



RFP/008/2026

**REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS (RFP) CONSULTANCY SERVICES FOR DELTAS AFRICA
II CAREER ADVANCEMENT FELLOWSHIP**

APRIL 2026

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. SFA Foundation operations are hosted within the International Centre of Insect Physiology and Ecology (icipe) as a programme in the Republic of Kenya.

2.0 Background

The Developing Excellence in Leadership, Training and Science (DELTA)S Africa Initiative is a flagship pan-African programme supporting the development of world-class researchers and robust research systems across the continent. Funded by Wellcome and the UK Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office (FCDO), and implemented by the Science for Africa (SFA) Foundation, DELTA)S Africa invests in African-led research consortia to strengthen scientific quality, leadership capacity, institutional systems, and societal engagement.

Now in its second phase (DELTA)S Africa II, 2023-2027), the programme supports 14 multi-country consortia operating through a hub-and-spoke model, spanning over 30 African countries. DELTA)S II focuses on four core pillars:

- Scientific Quality - advancing high-quality, impactful research across health and development priorities
- Research Leadership Capacity - building a critical mass of globally competitive African research leaders
- Research Systems Strengthening - improving institutional capacity, governance, and research management systems
- Scientific Citizenship (Societal Engagement) - enhancing the translation of research into policy, practice, and public engagement

Through this integrated approach, DELTA)S Africa contributes to strengthening Africa's research ecosystem, fostering collaboration, and positioning African scientists to lead globally competitive research agendas.

Despite these gains, a persistent gap remains in the transition from postdoctoral training to independent research leadership. Many promising African researchers face barriers in securing funding, establishing independent research programmes, and navigating institutional leadership pathways. This challenge contributes to attrition and limits the long-term sustainability of research capacity on the continent.

To address this gap, the DELTA)S Africa II Career Advancement Fellowship Programme has been established as a pilot initiative providing targeted intervention to support a cohort of 14 senior postdoctoral fellows and early career researchers (one from each DELTA)S Africa consortium) in consolidating their research portfolios and transitioning into independent leadership roles. The programme provides a one-year fellowship combining financial

support, targeted training, coaching, and mentorship to support their leadership development.

A central component of this programme is the provision of Leadership Development Training and Coaching, which is designed to equip fellows with the skills, networks, and strategic capabilities required to lead research programmes, secure competitive funding, and contribute to policy and innovation ecosystems.

3.0 Objectives of the Assignment

The objectives of the assignment will be to:

- i. Design and deliver a tailored leadership development curriculum aligned to the needs of African early-career researchers.
- ii. Provide structured coaching to support fellows' leadership, career progression, and project delivery.
- iii. Strengthen fellows' competencies in:
 - a. Research leadership and team management
 - b. Strategic career positioning and academic independence
 - c. Grant leadership and resource mobilisation
 - d. Institutional engagement and systems navigation
 - e. Policy engagement and science communication
- iv. Support fellows to translate training into tangible outputs, such as grant proposals, publications, and leadership roles.
- v. Contribute to building a cohort-based leadership network across DELTAS Africa consortia.

4.0 Scope of Work

The consultant will be responsible for, but not limited to, the following tasks:

4.1 Programme Design

- Conduct a rapid needs assessment of fellows (skills, gaps, career aspirations)
- Design a modular leadership curriculum, aligned with programme objectives
- Develop training materials, toolkits, and practical exercises
- Ensure integration with:
 - Fellows' individual career advancement plans

4.2 Leadership Training Delivery

Deliver structured modules across the fellowship year (virtual and/or in-person), including:

Core Modules (indicative):

- Research Leadership & Vision Setting
- Team Management & Supervision
- Building and Managing Research Programmes
- Grant Leadership, Budgeting, and Financial Stewardship
- Strategic Career Development & Academic Positioning
- Science Communication & Influence
- Responsible Research Culture, Ethics, and DEI
- Negotiation, Partnerships, and Stakeholder Engagement

4.3 Coaching and Mentorship Support

- Provide individual coaching sessions
- Facilitate group coaching sessions / peer-learning forums
- Support fellows in:
 - Refining career advancement plans

- Overcoming leadership and institutional barriers
- Preparing for leadership roles and opportunities

4.4 Integration with Programme Milestones

The consultant will contribute to:

- Inception Meeting (May/June 2026)
 - Deliver introductory leadership session
 - Support fellows in refining career plans
- Quarterly Check-ins
 - Facilitate reflection, learning, and peer exchange
- Final Convening (April 2027)
 - Support fellows in presenting leadership journeys and outcomes
 - Deliver reflection and sustainability session

4.5 Monitoring, Evaluation, and Learning (MEL)

- Develop leadership competency assessment framework (baseline and endline)
- Track fellows' progress in leadership development
- Provide periodic progress reports
- Contribute to programme-level learning and improvement

5.0 Deliverables

The consultant will deliver:

1. Inception Report (within 2–3 weeks of contract start)
 - Detailed workplan
 - Training curriculum and delivery schedule
 - Coaching framework
2. Leadership Training Curriculum and Materials
 - Modules, presentations, toolkits, exercises
3. Training Delivery
 - Structured training sessions
4. Coaching and Mentorship Delivery
 - Individual coaching sessions for all fellows
 - Group coaching and peer-mentoring sessions
5. Progress Reports (quarterly)
 - Summary of activities, participation, and emerging outcomes
6. Final Report
 - Assessment of fellows' leadership development
 - Lessons learned and recommendations for scale-up

6.0 Duration of the Assignment

The assignment will run for a period of 12 months upon signing of the contract

7.0 Proposal Submission Requirements

Mandatory/ Statutory requirements/ Company Profile:

- i. Certificate of incorporation/business registration,
- ii. Tax compliance certificate.
- iii. Registration with relevant bodies if applicable

Technical Proposals

- i. A one-page cover letter with contact details.
- ii. The proposal should not be more than five (5) pages (including the budget).
- iii. A project plan that demonstrates a clear understanding of the assignment.
- iv. An executive summary providing an overview of your methodology, project approach, detailed work plan, timeline and deliverables
- v. Experience
 - a. References from similar clients. (submit at least three (3) reference letters with evidence of successful similar assignments and good standing).
 - b. Submission of supporting documents such as reference letters.

Team Composition: Names and roles of the project team members, highlighting their qualifications and experiences in past assignments. Team members should have the required competences.

- vi. Companies are encouraged to include any additional information they believe demonstrates added value within the scope of this assignment

8.0 Required Competencies

The Lead consultant should demonstrate:

- Advanced degree (PhD preferred) in a relevant field
- Proven experience in leadership development for researchers or academics
- Strong track record in executive coaching and mentoring
- Experience working in African research and higher education systems
- Demonstrated expertise in:
 - Research leadership and grant development
 - Science communication and policy engagement
 - Capacity strengthening programmes
- Experience delivering blended learning (virtual + in-person)

Key Competencies:

- Strategic thinking and programme design
- Coaching and facilitation excellence
- Cultural and contextual awareness (African research systems)
- Strong interpersonal and communication skills
- Results-oriented approach

Cost projections

The financial proposal shall clearly indicate the total cost broken down into various components of the deliverables. The Financial proposal must be in US Dollars (\$) and shall remain valid for (120) days.

9.0 RFP Timelines

Table 1: Mandatory Criteria

Action	Date
Circulation of RFP	9th April 2026
Deadline for receipt of questions relating to the RFP and confirmation of participation	13th April 2026
Response to Vendors' Queries	15th April 2026
Deadline for submission of the proposals	22 nd April 2026
Project start date	After issuance of the contract

9.0 Evaluation Criteria

9.1 Mandatory Evaluation

The mandatory evaluation shall be conducted based on the below criteria. Any bidder who does not meet the mandatory requirements will be disqualified from proceeding to technical evaluation.

Table 2: Mandatory Criteria

Mandatory Requirements of the Bidder
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) Tax compliance certificate and PIN Certificate (if Kenyan) where applicable. b) Evidence of having conducted similar assignments. (list and provide recommendation letters, stating the similar assignment done) c) CV(s) of key personnel d) Registration with relevant bodies (where applicable)

9.2 Technical Evaluation * (Weight 80%)

Only bidders who meets all mandatory requirements will proceed to technical evaluation stage. The evaluation will be based on the below criteria.

Table 3: Technical Evaluation Criteria

Criteria	Weighted Percentage
<p><u>Understanding of the RFP</u> Clear understanding of the assignment as outlined in the (RFP) with realistic methodology, approach, workplan, deliverables and timelines.</p>	40%
<p><u>Experience</u> Evidence of similar assignments in last Ten (10) years. (Provide at least three (3) references where similar assignments were implemented. Provide one (1) Recommendation letter from a Reputable organisation.</p>	20%
<p><u>Team Composition</u></p>	15%

Composition and verifiable competencies of the proposed project team for the assignment (The project lead must demonstrate experience in leadership development, training and Coaching)	
Value addition	5%
Total Scores out of 80	80%
Minimum Score (64/80)	

Bidders must attain a pass mark of 64% to be considered for the next steps.

9.3 Financial Scores (Weight 20%)

Only bidders who will attain the minimum technical scores requirement will be considered for Financial Analysis.

Table 4: Financial Criteria

Criteria	Score
Cost and Value (20%)	20 marks
i. Total project cost broken down into various components of the deliverables.	
ii. Justification of costs, ensuring alignment with the scope	

9.4 Determination of the Winning Bidder

The winning bidder shall be determined based on the combined scores for Technical and Financial scores as per the below formula:

$$\text{Final Score (FS)} = \text{TS} \times \text{T\%} + \text{FS} \times \text{F\%},$$

where T% + F% shall always be equal to 100%.

- Final Score (FS) is the total combined scores of Technical and Financial scores.
- T% is the weighting given to the technical proposal.
- F% is the weighting given to the financial proposal

T% shall be 80% and F% shall be 20% respectively

The bidder with the highest combined scores shall be considered for negotiations for the award.

The best bidders as outlined above may further be invited for presentation on their proposals for further decision making.

10.0 Terms and Conditions

This document contains proprietary and confidential information. Bidders may use or reproduce the information detailed within this document and any other supporting

information only to provide a response to this request for proposal. No commitment will be made to any bidder unless a contract has been awarded and signed by both parties.

SFA Foundation reserves the right to cease this exercise at any time. During the period of this activity, no contact should occur between any members of the bidder's staff and SFA Foundation staff in relation to this exercise other than through the designated contact points as detailed within this request for proposal. It is however recognised that pre-existing relationships if any, will be respected.

11.0 Ethics

Bidders 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 bidder does not observe confidentiality or ethical practices, they shall be disqualified from any future work.

12.0 Non-Disclosure and Confidentiality

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

13.0 Independent Proposal

By submitting a proposal, the bidder warrants that the fees 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 fees, with any other potential bidder or with any competitor.

14.0 Proposal Submission Process

It should be noted that this document relates to a request for proposal only and not a commitment to enter into a contractual agreement. In addition, SFA Foundation will not be held responsible for any costs associated with the production of a response to this request for proposal.

Instructions on the Proposal Submission Process

1. Proposal to be sent by email to procurement@scienceforafrica.foundation on or before 22nd April 2026 at 5.00 pm (EAT)
2. Protect your proposal with a password and share the password on 23rd April 2026 by 8.00 am (EAT)
3. The proposal to be marked as follows on the subject line:

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