



# RISA Open Call

CALL NO. RISA-01-2022

# Call No. RISA-01-2022, Research and Innovation Systems for Africa (RISA)

Issuance Date	July 08, 2022
Bidders Conference / Information Session with Potential Applicants	July 14, 2022, Virtual; 1:00 to 4:00 p.m. EAT
Deadline for Submission of Questions on Application Process	July 20, 2022, 5:00 p.m. EAT
Deadline for Submission of Concept Notes	July 31, 2022, 5:00 p.m. EAT
Submit Concept Notes to	<a href="mailto:RISAFundapplications@chemonics.com">RISAFundapplications@chemonics.com</a>

RISA, a multi-country Foreign and Commonwealth Development Office (FCDO)-funded programme, invites applications from eligible organizations in RISA priority countries for projects that support Research and Innovation systems strengthening in Africa, described in the attached call for applications. RISA anticipates awarding a milestone-based or cost reimbursable awards.

This procurement will be conducted under open competition, in accordance with UK Government Grant Standards and the procedures in the RISA Funds Management Manual. Successful applicants must be operational and legally registered in: Ethiopia, Kenya, Rwanda, Ghana, Nigeria and South Africa. Applicants must have the experience, presence and organizational mandate to operate in the country and contribute to the regional goals and objectives of the FCDO SRIA and ATIP programmes.

Individual applications for this round should not exceed £ 300,000, with a maximum project length of 15 months. The expected project budget should range from a recommended minimum of £100,000 to no higher than £300,000. RISA anticipates multiple awards under this call for concept notes, subject to availability of funds. **Interested parties can locate the call for applications at [www.risa-fund.org](http://www.risa-fund.org) to find the announcement and the country funding priorities and other supporting documents.**

All concept notes must be submitted by the above final closing date no later than 5:00 p.m. East Africa Time (EAT). If the application is received after the closing date and time, or if it is incomplete, it will not be accepted nor considered unless authorised by the RISA Team Lead and/or the RISA Fund Management Lead.

All application packages are to be submitted via e-mail to: [RISAFundapplications@chemonics.com](mailto:RISAFundapplications@chemonics.com). Please quote the call number on the subject line of your e-mail application. **Applications must respond to the specific format, instructions and deadlines provided in the call announcement to be considered valid.**

Any questions regarding this solicitation should be submitted in writing to [RISAFundapplications@chemonics.com](mailto:RISAFundapplications@chemonics.com) no later than 12:00 hrs, Noon EAT - Nairobi Kenya, July 20, 2022.

A Bidders Conference for interested applicants will be hosted virtually via a webinar on **July 14, 2022, from 1:00 p.m. to 4:00 p.m. EAT - Nairobi Kenya**. Participation is limited to two individuals per organisation. To register for the webinar, go to [RISA Bidders Conference Registration Link \(office.com\)](#)

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# Section A: Award Information and Administration

## 1. Scope and Objectives

The objective of this call for funding is to seek applications from organisations in Ethiopia, Kenya, Rwanda, Ghana, Nigeria and South Africa.

### 1.1 RISA Programme Scope

The Research and Innovation Systems for Africa (RISA) Fund is a multi-country FCDO-funded programme that aims to support research and innovation systems strengthening in Africa by bringing together two FCDO Research and Evidence Division (RED) programmes under the RISA Fund umbrella: Strengthening Research Institutions in Africa (SRIA) and the African Technology and Innovation Partnerships (ATIP). The RISA Fund will enable the two programmes to more effectively realise the synergies between their objectives of strengthening research and innovation systems. The RISA Fund will operate from 16 July 2021 to 31 March 2024.

RISA seeks to strengthen research and innovation ecosystems by developing a portfolio of well-designed, evidence-based projects in six priority countries: Kenya, Ghana, South Africa, Nigeria, Ethiopia and Rwanda.

### 1.2 RISA Programme Objectives

To achieve its vision, RISA has three objectives:

- A. **Research institution and system strengthening (SRIA):** To support research organisations to have the capabilities necessary to produce relevant, high-quality research and to create an enabling environment for researchers and research organisations.
- B. **Innovation system strengthening (ATIP):** To strengthen the enablers for the scaling of new and emerging technologies with the high potential for poverty reduction and inclusive growth.
- C. **Strengthening synergies between research and innovation systems (SRIA and ATIP).** To identify and support linkages between research and innovation systems that will improve their integration and coordination. This will be funded through both programmes.

## 2. Award Information

### 2.1 Project Duration

Funding for projects under this call for Concept notes will be a minimum of 12 months and a maximum of 15 months with December 2023 being the cut-off date for implementation.

### 2.2 Anticipated Funding Availability

RISA anticipates a total of approximately £1.8 million to be available for this funding opportunity. Additional funds may be available in subsequent financial years rounds. Individual applications should not exceed £300,000. RISA reserves the right to incrementally fund activities over the duration of the project, if necessary, depending on project length, performance against approved indicators and availability of funds.

Issuance of this call for funding does not constitute an award or commitment on the part of RISA to make any awards. RISA shall not be liable for any costs incurred in the preparation and submission of an application. **RISA reserves the right to fund any or none of the applications submitted.**

### **3. Applicant Eligibility**

Organisations eligible for RISA Funding must be registered with relevant authorities and have been operating for at least **three years**. These include:

- International and national universities
- Research institutions
- Think tanks
- International and national NGOs or CSOs.
- Private sector organisations

**\*Government departments, ministries and agencies are not eligible for direct funding; these entities can only receive Technical Assistance from an implementer selected by the Fund Manager.**

Prospective partners must be organisations with a reputation for integrity and the highest standard of conduct, with a proven track record in their area of expertise. They should demonstrate a respect for human rights, gender sensitivity, inclusion of people with disabilities, fair labour practices and environmental consciousness. All partners must meet standard FCDO procurement policies for financial management and audits.

#### **3.1 Eligibility Criteria**

1. The organisation must be organised or recognised in accordance with the laws of and conduct operations in one or more of the following countries: Ethiopia, Kenya, Rwanda, South Africa, Ghana and Nigeria.
2. The following considerations will cut across the eligibility criteria design when designing the fund solicitation approaches in the RISA focus countries (Kenya, Ghana, Nigeria, South Africa, Ethiopia and Rwanda): -

#### *RISA Universal Project Eligibility Criteria*

- Alignment to SRIA, ATIP or synergies and traction objectives.
- Partnerships – Project demonstrates the ecosystem approach to addressing the research and innovation barriers including detailed mapping of relevant stakeholders, partners, institutions etc. that will engage during implementation.
- Additionality of the RISA investment and clarity of attribution to the RISA fund where a project is being funded by multiple donors.
- Value for Money considerations i.e., projects that can demonstrate maximum impact (Number of target beneficiaries reached and the positive change observed) from the RISA funding.
- Sustainability -Project demonstrates ability to ensure that gains realised through RISA funding are sustainable in the long term through building and strengthening local capacity and leveraging co-funding from local sources e.g., private sector, local authorities e.t.c
- GESI – Project Demonstrates efforts to mainstream gender and social inclusion across the life cycle of the project and seeks to strengthen gender equality and the social inclusion of specific marginalised groups.

## **4. Award and Administration Information**

Applicants must have established financial management, internal control systems, and policies and procedures that comply with International Financial Reporting Standards (IFRS) or FCDO standards, laws, and regulations governing the specific award mechanism. All potential awardees will be subject to a financial responsibility determination issued by the Fund Manager that will include a pre award due diligence assessment.

An award shall be made only upon FCDO Senior Responsible Officer (SRO) approval of the narrative proposal together with the accompanying budget, workplan, risk matrix and log frame but only contingent to their acceptance of the applicant's risk profile as determined through the due diligence assessment and required improvements where applicable. In determining their approval, the SRO will evaluate the applicant's ability to obtain, the necessary management competence in planning and implementing the project and that it will practice mutually agreed upon methods of accountability for funds and other assets provided by FCDO.

# Section B: Application and Submission Information

## 1. General Application Instructions

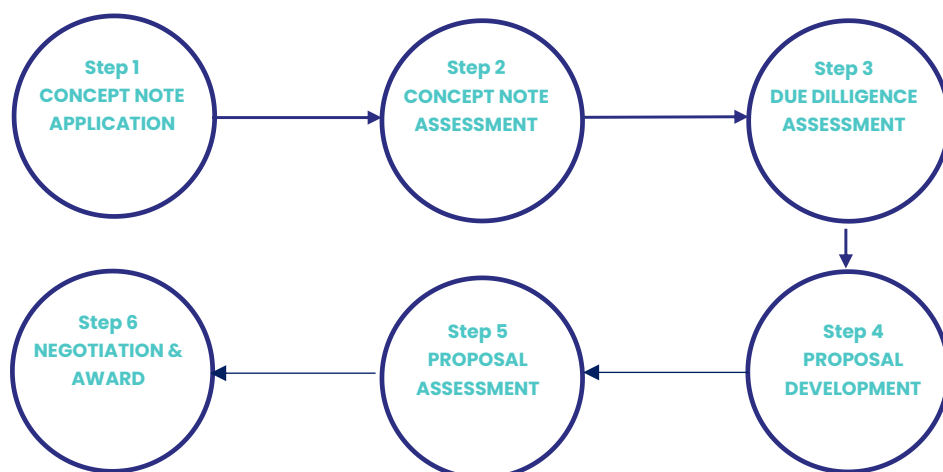
There are **two steps** to the application under this funding opportunity:

1. **Step One:** Submission of a concept note. Successful applicants will be contacted by RISA to submit a full proposal application. Before submitting a concept note, it is recommended that applicants review the full application requirements to ensure they meet all requirements. Reviewing these requirements will help the applicant prepare a competitive concept note.

*Note:* Applicants will be provided with the following documents to ensure that concept note applications and full project proposals are aligned with RISA Fund objectives and country development priorities:

- RISA theory of change (TOC) and country specific theories of change (TOCs) (Nigeria, Kenya, Ghana and South Africa)
  - Country Strategic Priorities (Nigeria, Kenya, Ghana and South Africa)
  - Country GESI Assessments (Nigeria, Kenya, Ghana and South Africa)
  - Eligibility and Assessment criterion for the Concept note applications
2. **Step Two:** Submission of a full proposal application in the prescribed format together with the annexes listed below.
    - Project Workplan
    - Project Budget
    - Project risk matrix
    - Due Diligence Assessment Questionnaire
    - Results Framework
    - VFM Framework
    - Milestone Schedule including expected payments and means of verification

The Two Stage application process will follow a six-step sequence as below:



# Section C: Concept Note Application Strategies and Guidance

## 1. RISA Investment Principles

RISA's investment strategy includes investment principles that are intended to offer the best additionality and return on investment aligned with the agreed RISA objectives and theory of change. The principles serve as a key reference point informing how RISA makes country portfolio funding recommendations under Objectives A, B, and C.

### Investment Principles – Impact-Driven

- RISA will prioritise investments that act as enablers or bridges for supporting the translation of research into practice or facilitating a backward loop from practice into research.
- RISA will prioritise a combination of deeper, longer-term investments targeted at specific barriers and goals that are significantly hindering ecosystem performance, with smaller, shorter-term investments that build networks and have the potential to reduce the barriers in play across multiple goals.
- RISA investments will prioritise value-add, catalytic, and 'gap-filling' activities that build research and innovation connectivity and generate new forms of value not currently targeted by other funding and support.

### Investment Principles – Portfolio Design

- All priority RISA countries (Kenya, Nigeria, Ghana, South Africa, Ethiopia, and Rwanda) will receive some level of RISA investment that strengthens their potential for regional partnership and learning (rather than siloed country impact)
- Approximately 10 percent of RISA funding will be allocated to projects that are deemed high-risk (in terms of impact) but high potential (in terms of learning)
- RISA will prioritise opportunities to support the creation, advancement, or sustainability of locally- owned and led institutions that have national and/or regional mandates to strengthen research and innovation systems
- RISA will prioritise complementary and mutually reinforcing opportunities with the potential to sustainably strengthen collaboration among ecosystem actors and attract additional investment from other funders (domestic and international)

### Investment Principles – Gender Equality and Social Inclusion (GESI)

- Are designed in a way that is consultative and participatory and draws on engagement and dialogue with a diverse range of stakeholders, including women, youth, and representatives of marginalised groups (including persons with disabilities, LGBT+ people etc.)
- Seek to promote gender equality and the social inclusion of different groups, including female researchers and innovators, PWDs, youth amongst others, through its activities, implementation, outreach, and advocacy/communications work.



- Demonstrate efforts to address social inequalities mitigate any negative social impacts across the life cycle of their projects, including through the design of robust safeguarding mechanisms and rigorous monitoring, evaluation, and learning (MEL) systems that systematically disaggregate by age, sex, disability, geography, and other relevant variables.
- Have the flexibility and willingness to learn from MEL data and incorporate or further amplify GESI considerations into their intervention with RISA programme support.

This concept note is made up of three sections that applicants must complete:

1. Section One: Organisation Profile
2. Section Two: Concept Note Application
3. Section Three: Project Budget

## 2. Application Guidelines

1. Your application will not be considered if any of the above three sections is incomplete.
2. Provide as much information as you can as this enhances your application. Please note that figures/diagrams/photos cannot be inserted into the form and no other documents or attachments will be accepted.
3. Before starting the application process, please review the eligibility and assessment criteria to ensure that your organisation and proposed project is eligible for RISA funding.
4. Concept notes must respond to the RISA Fund objectives and investment criteria outlined above as well as the geographic focus listed in the eligibility criteria. While we encourage creative partnerships and innovative approaches, we also strongly encourage applicants to be realistic in stating what can be reasonably achieved in the proposed project given the proposed activities, budget and timeline.
5. Please submit the concept note via e-mail to: [RISAFundapplications@chemonics.com](mailto:RISAFundapplications@chemonics.com) quoting the call number on the subject line of your e-mail application.
6. The RISA Fund management team will acknowledge receipt of the concept note by replying to the email address listed in the concept note submitted. The concept note will then be processed within month and a decision on the status of your application will be communicated at the end of the concept note assessment exercise.
7. The contact email address entered on the form will be the email address for all communication once your application has been processed. Please reconfirm that this contact email address is correct.
8. Any questions regarding this solicitation should be submitted in writing to [RISAFundapplications@chemonics.com](mailto:RISAFundapplications@chemonics.com) no later than 12:00 hrs, Noon EAT - Nairobi Kenya, July 20, 2022.
9. The Window for receiving the concept note applications is **8<sup>th</sup> July 2022 to 31<sup>st</sup> July 2022. The deadline for receiving concept notes is July 31,2022, 5:00 p.m. EAT.**

10. Should your application be selected for the next stage of the process, you will be contacted by the RISA fund management team to prepare a full project proposal and undergo a due diligence assessment.