




Invitation to Express Interest:

An Evaluation of ARUA & Its Centres of Excellence (CoEs)

With support from Carnegie Corporation of New York, ARUA is seeking to hire two consultants to evaluate the Alliance and its activities since 2015

Submission Deadline: 15 September 2023 || email: arua@ug.edu.gh

 www.arua.org.za

1 ABOUT THIS CONSULTANCY

The African Research Universities Alliance (ARUA) is commissioning this Consultancy to engage two consultants to review ARUA and its Centres of Excellence (CoEs). The two consultants will jointly evaluate ARUA as a network and assess the performance of its thirteen (13) Centres of Excellence. The assignment is to be undertaken with financial support from The Carnegie Corporation of New York (Carnegie).

1.1 About ARUA

The African Research Universities Alliance (ARUA) embraces 17 leading universities from different countries and different historical backgrounds but with a common vision. ARUA is interested in expanding and significantly enhancing the quality of research done in Africa by African researchers. The Alliance was always intended to be different from any other regional university network in Africa. The difference was to come from the approach to be employed, namely bringing together a number of peer African institutions that were willing to work together by pooling their limited resources, to generate 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 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 Carnegie Corporation of New York

The [Carnegie Corporation of New York](http://www.carnegie.org) 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 REVIEW FRAMEWORK

2.1 Background

As ARUA begins to deepen conversations about its current and future engagements, it has become necessary to take stock of its operations and their outcomes. It is inevitable that the Alliance undertakes this evaluation to establish whether it is on track towards its vision to strengthen African universities through effective capacity building that comes from working together with a view to significantly increasing their research output. ARUA's mission is to make African researchers and institutions globally competitive while contributing to the generation of knowledge for the socio-economic transformation of the African continent. This evaluation will seek to answer several critical questions that are intended to guide the Alliance's future growth and development.

Vice Chancellors of member universities have committed to pursuing this mission along four pillars, namely (a) significantly expanded and improved research programmes, (b) significantly expanded and improved graduate programmes, (c) strengthened research management and (d) enhanced research advocacy. Following the launch of ARUA's five-year strategic plan in 2022, several strategic objectives have been developed around each of the four pillars ([See Strategic Plan](#)).

ARUA believes that Africa's transformation will be shaped through efforts at achieving Agenda 2063 and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). The members have indicated that innovative ways of generating and applying new knowledge will be crucial for the region's development process. ARUA works with the premise that increased research collaboration among member universities which is multidisciplinary, is key to binding the activities of the network.

ARUA has been very well received in Africa and around the World. Within Africa, ARUA has received financial support from the National Research Foundation (NRF) of South Africa and has been acknowledged by all stakeholders in the research ecosystem. Outside Africa, ARUA has received significant support from the Carnegie Corporation of New York (CCNY), the UK Research and Innovation (UKRI), the Open Society Foundation (OSF), and The Andrew W. Mellon Foundation. The Alliance works closely with several international networks including the Guild of European Research-intensive Universities, the Association of Commonwealth Universities (ACU), and Universitas 21 (U21).

2.2 Focus of Evaluation

The Carnegie Corporation of New York is providing support to ARUA to hire two consultants to evaluate the Alliance and its activities since 2015. The consultants will review the operations of ARUA as an alliance. The key questions that must be answered by this evaluation include

Addis Ababa University • University of Cape Coast • University of Cape Town • University Cheikh Anta Diop • University of Dar es Salaam
University of Ghana • University of Ibadan • University of KwaZulu-Natal • University of Lagos • Makerere University
University of Mauritius • University of Nairobi • University of Pretoria • Rhodes University • University of Rwanda
• University of Stellenbosch • University of the Witwatersrand

whether the Alliance has been effective in pursuing its vision and mission, defined around its four main pillars. The consultants shall identify areas for the improvement of the Alliance, particularly concerning its structure, processes, and outcomes. The consultants shall also monitor the evolution of the Alliance as defined in its Concept and in its Strategic Plan.

The consultants shall review the work of the thirteen ARUA Centres of Excellence (CoE), paying attention to whether the CoEs are on track to realising their objectives, and whether their activities are fully aligned with the ARUA vision and mission. The consultants shall examine the products and the structure of the CoEs, the efficiency of their administrative activities and the effectiveness of their policy engagements. The consultants will be expected to make recommendations that will be critical in shaping the future of the CoEs.

2.3 Scope of Work

The terms of reference for the consultants will be to evaluate ARUA based on its strategic objectives and key pillars as stated above. They should focus on the effectiveness and viability of the Alliance, answering such questions as:

1. How relevant are the Alliance's goals, objectives, and strategies as defined in the [Concept](#) and the [Strategic Plan](#)? How committed are the member universities to these goals? Is there any evidence of progress on key milestones as reflected in the Strategic Plan? Is the organisation adequately sensitive to gender, race/ethnicity, and other areas of inclusivity?
2. How is ARUA measuring evidence of progress among its 4 pillars?
3. How is ARUA using evidence of progress in advocacy for research?
4. Is the management arrangement for the organisation viable and effective to achieve the mission pillars and objectives? Is the governance arrangement effective? Does it have the right leadership? Is the staffing adequate?
5. Are the management/administrative costs reasonable? Does the organisation offer value for money? How effective is the relationship with member universities in subscription payments?
6. Is the funding model effective? Is ARUA able to attract as many relevant potential funders as possible? If not, why not?
7. Are the [ARUA CoEs](#) delivering on their mandate? To what extent have they operated as originally proposed? Are they effectively managed? Have they been adequately resourced by the host universities and the other participants? Are there any visible outputs? Are they making any impact in relation to ARUA's goals and objectives? Is the model sustainable? What will it take to make them more visible and more effective?
8. Considering various relevant global developments, including the recent pandemic, should ARUA be re-strategising?
9. How has ARUA played a role in advocacy for African research among local and global higher education stakeholders and has this been effective?

The evaluation of ARUA as an alliance of research universities in Africa, after seven years of operation, should establish a firm basis to understand the extent to which it is pushing towards its mission of making African researchers and institutions globally competitive while



contributing to the generation of knowledge for the socio-economic transformation of the African continent.

3 METHODOLOGY AND APPROACH

The consultants will be free to develop the methodology they wish to employ and agree with ARUA on its effectiveness. The methodological approach to the assessment will therefore be presented in an inception report to be discussed with ARUA.

It is expected that the evaluation will involve limited travel. The consultants will be expected to visit the ARUA offices at the University of the Witwatersrand, South Africa, and in Accra, Ghana, to talk to relevant staff, including extensive conversations with the Secretary-General. They are expected to review various documents, including legal and financial records. They will also be expected to have virtual interviews with as many stakeholders as possible, including ARUA VCs, ARUA DVCs, ARUA CoE Directors, representatives of Carnegie Corporation, UKRI, NRF, ACU, AU, EU, the Guild, selected UK, European and North American universities that have a relationship with ARUA. Arrangements will be made for the consultants to participate in the November 2023 Lagos Conference where they can meet many stakeholders.

4 OUTPUTS

The main output of this Consultancy will include:

- A comprehensive report on the Evaluation of ARUA as an alliance as well as its CoEs.
- An abridged report and PowerPoint presentation.
- It is expected that a report on the evaluation will be available by March 2024 to guide an assessment of progress on the strategic plan.

5 RESPONDING TO THIS CONSULTANCY ANNOUNCEMENT

5.1 Qualities of the Consultant

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

- Very capable and highly motivated persons who have led university transformation exercises before and have considerable experience in the design and management of graduate programmes. Evidence of such experience is essential.
- Expertise in international education – evidenced by previous research projects and consultancy conducted for education and government establishments.
- Extensive knowledge and experience in higher education in sub-Saharan Africa
- Women with relevant expertise are strongly encouraged to consider this assignment.
- Willingness to travel to a few ARUA Member Universities, where necessary

5.2 Timing

The key dates for the Consultancy process are as follows:

Activities	Date
Announcement of Consultancy by ARUA	1 st August 2023
Deadline for submission of Proposals	15 th September 2023
Communication with Selected Applicants	30 th September 2023
Consultancy Start Date	15 th October 2023
Submission of Inception Report	30 th October 2023
Submission of Draft Report	31 st March 2024
Workshop with ARUA stakeholders	15 th April 2024
Submission of Final Report	31 st May 2024
Consultancy Completion Date	30 th June 2024

5.3 Submission process

Response to this Consultancy should include:

- Resume, showing qualifications and evidence of considerable experience in the design and management of graduate programmes, either in Africa or elsewhere
- Details of approach and method to be used.
- Detailed costing for assignment
- Proposed timelines
- All application documents are to be sent to arua@ug.edu.gh no later than 15th September 2023.