to these costs and with a view to removing barriers to participation, we will consider applications from any participant who requires to meet additional costs related to care responsibilities that cannot be met by their institution.

Applicants for financial support will be asked to:

a) Clearly demonstrate their need for funding;
b) Clearly illustrate the importance of participating in this programme and how it aligns to their career development plan; and
c) Clearly illustrate the importance of participating for their institution and the financial barriers to the institution in supporting participation.

Application for this funding will be carried out on an individual basis through an online form. Only applicants who are successful will be able to apply for the funding, however, all applicants will be required to state if they intend to apply for the grant when lodging their team application.

All applications will be considered on merit. Funds available for additional support are limited and therefore, cannot be guaranteed even if the basic criteria are met.

**Important dates**

- Call for applications opened: **19th June 2020**
- Call for applications closes: **10th August 2020 (16.00 EAT/12.00 GMT)**
- Screening: **11th August – 21st August 2020**
- Preselection and Matching: **24th August – 11th September 2020**
- Final selection and awards issued: **14th – 18th September 2020**
• Programme begins: **21st September 2020**

**Contacts:**

All queries about this call should be addressed to ReMPRO Africa at remproafrica@aasciences.africa or ARMA at eva@arma.ac.uk