DELTAS Africa II Call for Applications Questions submitted during the webinar of July 16, 2020

Developing Excellence in Leadership, Training and Science in Africa

Table of Contents

Budgeting for DELTAS Africa II

Budget Notes

Budget guidelines	Please read through, we are here to clarify any query you may have.
Indirect costs	AAS Policies, https://aasciences.africa/policies/aas-cost-guidelines
Budget template	As you have seen, this is based on the Theory of Change (ToC) pillars. Going forth into DELTAS Africa II, we would like to be able to trace costs to the programmatic elements and directly attribute them to what was proposed and is being achieved. Activities must be costed. The expectation is that costs are done by activity.
Allowable Costs	*Allowable Costs* Grantees should ensure that costs claimed under AAS grants are allowable and reasonable. In determining the allowable costs, costs must fulfill the following conditions: - Must be necessary for the performance of the grant; - Must be reasonable; - Must be allocable; - Must be in conformity with the grant policies, rules and guidelines, special provisions, and grantee internal policies; - Must be accorded consistent treatment; - Must be adequately documented; - Must not be against the law. This will be quizzed at the budget review stage.

Budget Template

1. **Is there a budget subminimum proportion for the different areas? Do any of the specific budget categories have caps?**
   No, there is no set budget caps for the various Theory of Change (ToC) pillars in the budget template. The overall budget cap is $3 million - $6 million and applicants can within these confines allocate budget across categories and pillars depending on the focus of the proposal at hand.

2. **The budget is based on activities and do not seem time bound.**
   The budget is set for five years/59 months as per the application template. At the awarding stage, these will be clarified in the award budget.

3. **Should the budget allocation element percentages tally to 100%?**
   If this is in the personnel tab, yes. That is an allocation of salaries across the ToC elements and should be 100%.

4. **Kindly clarify on the percentages appearing in the *Personnel* tab in the budget template with regard Research quality @ 10%, Research leads @ 30%, Research Management @10%, Scientific Citizenship @ 20% and Support costs @ 20%.**
   These percentages were placed for guidance purposes. You are free to alter them as you wish.

5. **How should currency fluctuation be addressed in the budget?**
Any fluctuations and inflation should be inbuilt into the numbers. These shall be reviewed for reasonability.

6. **In the budget template, if personnel have 50% effort and the ToC breakdown requires 100% total. Is this 100% of their 50% effort or should the total still be 50% in the ToC breakdown?**
You are required to allocate 100% of the time charged to the programme (in this instance, 50% of the personnel effort should be 100% allocated to DELTAS).
Access the new template that allows the insertion of additional rows on the DELTAS Africa webpage: https://www.aasciences.africa/calls/deltas-africa-phase-ii-call-proposals.

Consultants/Subcontracting

7. **Is it allowable to include consultancy and contracting in the budget? For instance, if the team wants to engage a consultant or contract some of the services to a third party?**
Yes, this will be guided by the procurement and expenditure guidelines.

8. **Are we allowed to sub-contract? If yes, will the consultant have to assess for GFGP?**
Yes, assuming these are external consultants/outsourced service providers? These will go through the procurement and expenditure guidelines rather than GFGP.

9. **On sub-contracts must they assess for GFGP?**
If you mean suppliers and consultants, no they do not need GFGP. If you mean partner organization (sub-grantee) then yes, they need to be assessed.

Indirect Costs

10. **Please could you confirm your position on overheads**
The AAS policies cap the indirect costs at between 0-15%. Apart from this guide, applicant's institutional policies on indirect costs should be the primary reference for allocating these costs as long as they do not exceed 15% of the direct costs. The use of overheads costs must be clearly outlined and justified.

11. **When you are in a consortium and one of your co-applicants have an overhead of more than 15%, how to handle that situation?**
The partners should be able to negotiate and keep it within the limits. The upper limit is inflexible.

12. **Is the indirect cost of 15% on direct costs or total costs? What elements can indirect costs be calculated against?**
15% of the direct costs.

Financial management of the awards

13. **If the Northern Co-investigator is from a soft-funded institution (i.e., have to raise their own salaries) are they allowed to include staff in the budget? That is, the co-investigator plus 2-3 of his/her staff?**
Yes, the budget guidelines define the expenses that can be included in each budget. Please note the 10% cap on the budget for all Northern partners.

14. **Can you build in child-care costs for researchers as suggested in one of the articles?**
   Yes, they are allowable costs backed by institutional policy.

15. **How will the budget be served? To the PI every year and it is then dispatched to the partners? Or is it directly transferred to them? Will the partners invoice the lead applicant for costs incurred or will they receive their budgets directly from AAS?**
   The lead Institution shall take responsibility of the overall budget and dispatch to the partners.

16. **If a course is organised and requires overseas faculty will their travel be paid by African partners?**
   Each program has been designed differently. Are these overseas faculty budget receiving? If yes, it is preferable that their travel costs are included in their budgets.

17. **On GFGP are Leads supposed to budget for GFGP assessments for the Co-Partners?**
   Yes, budget for certification costs as per the guidelines provided. Assessment costs will be paid by the AAS. The ballpark figure for certification cost for a DELTAS Africa II consortium is US$ 10,000 and you can include this in your budget for use when the time comes.

18. **Can we revise the budget value we submitted in the preliminary submission?**
   Yes, changes can be made to all fields submitted in the preliminary phase.

19. **"Senior researchers" are listed as Fellows. Where do we budget their remuneration - under Fellows or under Personnel?**
   It is expected that senior researchers would already be receiving salaries from their institutions of employment. For the supplementary salaries drawn on the programme based on the FTE spent on the programme, these could be budgeted under programme staff. Fellowship costs refer to the totality of costs contributing directly to the training of Fellows including stipends, tuition costs etc.

20. **In the case we have more than one Northern partner, should the budget for all northern partners be less than 10% or each of them should not exceed the 10%. Please clarify.**
   All the Northern partners in total should not exceed 10% of the total budget.

21. **We were originally informed that applicants can submit their proposals even if their GFGP level is not GOLD. Has this changed?**
   The assessment of DELTAS Africa II application is primarily on scientific merit and it is on this premise that applicants were selected to submit full proposals. The GFGP pre-certification assessments provide an indication of the institutional capacity to receive and manage grants and should applicants qualify to receive a grant based on the excellence of their application, various funding mechanisms shall apply based on the risks identified. All applicants invited to submit full applications should do so if they are still interested in pursuing these grants.

DELTAS Africa II narrative section

Narrative template

22. Given that some projects cut across disciplinary and thematic areas and require intersection of knowledge, is it acceptable to have 2 Co- Principal investigators to lead the programme? There is no space in the application form for this?

It is possible to have more than one lead applicant/principal investigator based on the need to have this set-up. Since the AAS will only assign <u>one</u> award for each consortium, the PI whose institution shall manage the grant shall be assigned as lead applicant on the application template. If a Co-PI (this status is different from a co-applicant) is desired, he/she shall be invited as a co-applicant in the online form, but their role elaborated in the *Programme Governance, Strategy and Management* section of the application form and an organogram uploaded in the same section if desired.

23. Section 4.1 and 5.1c looks similar, both seeking research questions. question 4.1 and 5b and C are very similar please clarify this.

These fields are complementary and there are distinctions in the approach and content sought as elaborated below:

4.1 Research questions and research plans

(a) Summarise the major research questions that the programme will tackle, including the methods to be used and the way that you will ensure that research questions and plans are linked to local and/or regional priorities.
500 words

In section 4.1 provide a high-level summary of the impetus of your application, in the areas mentioned and within the framing notes provided. This summary provides a holistic picture of the relevance of the application and how it is anchored in context.

5.1 Managing the programme

(a) What is the research vision of the consortia?
200 words

(b) Explain your research visions' relevance to local and/or regional needs and priorities.
700 words

(c) State your consortium's key research questions.
500 words

5.1 (b) seeks an understanding of the consortiums research vision in relation to the context. There should be linkage to the research vision presented in 5.1 (a).

5.1 (c) a list of research questions should be presented in this section without further elaboration as this has been done in preceding fields.

24. How technical could/should the language of the proposal be? Is there scope for scientific language (jargon) specific to the field or research?

The proposal can be written in technical or lay language as long as it is coherent. You might find section-6 of the *10 Tips to Winning a DELTAS Africa Grant (***link***)* useful as you make your elaboration.

25. **Should all information given fit into the application form with word limits or could additional information be given in attachments?**
The word limits in the DELTAS Africa II application form have been carefully considered and it would be useful to summarize all information within the limits provided. However, if there are lists of additional material, these can be uploaded under section 2.12, through the *Optional upload* field. The upload should be a single attachment with clear titles of the information uploaded for each of the data set. Although the section does not have any page limits, consider uploading information that is concise and pertinent to the application for the benefit of the reviewer.

26. **For multidisciplinary networks it is difficult to really go in scientific details for all the areas we are targeting within the confines of the word limits on the form.**
See the response to questions 24 and 25 above.

27. **There is no space on the form for references; and only a few sections have options to attach a figure. Is it possible to add an option for say 3 pages of additional materials?**
See the response to question 25 above specific to the *Optional upload* field. One can upload references here and/or insert them intext using an abbreviated format if word limits allow.

Scientific Quality

28. **Do you expect for the scientific review committees to be the same in all the countries? Or they will be different for each country?**
It is expected that the scientific review committees (SRC) will differ across country and region. What matters is that the SRC is valid and has the mandate to give input to the protocols set before it.

29. **Will it be one SRC for all the program or will it be different committees according to the countries? The question stems from your MEL.**
See the response to question 28 above.

30. **What sort of research is allowable and encouraged - is there any limitation to the type of research?**
For the DELTAS Africa II full applications, it is assumed that this phase will be an expansion of the preliminary applications already reviewed. Applications were invited from all areas of science, including social sciences, and all applications will go through similar merit-based selection processes.

31. **What about clinical trials are any phases not recommended?**
There are no restrictions as long as the trials fit within the five (5) year timeframe allocated for DELTAS Africa II. It is possible to design a longer timeframe if you have a plan to attract/ already attracted additional funds to complement those provided by this grant, and this is useful information to include in the application.

32. Should we be expecting to receive additional review feedback of our preliminary proposal? We received feedback of just one reviewer.

It was not mandatory for reviewers to provide qualitative comments for applications under assessment. While some applications received elaborate comments from 2-3 reviewers, others received one or no comments based on this liberty. All applications were assessed by a minimum of two reviewers and where comments were provided, they were passed on to applicants with minimal moderation.

Programme Governance, Strategy and Management

33. What nature of support does AAs give for M&E?

The AAS has an M&E team which provides various levels of support for AAS grantees once awards have been made. The team will develop all the overarching guidance documents that relate to DELTAS Africa II M&E processes. These are usually discussed in detail at the programme inception meeting and ongoing support is provided during programme implementation based on the MEL needs identified by the AAS. Upon selection, successful applicants will need to secure services of an M&E professional (in house or sub-contracted on retainer). The AAS M&E team will liaise with these professionals to translate the overarching guidance templates into documents that speak to and reflect the applicant's proposed work and focus area.

These refined and customized documents will form the foundation on which the programme's monitoring, evaluation and learning activities will be built on. The management of the M&E process will be led by the applicant's M&E professionals and supported at the back end by the AAS M&E team. Therefore, it will be critical for applicants to allocate budget for hiring M&E professionals to take charge of this important process.

34. Is it sufficient to provide a log-frame to explain the M& E process?

Applicants can provide a log frame to explain their proposed M&E process; however, this is not mandatory. The method used to explain the M&E process is entirely dependent on applicants. Any responses (in log-frame, paragraph form, etc.) that reflect clear consideration of the M&E management process will suffice.

35. Are the Theory of Change (ToC) sections weighted equally in terms of scores?

The ToC areas are weighted equally.

36. Can a work package leader come from a collaborating institution or must it be from a partner, in other words can the research activity take place in collaborators?

Research activities can and should take place at collaborating institutions. If a collaborator is delivering a significant work package on behalf of the consortium that is consistent over the life of the grant, it would be useful to have the collaborator invited as a co-applicant within the consortium, so that they can manage sub-grants in advancement of their work package. Whichever the case, research activities can take place in collaborating institutions, inspite of collaborators not managing grant funds.

37. How important is the managing risk section?

This section is important, as are all the sections in the DELTAS Africa II application form. Risk management will be an underlying factor in the final phases of pre-award and the entire implementation phase. Continuous updates will be made on the risk register through environmental scans and other methods and at this stage it would be useful to identify economic, social, legal and institutional risks that may affect your programme and/or your consortium.

Research Leadership

38. On research leadership aspects, would current registration for a higher degree be an advantage to be considered in staffing?

The calibre of staff that would be recruited as part of the programme team is important. We believe that identifying and recruiting relevantly qualified, competent and internationally competitive staff through open competition is an essential aspect of implementing this research leadership programme. Higher degree qualifications are important but should not be the overriding factors for staffing.

39. Is there opportunity for cross-programme training, drawing from your experience of the current DELTAS Africa programmes?

Opportunities exist for cross programme learning and in DELTAS Africa I, there has been cross programme training for example in biostatistics, community engagement, risk management etc. For consortia that qualify as grantees, these opportunities can be defined further, and synergies created.

40. How do we cost research activities that are numerous considering the critical mass of fellows who will be trained?

You could define a costed package for each level that you plan to recruit fellows into and use that as a guide to identify the number of fellows that your consortium could comfortably accommodate. Of course, this package will vary upwards or downwards as you implement your programme and this will further guide you on the modifications you need to make to ensure that the fellows recruited complete their training without financial constraints.

41. Will fellowship costs include transports, conference participations, computers, registrations?

Yes, all costs pertaining to fellows and their training. All fellowship costs should be assigned in the *Fellowship* costs budget category and not split under other categories.

42. Is it mandatory to develop Research Leadership programs or should we rely on existing like the AREF's?

It is necessary to allocate costs to research leadership activities for your programme. However, there is no need to reinvent the wheel if you can tailor your research training design to a similar programme that is successful. Your consortium's strategy for *Research Leadership* should be clearly elaborated and evident in your plans whether designing a new model or borrowing from existing models.

Research Management, Culture and Infrastructure

43. What is safeguarding?

Safeguarding is the process of protecting individuals from abuse or neglect, enabling them to maintain control over their lives and make informed choices without coercion. It involves empowering individuals at risk, consulting them before taking action unless someone lacks the capacity to make a decision, or their mental health poses a risk to their own or someone else's safety, in which case, always acting in his or her best interest.

44. Is it a disadvantage if institutions are unable to commit to monetary contributions? How is "monetary contribution" defined? Can you provide more detailed on in-kind contribution?

As has already been mentioned, successful applicants will be selected strictly on scientific merit and excellence. However, the AAS believes that the significant level of its grant funding provides an opportunity for applicants to use as a basis to leverage complementary or additional funding and other resources from their national governments as this would contribute towards our collective efforts to build strong national and regional R&D ecosystems on the continent. Monetary contributions may include cash and non-cash or in-kind contributions, as non-cash/in-kind contributions have an underlying cash equivalence or value. For example, if your institution already has a well-equipped laboratory, or an electron microscope or other scientific equipment (these were procured with cash) that can be made available for your proposed programme, or finance staff that would dedicate some FTE (this has cash implications as well) on the programme, these could all be viewed as in-kind contributions, with monetary value. The challenge is for applicants to carefully identify and state these in their applications.

45. What proportion of monetary contribution do you expect?

There is no prescribed monetary contribution model and provision of monetary contribution is not mandatory. However, where monetary and/or in-kind contributions are provided, please provide this information in the appropriate section of the application form.

Scientific Citizenship

46. Can a new App for communication be financed by the grant?

Developing or procuring innovations that support the broad aims of the programme are supported. However, the need for such innovations must be clearly identified and justified, and must have and provide clear value for money advantages in the overall programme strategy and implementation

47. Are institutions allowed to outsource the story telling and communications actions

Decisions to outsource services to support various aspects of the programme need to be carefully considered in terms of need, and due assessment of all options available towards meeting the identified need as efficiently and as cost effectively as possible. We strongly emphasize the concept of value for money, and therefore programme decisions that impact on finance expenditure need to be evaluated against this background.

48. Is that engagement of journalists or the young? Is the presentation of findings to the youngsters considered as involvement of the public? I am not sure if the journalists comprehend and present it to the public properly.

Community and Public Engagement targets ordinary citizens. If your target audience is young people who you wish to share your findings with, then they qualify to be within this category. However, how you present/deliver your findings is what will determine if you are conducting "engagement" or "disseminating information".   Engagement goes beyond providing information/communicating your findings.

The concept of engagement promoted by the AAS goes far beyond the mere presentation of research findings to young people. It includes carefully thought out interventions that encourage and promote a two-way dialogue between researchers and different audiences or communities, with the main goal being to draw out and enrich the research being done with different or multiple perspectives from the various audiences. Note that the AAS has a programme which provides science reporting training and capacity development for African journalists. This training equips and allows journalists to write and disseminate science reports and stories to broad audiences in a manner that is easily understood and appreciated.