



## **Preparing for Collaborative PhD Programs Invitation to Consultants**

### **1 About this Consultancy**

The consultancy is being commissioned by the African Research Universities Alliance (ARUA), with support from the Carnegie Corporation of New York, to engage two consultants to review and advise on how best to achieve ARUA goals and objectives with globally competitive collaborative PhD programs. One consultant will be engaged for the (1) Natural Sciences, and the other for the (2) Humanities and Social Science disciplines.

#### **1.1 About ARUA**

The African Research Universities Alliance (ARUA) is a network of sixteen (16) leading universities from different countries in Africa and different historical backgrounds, but with a common vision. ARUA is generally interested in expanding and enhancing significantly the quality of research done in Africa by African researchers. The network, right from inception, was intended to be different from any other regional university network in Africa. The difference was to come largely from the approach to be employed, namely bringing together a number of peer African institutions that were willing to work together by pooling their own limited resources, with a view to generating a critical mass that could more effectively support their limited, but growing numbers of researchers. Underlying the approach was the conviction that they could leverage their own resources effectively for additional resources from outside. ARUA is pursuing this goal through the setting up of Centres of Excellence hosted by member universities.

#### **1.2 About the Carnegie Corporation of New York**

The Carnegie Corporation of New York is one of America's oldest grant-making foundations established by Andrew Carnegie to promote the advancement and diffusion of knowledge and understanding. In keeping with this mandate, the Corporation's work focuses on the issues that

Andrew Carnegie considered of paramount importance: international peace, the advancement of education and knowledge, and the strength of democracy. The Corporation currently supports four key program areas, including Education, Democracy, International Peace and Security, and Higher Education and Research in Africa.

## **2 Research Framework**

### **2.1 Background**

One of ARUA's aims is to make African universities globally competitive. Members of the ARUA network have decided to pursue this mission along four pillars, namely (a) significantly expanded and improved research programs, (b) significantly expanded and improved graduate programs, (c) strengthened research management, and (d) enhanced research advocacy. Several strategic objectives have been developed for each of these four pillars, but the main approach to achieving them is by working collaboratively.

In pursuit of the above agenda, ARUA has opened discussions with several potential international partners. Current partnerships support ARUA in the areas of collaborative research and capacity building. Discussions have included the possibility of split-site PhD programs, sandwich programs, joint degree programs, double degree programs, etc. Participation in collaborative programs will be open to all member universities who accept the general principles and standards agreed by the members for those specific programs.

It is important that, within ARUA, there is a common understanding of what the network seeks to achieve with collaborative programs, ensuring that the outcomes meet the requirements and expectations of each of the member universities. In order to exchange students and faculty, there must be some shared values and principles to be reflected in the agreed standards.

ARUA member universities currently have a diverse set of PhD structures, including 3-year programs that are entirely based on research, 4-year programs that are almost entirely based on research, 4-year programs that have a taught component, 5-year programs that have a taught component. Some of the programs that have a taught component sometimes have the teaching done over one year, and in a few cases over two years. The requirements for admission into PhD programs also vary from place to place.

It is noted that universities and university alliances around the globe are engaged in discussions of how best to restructure PhD programs. In the European Union, efforts at harmonising admission requirements have been part of the Bologna Process. In the UK, more and more universities and disciplines are increasingly moving towards the well-known North American systems, including the adoption of Graduate Record Examinations (GRE) as an entry requirement for international students. The USA has the most established arrangement of typically 4-year programs, with a taught component in the first year.

As ARUA begins to deepen and concretise its conversations with international partners about significantly expanded and improved collaborative PhD programs, it is inevitable that there will be questions about the type of collaborative PhD programs the network members have in mind. There will be questions about entry requirements as students from one ARUA member university seek to use the facilities of other member universities and work with their faculty.

## **2.2 Research Purpose**

With support from the Carnegie Corporation of New York, ARUA is seeking to engage two consultants to review and advise how best to achieve the ARUA goals and objectives with globally competitive collaborative PhD programs. One consultant will be engaged for the Natural Sciences and the other for the Humanities and Social Science disciplines. The research findings from this consultancy will be critical in creating globally competitive collaborative PhD programs within ARUA member universities. This should make it possible for ARUA member universities to have a harmonised set of principles and standards behind the agreed collaborative PhD programs. The harmonisation of collaborative PhD programs in ARUA member universities is further expected to enhance collaboration with universities in the global North. The outputs of the consultancy will generate valuable information regarding the research environment of ARUA member universities as well as their research priorities.

## **2.3 Definitions of Scope**

The research will cover nine (9) countries in Africa that host all sixteen (16) ARUA member universities. The member universities of ARUA are as follows:

- 1) Addis Ababa University
- 2) Makerere University
- 3) Rhodes University
- 4) Université Cheikh Anta Diop
- 5) University of Cape Town
- 6) University of Dar es Salaam

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|---------------------------------|--------------------------------|
| 7) University of Ghana          | 13) University of Lagos        |
| 8) University of Ibadan         | 14) University of Nairobi      |
| 9) University of KwaZulu-Natal  | 15) University of Pretoria     |
| 10) University of Rwanda        | 16) Obafemi Awolowo University |
| 11) University of Stellenbosch  | 17) University of Mauritius    |
| 12) University of Witwatersrand |                                |

### **3 Study aim and objectives**

To accomplish the purpose of this consultancy, the following objectives are outlined:

1. Identify potential areas/disciplines that ARUA might support for collaborative PhD programs at member universities
2. Review the structure and content of selected PhD programs at ARUA member universities, comparing them to current and emerging best practices from other regions.
3. Review the admissions requirements of selected PhD programs in ARUA member universities, comparing them to current and emerging best practices from other regions.
4. Determine the need or otherwise to restructure/reconfigure selected PhD programs for the purpose of collaboration at ARUA member universities in view of the ARUA mission.
5. Determine the need or otherwise to modify admission requirements for PhD programs at ARUA member universities in view of the ARUA mission.
6. Propose to the ARUA Board any modifications to PhD programs and standards that may be necessary at ARUA member universities in order to facilitate collaboration and the conduct of joint activities, taking into account national rules and regulations on graduate training and accreditation requirements.

It is expected that, with time, member universities will voluntarily apply the standards of the ARUA collaborative PhD programs to all other PhD programs at their universities.

### **4 Methodology**

The main methodology to be used for the consultancy will be agreed with ARUA, and in consultation with the Carnegie Corporation of New York. As far as possible, ARUA will make available appropriate data relating to the emerging trends in PhD programs among member universities. This will be made available upon request to the Consultants.

While this information will provide an appropriate context for the consultancy, it is generally expected that the methodology for the consultancy would include:

- A comprehensive literature review on the restructuring of PhD programs
- Analysis of data on PhD programs in ARUA member universities
- Review of university policy documents to identify the objectives and rationale of PhD programs, their structure and outcomes
- Interviews (and surveys) with appropriate audiences (potentially to include National Government Departments, Higher Education and Research Institution leaders, research uptake managers, PhD Scholars, early career researchers)
- Travel to ARUA member universities to engage the above stakeholders, if necessary.

## **5 Outputs**

The main output of the Consultancy will be a detailed report to include:

- A series of country profiles mapping the structure and content of selected PhD programs in ARUA member universities, with the following specifics
  - Quality of Candidates
  - Admission Requirements
  - Quality of PhD Programs
  - Quality of Research/Teaching Staff
  - Appropriateness of supporting infrastructure
  - Funding support for PhD Programs
- A comparison of selected PhD programs in ARUA member universities with those of other regions, preferably comparator universities in Europe and the USA
- A detailed analysis of the selected PhD programs in ARUA member universities including admission requirements, duration, structure, outputs, and profiles of graduates
- Proposals for the adoption of common principles and standards for collaborative PhD programs with a focus on minimum standards that are required in order to facilitate collaboration and the conduct of joint PhD programs
- A PowerPoint presentation to communicate research methodology and findings to external and internal audiences
- All data supplied to the client including interview summaries and collation of the main themes to emerge from the analysis of various documents

## 6 Responding to this Consultancy

### 6.1 Qualities of the Consultant

ARUA is looking to appoint two (2) Consultants with the following qualities:

- Very capable and highly motivated academics who have led university transformation exercises before and have considerable experience in the design and management of graduate programs. Evidence of such experience is essential
- Expertise in international education – evidenced by previous research projects and consultancy carried out for education and government establishments
- Extensive knowledge and experience of PhD programs in sub-Saharan Africa
- Women academics are strongly encouraged to consider this assignment
- Willingness to travel to some ARUA Member Universities, if necessary

### 6.2 Timing

The key dates for the Consultancy process are as follows:

Activities	Date
Consultancy (this document) is issued	03-05-2021
Deadline for submission of Proposals	24-05-2021
Communication to shortlisted Candidates	24-06-2021
Consultancy Start Date	08-07-2021
Submission of Inception Report	22-07-2021
Submission of Draft Report	08-11-2021
Workshop with ARUA stakeholders	06-12-2021
Submission of Final Report	01-02-2022
Consultancy Completion Date	22-02-2022

### 6.3 The Submission Process

Response to this Consultancy should include:

- Details of approach and method to be used
- Qualifications and evidence of considerable experience in the design and management of graduate programs either in Africa or any part of the world
- Detailed costing in line with the main research objectives
- Detailed timescale
- All documents are to be sent to [arua@ug.edu.gh](mailto:arua@ug.edu.gh) no later than 24<sup>th</sup> May 2021.