Leading Integrated Research for Agenda 2030 in Africa

A five-year programme of the International Council for Science (ICSU), implemented in partnership with the Network of African Science Academies (NASAC) and the International Social Science Council (ISSC), that aims to generate solutions-oriented knowledge required to address complex sustainability challenges in Africa and to increase participation of the African scientific community in the global research programmes Future Earth, Integrated Research on Disaster Risk, and Health and Wellbeing in the Changing Urban Environment.

Call for pre-proposals: Making African cities and human settlements inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable

Advancing the Sustainable Development Goal 11 in Africa

Deadline: 17 April 2017 (18:00 CET)

Submission via https://form.jotformeu.com/70544612349355

ICSU in partnership with NASAC and the ISSC has opened a call for pre-proposals to identify collaborative research projects across Africa that are interested to contribute to the implementation of SDG 11 in Africa. 35 pre-proposals will be selected to attend a training event on inter- and trans-disciplinary research, which will take place on 28 August - 1 September 2017 (place tbc). Participants of the training will then be given about two and half months to submit full proposals. In January 2018 up to ten collaborative research projects across Africa will be funded to the value of up to 90,000 Euro each over two years.

Issue of the call for pre-proposals	27 February 2017
Submission deadline for pre-proposal	17 April 2017 (18:00 CET)
Selection decision of pre-proposals	End of June 2017
Training on integrated research	28 Aug - 1 Sep 2017 (place tbc)
Submission deadline for full proposals	20 November 2017 (18:00 CET)
Funding decision	End of January 2018

THEMATIC FOCUS OF THE CALL FOR PRE-PROPOSALS: ADVANCING SDG 11 IN AFRICA

Africa is urbanising at a historically rapid rate, more than half of all Africans are expected to live in cities by 2050's[1]. Urbanisation has created some of the region's greatest development challenges, but it also offers tremendous opportunities for advancing sustainable development in the region. The Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), adopted by all parties of the United Nations in 2015, provide a roadmap for sustainable development until 2030. Given the anticipated scale of urbanisation over the next 15 years, cities will be fundamental to the implementation of all 17 SDGs.

By embracing the challenges set out in the SDGs, cities can leapfrog detrimental development practices and progress directly to more inclusive, sustainable development pathways. SDG 11 recognises the central role of urbanisation in sustainable development, and calls for *making cities and human settlements inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable.* This "urban SDG" provides a great opportunity for cities to develop inclusive local policies, strategies that would advance sustainable urban development. However, before meaningful implementable and scalable strategies and actions are possible, relevant place-based knowledge is needed.

To stimulate and deliver the new knowledge required in the practice of sustainable urban development, LIRA 2030 Africa will support up to 10 collaborative research projects across Africa that will explore innovative ways of advancing the implementation of SDG 11 in Africa. These research projects are expected to explore the development of new approaches and strategies towards the integration of sustainable solutions into a societal, urban and behavioural context, and the innovative re-thinking of urban futures - in partnership with local authorities, industry, communities, and government.

In that way, LIRA 2030 Africa seeks to foster African scientific leadership for the implementation of the Agenda 2030 on Sustainable Development. New knowledge generated by these research projects will also contribute to the implementation of the New Urban Agenda and the African Union's Agenda 2063.

We are particularly interested in research projects that are:

- Exploring ways of linking SDG 11 with other SDGs, e.g. identifying systematic linkages and synergies between economy, energy, environment, and social outcomes in the urban systems and assessing potential co-benefits and trade-offs that can lead to coherent and mutually reinforcing policies on urban development.
- Developing urban governance models that are inclusive and that recognise the existing linkages within cities, and also their impact on the wider world.
- Investigating innovative approaches of participatory integrated urban planning, reducing inequalities in urban areas; reducing environmental impacts and resource

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[1] ADB (2011). Africa in 50 Years Time. The Road Towards Inclusive Growth, African Development Bank (ADB) (Tunisia, Tunis), September 2011.

footprints of cities; improving quality of urban environments, promoting transition towards sustainable urban mobility and inclusive public transport systems.

- Exploring innovative ways of providing services in cities (e.g. clean drinking water, sanitation, energy, health, and housing) that are inclusive, accessible, affordable and resilient to climate change and natural disasters energy.
- Devising metrics for tracking progress on SDG 11, and exploring monitoring and evaluation mechanisms.
- Exploring approaches of systematic collection and sharing of relevant, accessible and timely urban data that will help to understand how key urban indicators are responding.
- Understanding skills that are needed in the African context to ensure that the SDG 11 is realised.

We are looking for collaborative projects that:

- contribute to the implementation of SDG 11, however, projects that are exploring interactions between SDG 11 and other SDGs are also encouraged (see ICSU framework on SDGs interactions);
- foster collaborations between early career scientists in Africa across scientific disciplines (**research teams should be inter-disciplinary in that they should involve at least one social and one natural scientist**);
- bring together key stakeholders (e.g. local authorities, policy makers, the private sector, civil society, urban planners, engineers and citizens) in research co-design and co - production. Research questions should be co-designed with key stakeholders at the earliest stages of research process. Each pre-proposal should explain and illustrate the steps toward co-design with key stakeholders to date and indicate the further steps toward research co-design and co-production (**research teams should be trans-disciplinary in that they should involve academic researchers with non-academic based stakeholders in the research process from the beginning, in order to bring together different knowledge systems to understand and seek solutions for real world challenges – integrate scientific knowledge with tacit and traditional knowledge and professional know-how).** See this article, for further details about trans-disciplinary research.
- foster research collaboration across Africa (each project should involve 2[2] African countries). Ideally at least one member of the research team should be based in a low income country (based on OECD ODA's ranking) or the inclusion of collaborators from the poorest parts of middle income nations should be demonstrated.

TWO-PHASE APPLICATION PROCESS

The LIRA 2030 Africa programme has a two-phase application process. The first phase is a call for pre-proposals which aims to identify early career researchers in Africa interested to undertake integrated (inter- and trans-disciplinary) research on advancing the

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[2] involvement of more countries maybe too difficult for this type of research

implementation of SDG 11 in Africa. Representatives of successful pre-proposals will be invited to attend a **5-day training event on integrated research** which will take place on 28 August – 1 September 2017 (place tbc). This training aims to strengthen scientific capacity to undertake this form of research, to enable researchers to build meaningful inter- and trans-disciplinary projects, to support the development of full proposals and to strengthen science communication skills. The programme will cover associated travel and subsistence costs.

In the second phase, which will be launched following the training (in September 2017), the programme will offer up to **ten grants, each up to 90000 Euro over 2 years,** for integrated research projects. Only participants of the training event will be eligible to apply for these grants. They will be given about two and half months to develop full proposals and submit them by **20 November 2017.**

! As soon as applicants are aware that their pre- proposals have been selected, they are encouraged to start the development of full proposals (see a template for full proposals). Full proposals can be further developed following the training event.

Please note that this document relates to the first phase only. Further details about the process for applying for funding in the second phase will be made available in September 2017.

Successful projects will be announced early 2018. The research projects funded by the programme will become part of the LIRA 2030 Africa network and will be connected with global research projects of Future Earth, Integrated Research on Disaster Risk, and Urban Health and Well-being.

KEY DATES

Issue of the call for pre-proposals	27 February 2017
Submission deadline for pre-proposal	17 April 2017 (18:00 CET)
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SCOPE

- Research must have the potential to foster the implementation of SDG 11 or explore interactions between SDG 11 and other SDGs
- Pre-proposals and full proposals must involve collaboration across Africa, across scientific disciplines and beyond academia (e.g. with civil society, business or policy).

ELIGIBILITY

- This call is open only to African early career scientists based at organisations in Africa.
- Applicants should have no more than 10 years work experience following their PhDs or equivalent research experience. If an applicant does not have a PhD, evidence proving research experience should be provided.
- The programme aims to foster research collaboration across Africa, therefore each project should involve 2 African countries. Ideally at least one member of the research team should be based in a low income country ([based on OECD ODA's ranking](#)) or the inclusion of collaborators from the poorest parts of middle income nations should be demonstrated.
- Demonstrating contribution to the implementation of SDG 11 or exploring interactions between SDG 11 and other SDGs.
- Each research team should include minimum one social and one natural scientists
- Pre-proposals should illustrate steps that were taken to co-design research questions with key stakeholders (state who they are, e.g. regional and local government, municipality representatives, policy makers, urban planners, health service providers, engineers, the private sector, and civil society organisations). Plans of engaging these stakeholders in knowledge co-production should also be outlined.
- Both individual researchers and research teams can submit pre-proposals. However, individual applicants should indicate the name of the collaborator(s) and attach a letter confirming his/her interest in research collaboration.
- In the case of applications submitted by the research teams, only the lead applicant will be invited to attend the training on integrated research.
- The institution under which the project will take place should be based in an African country. This institution should provide a letter of support for the project, if it's successful. A senior scientist from this institution who will supervise the applicant should also provide a letter of support. Applications which do not include such letters will not be considered.
- All projects must include a university partner.
- Applications must be written in English (if the project is successful, all progress reporting will also need to be done in English). However, it is not necessary that the research be conducted in English or published only in English.
- Applications which exceed the character limits (see below) will not be considered.

APPLICATION FORM FOR PRE-PROPOSALS

- Name and institutional affiliation of lead applicant and co-applicants.
- Proposed title of project
- A clear summary of how the research project will contribute to the implementation of SDG 11 or explore interlinkages between SDG 11 and other SDGs in African cities (up to 3500 characters including spaces).
- Research questions you project will investigate

- A description of the integrated nature of the project, including the different academic disciplines and other knowledge partners (from outside academia, e.g. regional and local government and municipality representatives, policy makers, urban planners, health service providers, engineers, the private sector, and civil society organisations) who will be engaged in research co-design and co-production, and how (up to 4500 characters including spaces).
- Indication of research relevance to poverty reduction, and gender equity (max 1000 characters including spaces).
- Characteristics of the proposed team: short CVs of the Principle Investigator and members of the research team (each CV max 2 pages) should be attached. Diversity of the project team in terms of disciplines, countries involved, and experience, etc. should be indicated.

Submission of pre-proposals and relevant documents may only be made using the online form available at https://form.jotformeu.com/70544612349355

ASSESSMENT PROCESS OF PRE-PROPOSALS

All pre-proposals will undergo a three-stage assessment process:

1. Eligibility check of all applications by the programme's management team (see below) and exclusion of applications that do not meet the eligibility criteria
2. Scientific review of eligible pre-proposals
3. Final selection of pre-proposals by the programme advisory committee (see below)

ASSESSMENT CRITERIA FOR PRE-PROPOSALS

- Relevance to the call for pre-proposals
- The project's scientific merit: originality, innovativeness, the potential of advancing understanding of the subject concerned
- Potential research impact in addressing urban development challenges and urban poverty reduction
- Inter- disciplinary skills mix of projects teams
- Collaboration with non-academic stakeholder groups
- Research collaboration at the regional level
- Adequacy of communication/outreach/engagement approach
- Approach to integrating gender equity dimension in research content and/or research practice

PROGRAMME GOVERNACE and MANAGEMENT

Programme Advisory Committee

The LIRA 2030 Africa programme is guided and overseen by an inter- and trans-disciplinary programme advisory committee. In addition to its responsibilities for advising on strategy development and resource mobilisation and for overseeing programme management, the advisory committee makes final decisions on the selection of pre-proposals and full

proposals and the associated allocation of funds. In order to avoid conflicts of interest, Advisory Committee members cannot participate or serve in advisory functions to the applicants or funded projects. Funding organisations supporting the programme have observer status on the advisory committee.

Programme Management Team

The Programme will be run by a management team involving ICSU, ICSU ROA, NASAC and ISSC staff, coordinated from the ICSU Secretariat.

CONTACTS

Before making a direct inquiry, please read the call for pre-proposals carefully. For inquiries concerning the content of the call, please contact:

Ms. Katsia Paulavets, Programme Manager
Email: Lira2030Africa@icsu.org
Website: http://bit.ly/lira2030