RFP/018/2026

Request for Proposals (RFP) for consultancy services for Strategy Development Support for SFA Foundation

November 2026

Request for Proposals

1 Introduction and Background of the Assignment

SFA Foundation is a pan-African, non-profit, organisation that exists to support, strengthen and promote science and innovation in Africa for the benefit of the continent and the world. Established in 2021, SFA Foundation supports African scientists and the wider science ecosystem, recognising science and innovation as central to the Africa's sustainable development.

SFA Foundation's inaugural strategic plan was developed in 2023 and covers the five-year period ending in December 2027. The Foundation intends to develop, approve and socialise its next strategy in time for implementation from January 2028. The strategy development process will therefore commence in early 2027 and is expected to conclude with Board approval by November 2027.

The process will build on the current strategy's implementation experience, the mid-strategy review, programme and portfolio evidence, institutional performance and learning, stakeholder insights, existing studies and analyses, and relevant commitments. It will also capture new learning emerging through 2026–2027 and address material evidence gaps that could affect strategic choices.

SFA Foundation seeks an experienced strategy development consultant to provide independent challenge on the current evidence and consequent strategic choices, strategy workshops facilitation and synthesis. Strategic ownership and decision-making will remain with SFA Foundation's leadership and governance structures.

2 Purpose of the Assignment

The purpose of the assignment is to support SFA Foundation to develop an evidence-grounded, clearly prioritised and implementable organisational strategy for 2028–2032, with explicit strategic choices and trade-offs, a clear value proposition and theory of change, measurable outcomes, and a credible implementation and financing model. While the strategy shall cover the 2028-2032 strategic period, a longer-term strategic outlook, typically for the next 7-10 years is expected with insights that fall outside the 5-year strategy period prioritised and documented. The assignment will integrate the end-strategy review and development of the 2028 Annual Operating Plan (AOP) to enable a timely transition from strategy development to execution.

3 Approach

The SFA Foundation strategy development consultancy is a collaborative effort that will leverage external support with in-house capability. The successful consultant will therefore be

required to work hand in hand with a dedicated strategy professional at SFA Foundation. In light of this, the Consultant will be expected to:

1. Adopt a highly collaborative approach with the SFA team at all levels.
2. Build on existing strategy work and internal knowledge.
3. Challenge SFA on unexplored high-impact opportunities using a hypothesis driven, evidence-based approach.
4. Maintain clear channels of communication and factor adequate time for review and feedback.

4 Scope of Work

The assignment is organised around five indicative phases. The phases and activities below describe SFA Foundation's proposed approach and expected outcomes; they are not intended to constrain the consultant to a prescribed methodology. The consultant should use professional judgement to propose the most effective approach for achieving the assignment objectives and deliverables.

4.1 Phase 1: Preparation and Inception: (February 2027)

The consultant will gain an in depth understanding of SFA's founding principles, strategic direction and ethos. The consultant will also align with key staff to finalize the proposed approach and methodology.

Table 1:

Proposed Activities	Output / Deliverable
Review all pertinent documents relating SFA's direction, founding principles and ethos Engage with the key process leads to clarify the scope, methodology, workplan and timelines.	Inception report: shared understanding of success, sign-off on final scope, final methodology, workplan and milestones document, draft stakeholder engagement / interview guide. The inception report also needs to disclose if / how Artificial Intelligence will be utilized in the project in alignment with SFA Foundation guidelines.

4.2 Phase 2: Framing the Context — Consolidate, Learn and Test (February–April 2027)

The consultant will support SFA Foundation to establish a robust evidence base and assess the strategic context. Activities are expected to include:

Table 2:

Proposed Activities	Output / Deliverable
• Review the current strategy, mid-strategy review report, programme and portfolio evidence, performance data, institutional learning, previous stakeholder insights, commitments, studies and other relevant documentation. • Lead an end-strategy review assessing performance, what worked and what did not, organisational capabilities and lessons for the next strategy. • Develop and maintain a Strategy Evidence & Learning Synthesis that distinguishes established evidence from emerging learning and assumptions; records material gaps; identifies actions and owners to close priority gaps; and transparently records residual uncertainty. • Assess the internal environment, including strengths, weaknesses, capabilities, culture, systems, operating model and capacity to deliver future ambitions. • Review relevant external science, funding, policy and ecosystem trends; benchmark selected institutions; and undertake targeted research or stakeholder inquiry where gaps could materially change a strategic choice. • Facilitate early key stakeholder engagement to frame future ambition and success, and to test assumptions, priorities and trade-offs without prematurely fixing final choices. • Prepare a situational analysis that identifies strategic implications, emerging priorities and potential trade-offs.	Institutional assessment and strategic landscape report; including: a) End-strategy review findings b) Strategy Evidence & Learning Synthesis c) Situational Analysis

Phase 3: Taking a Position (May–July 2027)

The consultant will facilitate the transition from evidence and learning to explicit strategic decisions. Activities are expected to include:

Table 3:

Proposed Activities	Output / Deliverable

• Design and facilitate an offsite strategy workshop of at least three days with the Executive Team and selected departmental and portfolio leads to:
  ○ Help leadership clarify SFA Foundation's beneficiaries, implementation partners and their needs, and articulate the Foundation's value proposition.
  ○ Facilitate the definition of three to five strategic objectives, corresponding focus areas, priority initiatives and institutional capabilities.
  ○ Support development of a Theory of Change and/or Strategy Map that articulates the relationships between strategic objectives, organisational capabilities, outputs and intended impact.
  ○ Facilitate agreement on performance measures and targets, key assumptions, resource logic and explicit trade-offs, including what SFA Foundation will not prioritise.
• Support a Board engagement to review, challenge and validate and/or provide input on the strategic choices made by the Executive Team.
• Facilitate functional workshops that translate strategic choices into sequenced initiatives and activities, align priorities across functions, and identify 2028 priorities. These workshops will also serve as the mid-year Pause and Reflect sessions that the SFA Foundation conducts each year to review performance and prioritise for the next year.
• Work with SFA Foundation's Strategy and Finance teams and develop the corresponding budget requirements for the strategy and financing assumptions.
	Report on:
	1) Stakeholder insights, strategic options and recommendations.
	2) Draft strategic framework and strategic plan; including:
	a) Value proposition,
	b) Strategic objectives,
	c) Focus areas,
	d) Strategic initiatives,
	e) Capabilities,
	f) Theory of Change/Strategy Map,
	g) Results measures and targets.

Phase 4: Implementation Planning and Approval (August–November 2027)

The consultant will help ensure the strategy is coherent, affordable, approved and ready for implementation. Activities are expected to include:

Table 4:

Proposed Activities	Output / Deliverable
• Prepare and refine the draft strategy, documenting the rationale for major choices and maintaining strategic choices, assumptions and trade-offs register. This can be kept as a continuation of the	1) Validated final strategic

strategy learning and evidence synthesis document that will be created in phase 1. • Develop the detailed implementation plan and the first AOP of the new strategy for 2028, with aligned priorities, activities, measures, ownership and budgets. • Lead an EXCO validation workshop where the EXCO is expected to challenge the draft strategy, evidence, assumptions, implementation logic and 2028 AOP. • Incorporate feedback and support the presentation of the EXCO-endorsed strategy to the Programme and Strategy Committee for review and recommendation, followed by submission to the Board for final approval. • Prepare abridged versions of the approved strategy for internal and external audiences, while ensuring that the substance of the approved choices remains clear. • Develop a strategy for socialisation and implementation-readiness plan, including CEO-led launch, staff engagement and targeted communication with funders and priority external stakeholders.	framework and strategic plan. 2) Implementation roadmap, results framework and budget / sustainability outline.

Phase 5: Wrap-up and Post-Delivery Follow-up (2028)

Table 5:

Proposed Activities	Output / Deliverable
The consultant will work with the SFA Foundation team to develop and implement a launch and socialization plan for the strategy.	Interactive workshop with SFA Board and staff leading to presentation of a final synthesized SFA 5-year strategy.
The consultant will conduct follow-up sessions at 6- and 12-month points after delivery of the final strategy in order to gauge SFA Foundation's progress in alignment with the implementation plan.	Memo to Executive Management outlining strategy implementation status and top-line recommendations.

5 Summary of Expected Deliverables and Timelines

Table 6:

No.	Deliverable	Expected Timeline
1	Inception report or project charter which will include refined workplan, methodology, stakeholder engagement plan and information/document request.	February 2027
2	End-strategy review findings, including performance assessment, organisational capabilities and lessons for the next strategy.	February–April 2027
3	Strategy Evidence & Learning Synthesis, including evidence base, emerging learning, material gaps, assumptions and implications.	Initial version by April 2027; refreshed at key decision points
4	Situational analysis report covering internal and external context, comparative positioning, strategic implications, emerging priorities and trade-offs.	April 2027
5	Facilitated executive strategy workshop and documented outputs, including value proposition, strategic objectives, focus areas, initiatives, capabilities, Theory of Change/Strategy Map, measures and targets.	May–July 2027
6	Board engagement and documented feedback/validation of strategic choices.	May–July 2027
7	Draft strategy and strategic choices/assumptions register, including rationale for major choices and explicit trade-offs.	By early September 2027,
8	Implementation and financing model, including indicative budget, fundraising targets, cost assumptions and staffing implications.	Draft by October 2027;
9	Final approved strategy, incorporating governance feedback.	By November 2027
10	Detailed implementation plan and 2028 Annual Operating Plan with aligned priorities, activities, measures, ownership and budgets.	By November 2027
11	Abridged internal and external versions of the approved strategy.	By November 2027

The final deliverables and acceptance criteria will be confirmed in the inception report. Editable source files should be provided alongside final documents.

6 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 7:

Mandatory Requirements of the Bidder
a) Tax compliance certificate and PIN Certificate (if Kenyan) or equivalent statutory documents (if Non Kenyan) where applicable.
b) Evidence of having conducted similar assignments. (list and provide (3) Three recommendation letters, stating the similar assignment done)
c) CV(s) of key personnel

7. Technical Proposal

The technical proposal will be assessed with an 80% weighting and should set out:

- A one-page cover letter with contact details.
- **Understanding of the assignment** – provide an understanding of the strategic context and the critical decisions the process must enable, including an understanding of SFA Foundation, the assignment and the key strategic questions to be addressed.
- **Proposed methodology –** highlights of the proposed approach and methodology, project workplan and timelines, including deliverable milestones and outcomes as well as any recommended changes to the indicative phases or sequence.
- **Firm profile** - detailing relevant institutional strategy experience from similar assignments in line with, but not limited to, the themes below:
    - Extensive experience in developing organizational strategies and actionable implementation plans for development organizations; providing at least three examples of comparable strategy development or organisational review assignments, with client details where disclosure is permitted.
    - Technical knowledge of the science space in Africa and experience supporting clients operating across the continent.
    - Deep familiarity with strategic steps necessary to position a mission-driven organization such as SFA Foundation in the local and global context.

*Shortlisted Consultants will be required to submit at least three (3) reference letters later in the selection process.

- **Team** – the assignment requires a consulting team with demonstrated experience in strategy development, organisational review, facilitation and implementation planning. a detailed description of the roles, skillsets and experience of the proposed team including names, bios and detailed CVs of the consultants who will be involved in this assignment, as well as their

expected level of effort and availability for the assignment. The consultancy is expected to have a team leader with more than fifteen (15) years of expertise in undertaking similar assignments.

- **Stakeholder Engagement and Facilitation** - indicative stakeholder engagement approach identifying key stakeholders, the purpose of engagement and how stakeholders will inform, challenge, shape, validate or approve different elements. A write-up on the proposed approach to facilitating strategic choices, trade-offs and consensus for multiple stakeholder groups.
- **Project Management**: A write up demonstrating considerations on quality assurance, risk management, project governance, reporting and arrangements for transferring knowledge to SFA Foundation.
- Any additional value add that the consultant deems they can add to the SFA Foundation during the process.

8. Financial Proposal

The technical proposal will be assessed with a 20% weighting and should set out:

- A detailed, itemized budget in US Dollars ($), with professional fees, level of effort and applicable taxes clearly stated. The financial proposal shall clearly indicate the total cost disaggregated to enable partial payments and/or scaling of services.
- Any anticipated travel, workshop, research or other reimbursable costs must be shown separately, with assumptions specified.
- A payment schedule linked to deliverables and acceptance milestones.
- The financial proposal should also demonstrate how the consultant factors in the support that will be offered by the in-house strategy team. Where possible, the proposal can clearly indicate activities that the in-house strategy team is expected to take lead, where they collaborate and where the consultant takes lead.
- The financial proposal should also indicate how the consultant manages the final fee while balancing quality requirements such as when and how experts from the consulting team are engaged.
- The financial proposal must be submitted as a different document from the technical proposal and clearly marked, “Financial Proposal”.

All proposal documents shall remain valid for (120) days.

9. Proposal Evaluation Criteria

The evaluation of the proposals shall involve Technical and Financial analysis. The technical proposal will be evaluated based on the following criteria:

Table 8:

Criteria	Weighting
Understanding of the Assignment	15%
Clarity, fit and value-add of the proposed Methodology	15%
Firm Profile with 3 reference letters for similar assignments completed in the last 5 years provided	15%
Team Profile including a qualified team lead and a project team that demonstrates the competencies described under the team section	20%
Stakeholder Engagement and Facilitation Plan	10%
Project Management Plan for the project	5%
Total	80%
Minimum Score	64% (80% of the total technical marks)

Bidder must attain at least 64% of the technical proposal to be considered for the financial evaluation. SFA Foundation reserves the right to verify references, request clarification and conduct interviews or presentations as part of the evaluation.

The financial proposal shall carry 20% of the total score. Only bidders who will attain the minimum technical scores requirement will be considered for financial Analysis. The financial proposal shall be prepared as per the guidelines in the financial proposal section of this document.

10. 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:

Final Score (FS)= TS x T% + FS x 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.

11.Duration of the assignment

The assignment is expected to run from February to November 2027. The high-level schedule is indicative and the milestones may change. However, delivery of the final strategy remains strictly for early November 2027:

Table 9:

Period	Main milestone
February–April 2027	Evidence consolidation, end-strategy review, targeted gap-filling and situational analysis.
May–July 2027	Executive strategy workshop, Board Programme and Strategy Committee engagement, functional workshops/Pause and Reflect sessions, 2028 priority-setting and draft financing assumptions.
August–September 2027	Draft strategy and choices/assumptions register; implementation and financing model.
September–November 2027	EXCO validation, Committee review and recommendation, Board approval, 2028 AOP and implementation planning, abridged strategy and socialisation plan.

12 Confidentiality

All information obtained during the assignment shall be treated with the highest level of confidentiality and used solely for this assignment.

13 RFP Timelines

Action	Date
Circulation of RFP	16th November 2026
Deadline for receipt of questions relating to the RFP and confirmation of participation	24th November 2026
Response to Vendors' Queries	1st December 2026
Deadline for submission of the proposals	18th December 2026
Project start date	After issuance of the contract

14 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.

15 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.

16 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.

All information obtained during the assignment shall be treated with the highest level of confidentiality and used solely for this assignment.

17 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.

18 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. Proposals (technical and financial) to be sent by email to

procurement@scienceforafrica.foundation on or before 18th December 2026 at 5.00 pm (EAT)

2. Protect all your proposals with a password and share the password on 21st December 2026 by 9.00 am (EAT)
3. The proposal to be marked as follows on the subject line: **RFP-018-2026 REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS (RFP) FOR CONSULTANCY SERVICES FOR STRATEGY DEVELOPMENT SUPPORT FOR SFA FOUNDATION**