RFP FOR CONSULTANCY SERVICES TO DEVELOP RESEARCH COSTING AND PRICING TOOL KITS FOR UNIVERSITIES IN AFRICA

RE-ADVERTISEMENT

January 2025

1.0 Introduction

The Science for Africa Foundation (SFA Foundation) is a pan-African, non-profit, and public charity organisation that supports, strengthens, and promotes science and innovation in Africa. The SFA Foundation is committed to improving African people's quality of life and promoting research uptake in communities, industry, and the public sector. We serve the African research ecosystem by designing, funding, and managing programmes that support excellent science and innovation; and that build and reinforce environments that are conducive for scientists to thrive and produce quality research that impacts development. SFA Foundation is distinctive in that it focuses on the ecosystem surrounding research and the production of research itself. It also supports initiatives that directly influence the quantity, quality, and impact of research, but are not part of specific research projects. SFA Foundation operations are hosted within the International Centre of Insect Physiology and Ecology (icipe) as a programme in the Republic of Kenya.

1.1 The Africa Research Management Capacity Strengthening Programme (REMACS Programme Africa)

The REMACS Programme is designed to fill the critical gaps in the African research ecosystem to support a vibrant research culture and leadership at research institutions. It seeks to build the expertise necessary to create and sustain robust research enterprises and environments at institutions in Africa. The Programme's overall goal is to address systemic level challenges, at institutions, in creating and sustaining enabling research environments by addressing systemic level challenges, namely, institutional leadership, sustainability, standards and developing individual capacity. Strand Two – sustainability is about working with institutions to create mechanisms that will sustain the research enterprises supported by efficient research management functions through a structured framework to accurately determine the costs and set the appropriate prices for research projects transparently. In recent years, funding bodies have increasingly allowed costs for research management and paid indirect costs of African research institutions even if there is still a disparity with the Global North. The ESSENCE Group for Health Research's good practice document 'The Five Keys to Improving Research Costing and Pricing in Low- and middle-income countries' (2020) provides fundamental principles to guide the costing and pricing of research.

2.0 Overview

Research activities in African academic and research institutions have surged, highlighting the need for strong research support systems to foster impactful, world-class research that drives innovation and economic growth. However, many institutions face challenges in recovering the full costs of conducting research as comprehensive cost accounting practices are often lacking. Researchers, in their efforts to reduce budgets and secure grants, frequently exclude indirect costs essential to institutional operations, inadvertently burdening institutional resources. This unsustainable approach can lead to project abandonment when institutions are unable to subsidize these hidden costs.

The SFA Foundation seeks proposals from qualified consultants to develop comprehensive research costing and pricing models and toolkits that are easily adaptable by universities and research institutions in Africa. These toolkits will be

instrumental in aiding institutions to cost and price research projects efficiently and effectively. The consultant will review several good practice documents and guidelines including the "Five Keys to Improving Research Costing and Pricing in low- and middle-income countries" document, and policies from select funders and universities such as budgeting guidelines, indirect/overheads use, etc.

This framework will establish a robust methodology for calculating true research costs and prices, enabling institutions to recover full costs effectively and sustainably, reducing their reliance on subsidies, and allowing their research enterprises to thrive. The findings of this review will inform the development of model frameworks and toolkits which could be easily adopted by African universities to enable proper research costing and pricing that will contribute to sustainability for the research enterprises.

3.0 Aim and Scope of the assignments

The assignment aims to enhance the research costing and pricing practices of select universities and funders by:

- Gaining a comprehensive understanding of the current research costing and pricing practices among selected funders and universities.
- Reviewing relevant good practice documents, including the ESSENCE guidelines and policies from selected funders and universities. The insights from this review will guide the development of adaptable model frameworks and toolkits.
- Developing comprehensive and practical research costing and pricing models and toolkits. These tools will be designed for easy adoption by universities and research institutions, enabling them to achieve greater transparency, sustainability, and efficiency in costing and pricing research projects.

The tasks of this assignment will include:

a. Review good practice documents and select funders' policies and guidelines on research costing and pricing which will be agreed upon before signing the contract.
b. Review existing research costing and pricing policies and practices at select African universities which will be agreed upon before signing the contract
c. Develop practical and easily adaptable frameworks including toolkits for research costing and pricing.

4.0 Expected Deliverables

The consultant will deliver the following:

a) A brief methodology proposal that defines the approach, parameters, and scope within two weeks of contracting
b) An interim report outlining key findings against the tasks outlined above.
c) A framework including toolkits for research costing.
d) A framework including toolkits for research pricing.
e) User guide and training materials for the costing and pricing frameworks

[a] Two virtual workshops for users who will be determined upon signing the contract

5.0 Duration

This work is to be delivered in 16 weeks with an expected start date of **February 30, 2025**

Action	Date
Circulation of RFP to prospective bidders [Readvertisement]	January 21, 2025
Deadline for receipt of questions relating to the RFP and confirmation of participation	January 25, 2025
Response to Vendors' Queries	January 28, 2025
Deadline for submission of the proposals	February 4, 2025
Project start date	February 30, 2025

6.0 Consultant Profile

The competent consultant (s) must have the following knowledge and skills:

a) Deep understanding of business, finance, accounting, or professional accounting qualifications from internationally recognized institutes of accountancy
b) Lead consultant will have at least 10 years' experience in financial analysis, business analysis, accounting or related field in the public sector, or non-profit environment.
c) One team member must understand the African research landscape including research management at universities.
d) Experience in internationally applicable costing and pricing methodologies which include Cost Accounting or Cost/Price Estimating based on at least three previous assignments carried out in the last seven years.
e) Proven experience in financial policy and procedures formulation preferably in a consultancy setting in multiple organizations.
f) Ability to actively engage key leaders throughout the process to ensure buy-in from stakeholders.
g) Strong writing and presentation skills demonstrated in the application documents.
h) Experience in effective training and coaching teams.

7.0 Proposal Submission Guidelines

a) A cover letter introducing the submission (1 page in A4 form)
b) The proposal should be concise (up to 1-5 pages in A4 form) and expected to include:
    - Details on approach and methodology
    - Synopsis of qualification for all team members who will be working on the assignment giving competency, aptitude, and relevant experiences from any similar work (attach detailed CVs);
    - Work plan with timelines proposed for this work
c) Financial Proposal for the provision of the services. This should include detailed costings that tie to the elements of your strategy to deliver this contract. Also, to include day rates and the number of days for each person

plus other expenses in a clearly articulated manner

d) Letters of support from relevant partners
e) Current business licenses where applicable.
f) VAT and PIN Certificate (if Kenyan) where applicable.

8.0 Evaluation Criteria

The proposal will be evaluated based on the following criteria:

Mandatory Requirements of the Consultant
a) VAT and PIN Certificate (if Kenyan) where applicable. b) Evidence of having conducted similar assignments. (Provide completion certificates, recommendation letter among others)

Only Bidders who meet the mandatory requirements will proceed to Technical Evaluation and will be evaluated based on the following criteria:

8.1 Technical Score (Weight 80%)

Criteria	Score
• Deep understanding of the pricing and costing options available to research and not-for-profit institutions and funder conditions. (Provide evidence of past experience) • Adequacy of the proposed work plan, methodology and deliverables, in responding to the terms of reference	40 marks
Specific experience of the firm related to the engagement. • Knowledge and experience developing manuals and toolkits (Provide evidence of past experience) • Details of selected relevant and similar assignments completed in the past five years (provide reference letters or completion certificates) • Good understanding of the current research funding landscape in Africa • Knowledge and experience in developing budgets for research proposals in not-for-profit institutions (Provide evidence of past experience) • Excellent facilitation, presentation, and writing skills. (Provide evidence of past experience)	20 marks
Team Composition and Expertise • The team should have appropriate professional qualifications and suitable experience in developing costing and pricing tools. • Team should have at least a member experienced in research management.	20 marks

8.2 Financial Scores (Weight 20%)

Criteria	Score
Proposed costing structure/rates;	20 marks

9.0 Terms and Conditions

This document contains proprietary and confidential information. Recipients may use or reproduce the information detailed within this document and any other supporting information only to provide a response to this RFP. No commitment will be

made to any firm/consultant unless a contract has been awarded and signed by both parties. We reserve the right to cease this exercise at any time. During the period of this activity, no contact should occur between any members of the supplier's staff and organisational staff in relation to this exercise other than through the designated contact points as detailed within this RFP. It is, however, recognized that pre-existing relationships, if any, shall be respected.

9.1 Ethics

Applicants are required to observe our procurement ethical code of conduct which includes but is not limited to observing the highest standard of ethics regarding corruption, collusion, conflict of interest and fraud. If the agency does not observe confidentiality or ethical practices, they shall be disqualified from any future work.

9.2 Non-Disclosure and Confidentiality

The information contained within this document or subsequently made available to the consultant is deemed confidential and must not be disclosed without prior written consent unless required by law.

10.0 Independent Proposal

By submitting a proposal, the consultant warrants that the prices in the proposal have been arrived at independently, without consultation, communication, agreement or understanding for the purpose of restricting competition, as to any matter relating to such prices, with any other potential consultant or with any competitor.

11.0 Proposal Submission Process

It should be noted that this document relates to a Request for Proposal (RFP) only and not a firm commitment to enter into a contractual agreement. In addition, we will not be held responsible for any costs associated with the production of a response to this Request for Proposal.

11.1 Instructions on the Proposal Submission Process

The deadline for submission of proposals is **February 3, 2025, at 17:00**. (East African Time)
Proposal must be sent by email to: procurement@scienceforafrica.foundation

The proposal to be marked as follows on the subject line: REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS FOR CONSULTANCY SERVICES TO DEVELOP RESEARCH COSTING AND PRICING TOOLKITS SFA

Please encrypt your proposal with a password and share your password on February 5, 2025.