**RISA PROGRAMME ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA**

**Overview of the FCDO RISA Programme**

Research and Innovation Systems for Africa (RISA) is a programme funded by the UK Foreign, Commonwealth & Development Office (FCDO) that aims to strengthen research and innovation ecosystems in Africa. The RISA Fund is jointly funded by two separate FCDO programmes – Strengthening Research Institutions in Africa (SRIA) for research ecosystems and African Technology and Innovation Partnerships (ATIP) for innovation ecosystems and will be implemented until 31 March 2024.

The RISA Fund has three broad objectives as defined below:

A) Research institutions and system strengthening (SRIA). To support research institutions to have the capabilities necessary to produce and diffuse 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 + 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.

During the implementation phase of the programme, RISA will fund projects in the six focus countries of Ghana, Kenya, Nigeria, Ethiopia, Rwanda and South Africa.

**Eligibility Criteria**

1. **Types of Organisations that are eligible for RISA programme funds.** Organisation must be registered with relevant authorities and should have been operating for at least three years.

* International and National universities.
* Research Institutions.
* Think Tanks.
* International and National NGOs.
* 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.**

1. **Countries of focus:**

* Kenya
* Ghana
* South Africa
* Nigeria
* Rwanda
* Ethiopia

1. **The proposed project must contribute to one or more of the RISA Fund Programme goals as defined below:**

* Building informed human capital through the enhancement of research and innovation skills
* Ensuring accessibility of finance for innovation processes and strengthening national research funding capacity
* Establishing supportive research and innovation infrastructure
* Creating enabling national research policy and regulation alongside national science, technology and innovation (STI) policy and regulation
* Nurturing a culture supportive of research, innovation, and entrepreneurship
* Supporting coordinated networking assets that enable productive interconnectivity among various research and innovation stakeholders
* Embedding gender equality and social inclusion (GESI) at the centre of ecosystem governance and participation.
* Creating smoother pathways to scale up research diffusion and specific innovations
* Mobilising a collective research and innovation ecosystem approach to address a particular development challenge
* Supporting the development of effective research incentives for government stakeholders, research institutions, and researchers
* Building a framework for assurance and enhancement of research quality, uptake and impact

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.

1. **Grant Award Size**

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.

1. **Deadline for Submission of applications under this funding window**

All concept notes must be submitted no later than **31st July 5:00 p.m. East Africa Time (EAT).**

**Assessment Criteria**

**The proposed projects will be assessed under the following criteria:**

* The project is being implemented in one or more focus countries.

Yes /  No

* The project is being implemented by an organisation that has implemented similar projects.

Yes /  No

* Is the project anchored on Ecosystem Goal No. 7(Embedding gender equality and social inclusion (GESI) at the centre of ecosystem governance and participation). is cross-cutting across the other goals and contributes to one or more of the other ten ecosystem goals?

Yes /  No

* Is the project aligned to a country's national research and innovation ambitions and can this be leveraged to drive the country's national development priorities?

Yes /  No

* Does the project have clear objectives and a clear route(how/when/who/what) to achieve project objectives?

Yes /  No

* Is the project locally owned and designed in consultation with/ being implemented with other country stakeholders?

Yes /  No

* Does the organisation have the technical capacity and qualified staff / consultants on a roaster and or the ability to mobilise consultants quickly or build the capacity of existing staff) to effectively implement the project?

Yes /  No

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| **Key Criteria** | **Description of Scoring Criteria** | **Scoring Weight** |
| **Alignment to RISA Programme Goals** | The Concept Note / Proposal demonstrates alignment to RISA Programme Objectives | 10% |
| **Catalytic** | * The project has the potential to be transformative; * The project has the potential to address persistent blockages and constraints in research and innovation ecosystems in the focus countries and in Africa. | 20% |
| **GESI** | Concept Note integrates GESI in one or more of the following ways:   * Is designed and or implemented by agencies led by women; * Seeks to strengthen gender equality and the social inclusion of specific marginalised groups; * Demonstrates efforts to mainstream gender and social inclusion across the lifecycle of the project; * Has the flexibility and willingness to incorporate or further amplify GESI considerations into their intervention (where these do not exist already / are very light touch) with RISA programme support. | 20% |
| **Partnerships/ Stakeholder engagement.** | Concept Note clearly outlines:   * How stakeholders (public sector, private sector, donors, civil society, and other interest groups) in the focus countries will be included in the design, implementation and adoption of the solution; * How the project will foster synergies with the existing stakeholders and policy making bodies in the research and innovation ecosystem. | 15% |
| **Sustainability** | Concept Note has:   * Identifiable measures of success and clear pathways /frameworks of demonstrating the project long term benefits/ successes; * Ability to positively contribute to the country TOC and country strategy; * A sustainability framework outlining how the gains realised through the project will continue long after the project has ended; * A concerted effort by the organisation to strengthen individual and organisational capacities in quality research, management and or leadership as relevant. | 20% |
| **Knowledge and Learning** | The project demonstrates the capacity to distil learnings through:   * Building relationships in a promising local ecosystem; * Deepening understanding of ecosystem strengthening; * Increasing the understanding of relationships between research and innovation ecosystem where applicable. | 15% |