

Call for Proposals 2024 “Establishing an Africa- Europe Research Partnership”

Submit application to
Research@AfricaEuropeFoundation.org
Deadline 23rd May 2024
(17:00 Brussels, 18:00 Addis Ababa)

Contracting Authority: **Africa-Europe Foundation**

Call for Proposals 2024

**“Establishing an Africa-Europe
Research Partnership”**

Guidelines for Grant Applicants

**Deadline for submission of the Application
23rd May 2024 (17:00 Brussels, 18:00 Addis Ababa)**

List of Acronyms and Abbreviations

AU African Union

CfP Call for Proposals

COP The Conference of the Parties for UN Conventions on climate, biodiversity, and desertification

EU European Union

PRAG Procurement and Grants for European Union external actions

UNGA General Assembly of the United Nations

WHA World Health Assembly

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I. Summary

The Africa-Europe Foundation (AEF) is seeking African and European research organisations to jointly develop a cross-continental research programme.

- The Call for Proposals (CfP) will catalyse cooperation through establishing a research consortium consisting of African and European organisations selected through the CfP.
- **The overall budget of the Call is initially set at 300,000 Euros.** Within this budget envelope, the Africa-Europe Foundation is able to award individual grants valued between 20,000 Euros and 100,000 Euros.
- Given the importance the Africa-Europe partnership approach, this Call is based on a **'1+1 formula', whereby each application needs to be submitted with a minimum partnership of two organisations - one from Africa and one from Europe** - clearly identifying the roles as 'lead applicant' or 'co-applicant'. Additional affiliated organisations are considered added value for the reach, impact and sustainability of the overall initiative.
- The theme of the AEF research programme is framed by the "The State of Africa-Europe Report 2024" (published by AEF in February 2024) with a **strategic focus on: 'Sustainable Finance'; 'Climate and Development'; and 'Science, Education, and Culture'** (three of the central chapters of the Report).
- The Call requires organisations to present short proposals (**Concept Notes**) for research projects.
- Implementation phase is set from **July 2024 to October 2025**, with the final two months of 2025 for evaluation analysis and reporting. Proposals should clearly specify intended implementation period within this timeline.
- The AEF reserves the right to negotiate with the selected applicants the final scope, deliverables, timelines and budget for proposed projects to maximise programming synergies across awarded projects and leverage strategic milestones in the AU-EU political calendar.

II. Programme "Establishing an Africa-Europe Research Partnership"

1. Overview

The Africa-Europe Foundation is pleased to announce a Call for Proposals to establish a multiannual research partnership from July 2024 to December 2025.

This Call for Proposals is underpinned by the "State of Africa-Europe Report 2024", produced by the Africa-Europe Foundation and providing a unique benchmarking exercise on the implementation of the Africa-Europe Partnership, including review of the existing policy/financial commitments of the political partnership between the African Union and the European Union.

This Call invites research organisations to deep dive into 3 priority chapters from the ‘State of Africa-Europe Report 2024’, specifically the chapters on:

- Sustainable Finance;
- Climate and Development;
- Science, Education, and Culture.

The Call will serve to establish a first “Africa-Europe Research Consortium”, consisting of 4 to 8 research organisations from Africa and Europe, including think tanks, research institutes, universities as well as CSOs/NGOs and social enterprises with proven track record in research and policy.

The purpose is to implement the AEF research programme through a collaborative process that will generate the evidence needed to identify obstacles and opportunities that can strengthen Africa-Europe Partnership. This includes providing evidence that can help implement existing areas of AU-EU commitments and identifying strategic topics which offer the most promise today for win/win partnership between Africa and Europe.

Ensuring geographic and thematic balance, the research organisations from both continents will support the AEF’s work through high quality research and data analysis to take stock of knowledge and provide new evidence in specific fields, identify policy engagement pathways, and explore innovative solutions to major challenges in key thematic areas, emphasizing opportunities for deepening Africa-Europe engagement.

2. Africa-Europe Foundation background

The Africa-Europe Foundation (AEF) is an independent, multi-stakeholder platform engaged in frank dialogue, policy advocacy and strategic analysis on promising topics for the Africa-Europe Partnership.

Founded in 2020 by Friends of Europe and the Mo Ibrahim Foundation, in partnership with the African Climate Foundation and ONE Campaign, AEF aims to promote and strengthen cooperation between Africa and Europe. The AEF firmly believes exchange of ideas and experience plays a central part in constructing a different, more collaborative future between the two continents, and that any dialogue process should be rooted in evidence. As such, the Foundation actively engages in data gathering and research together with various stakeholders to support its positions on policy advocacy and help open up spaces for dialogue. The backbone of AEF’s action are our multi-stakeholder ‘Strategy Groups’, ‘Working Groups’ and high-level dialogue platforms that bringing together experts and leaders from diverse sectors including Health, Energy, Agri-Food Systems, Blue Economy and Ocean, Digital and Sustainable Finance. Investment in youth voice, agency and leadership is a transversal priority.

AEF has also launched a programming pillar on ‘commitment tracking’ as outlined in its founding Charter and to compliment to existing mechanisms aimed at tracking and facilitating the policy/finance commitments of the political partnership between the EU and AU. In February 2024, the publication of the AEF ‘State of Africa-Europe Report 2024’ represented a first benchmarking exercise of its kind to aggregate data and analysis on the implementation of the conclusions of the most recent Summit between EU and AU Heads of State (6th EU-AU Summit of February 2022).

3. Purpose of the research programme

The AEF research programme will deep dive into priority themes of the ‘State of Africa-Europe Report 2024’ (‘Sustainable Finance’, ‘Climate-Development’, ‘Science, Education, and Culture’).

The purpose is to bring impactful research to the policies taking renewed shape for a strengthened Africa-Europe Partnership (in anticipation of the next AU-EU Summit in 2025) and to develop robust knowledge products with the facts, figures and 360 degrees analysis which can identify obstacles and opportunities to accelerate the implementation of existing policy/financial commitments.

The proposed Africa Europe Research Consortium will implement a collaborative research programme designed to bring together African and European research institutions to generate evidence and contribute to policy monitoring and development that takes a unique Africa-Europe lens which builds on the historical ties and recognises strengths that Africa-Europe stakeholders bring to the Partnership. It will leverage AEF’s growing standing as a knowledge organisation and its ongoing efforts to produce evidence from and for both continents, strengthening policy advocacy and monitoring the implementation of commitments made through the AU-EU partnership.

To this end, AEF launches this Call for Proposals to identify organisations that will form the Research Consortium and take part in the Africa-Europe Research Partnership that will operate over an initial 18-month period, from July 2024 to December 2025, based on an agreed workplan specifying the main thematic areas and key research outputs. The workplan shall be reviewed at 6-month intervals to ensure validity.

4. Objectives of the Call for Proposals

4.1 Global objective of the Call for Proposals

The global objective of this Call is establishing a collaborative research partnership between African and European organisations with an overarching aim to build body of evidence and identify policy solutions that can strengthen Africa-Europe cooperation in few key thematic areas.

4.2 Specific objectives of the Call for Proposals

SO1: Fostering strategic vision and foresight: identifying and examining current trends and projecting future scenarios to help anticipate challenges and opportunities on the horizon looking beyond the current development strategies and frameworks (eg. Agenda 2030), uncovering shared priorities and mutual opportunities that can serve as focal points for strategic alignment and cooperation between the two continents.

SO2: Enhancing cross-continental insights: Examining global and regional challenges through a unique Africa-Europe lens, utilizing the expertise and insights of research organisations from both continents and, providing ‘hard facts’ in crucial areas relevant to the Africa-Europe Partnership that leads to tangible policy recommendations.

SO3: Supporting the monitoring of Africa-Europe Partnership and its policy/financial commitments: Contributing to the implementation of policy commitments made by the AU and the EU by gathering

information on progress towards certain objectives and producing research results that can be used to inform the monitoring of the Partnership's commitments.

4.3 Priorities of the Call for Proposals

The priorities of this Call for Proposals are (all equally important):

- Through a holistic exploration, to identify common challenges, shared priorities, and mutual opportunities within Africa-Europe Partnership, focusing on key thematic areas outlined below. (Applicants are encouraged to propose additional areas of potential contribution, which could offer further grounds for Africa-Europe collaboration.)
- Encourage transcontinental collaboration of all actors and knowledge sharing beyond conventional boundaries to promote deeper mutual understanding and cooperation between research organisations from both continents.
- Emphasize cross-continental data collection, gather evidence, provide 'hard facts', and produce analysis to assess the implementation of Africa-Europe Partnership, including political/financial commitments between the AU and EU, thereby ensure effective accountability and provide crucial insights to shape future policies.
- Ensure that research and analytical activities actively contribute to advancing the Africa-Europe Foundation's objectives in terms of policy advocacy and monitoring of Africa-Europe Partnership.

4.4 Proposed research projects must focus on the following themes.

The applicants are expected to specify in their application the themes they wish to engage on (allowing more than one) and are encouraged to include other topics and sub-themes that they may consider complementary.

The three priority themes of this Call for Proposals correspond to central chapters of the 'State-of-Africa-Europe Report 2024':

- 1) 'Sustainable Finance', covering issues including:
 - Combatting illicit financial flows,
 - Reform of the global financial architecture,
 - Innovative mechanisms for resource mobilisation (for example hybrid capital mechanism to leverage SDRs), global taxation (for example on shipping), and carbon markets.
- 2) 'Climate and Development', including:
 - Nexus of climate and health
 - Agri-food system transformations,
 - Investment in energy and green transitions
 - Blue Economy and Ocean Governance
 - Nexus of climate, trade and development
- 3) 'Education, Science and Culture', covering issues such as:
 - Education and skills development,
 - Scientific and cultural cooperation.
 - Investment in youth voice, agency and leadership
 - Digital transformations and AI

- Perceptions and Africa-Europe Narratives

For consideration the following sub-topics have been identified through the AEF multi-stakeholder dialogue platforms:

- Global Gateway and alignment with African strategies and plans
- Public perception of political commitments and their delivery
- Carbon markets and AI
- Critical raw materials and Green Industrialization
- CBAM Response Strategies
- Africa-Europe Water Cooperation and Partnerships
- The Future of Land use and Agri-Food in Africa and Europe

4.5 Results to be achieved through the research partnership

The Research Consortium will contribute to:

- Providing information that is relevant and timely to the global policy agenda.
- Influencing the orientation, development, and programming of future policies of the AU and EU institutions.
- Facilitating the implementation of cooperation commitments under the Africa-Europe Partnership.
- Promoting better AU-EU collaboration, particularly in socio-economic areas.

As such, applicants are expected to clearly outline in their proposals how their work will support the AEF efforts and contribute to significant political milestones that influence the future programming and policymaking of both AU and EU institutions.

4.6 Type of activities that may be implemented in the programme implementation.

AEF aims to leverage the Research Consortium to undertake:

- Data gathering and compilation (primary and secondary sources);
- Research and analysis (for evidence building and policy development);
- Results assessment and evaluations (initiatives and projects implemented as part of the AU-EU commitment delivery);
- Scientific publications and policy papers;
- Dissemination and communication: contribution to publicising the results of the research carried out;
- Knowledge and capacity sharing: sharing experiences, vision, and ideas with AEF and the Research Consortium partners.

4.7 Deliverables

The expected deliverables from the Research Consortium are:

- A minimum of 2 (to 3) in-depth studies (360 degree), in a form of strategic reports of 50 pages (excluding annexes), developed collaboratively between African and European organizations to enhance cross-continental insights and ensure regional balance of perspectives.
- A minimum of 4 (to 6) sectoral expert studies, such as policy research papers, case studies, scoping studies, position papers, in a form of 20 pages reports (excluding annexes).
- 6 meetings/campaigns to promote research outcomes, with foresight as the overarching theme, anticipating future needs and challenges of the AU-EU partnership.
- 2 data aggregation and analysis assignments to support the AU-EU Commitment Tracking process, in a form of 10-page reports accompanied by a data spreadsheet focused on the specified political or financial commitment and its implementation.
- 6 (to 9) associated documents based on the above research deliverables, such as policy briefs, briefing notes, information bulletins, in a short form (up to 4 pages long) that are tailored to specific audience contributing to AEF advocacy and policy monitoring.

Dissemination

The research partners should allocate and ensure adequate flexible capacity to undertake the research projects as well as help facilitate the dissemination of the Consortium work through scientific networks and conferences.

4.8 Beneficiaries and target groups

The direct target groups of the programme are:

- Policymakers, institutions, and other committed stakeholders in Africa and Europe who will benefit from the knowledge and recommendations generated by the programme.
- Research institutions, NGOs, Civil Society actors that work in/for the field of a stronger and Africa and European cooperation based on shared values and common interests.

The final beneficiaries of the programme are:

- African and European citizens, who could benefit from enhanced cooperation between the two continents through policies informed by research conducted under the programme.

4.9 Cross-cutting elements

These cross-cutting elements should be reflected in the Applicant's proposal as added value.

Knowledge Sharing and fostering Africa-Europe perspectives: fostering knowledge exchange between African and European institutions, and promoting research contributions, in adopting a collaborative approach that guides evidence gathering and analysis leveraging unique perspectives from the Africa-Europe lens.

Capacity Building: Emphasizing the importance of synergy among stakeholders (research organisations, governments at national and local level, institutions, NGOs, CSOs, private actors,

citizens), and encouraging the constitution and capacity-building of networks of local research organisations and implementing actors, including at regional level.

Needs and challenges faced by targeted groups should be especially considered. Aligning the work to the global and regional political calendar and policy agenda and take into account key international milestones, such as the AU-led conference on Illicit Financial Flows, EU-AU Ministerial Meeting, World Health Summit, COP29 and COP30, G20 formal convenings, 7th AU-EU Summit, ... etc.

Youth Engagement and Empowerment: Involving youth in research activities, leveraging their innovative perspectives, and empowering them to contribute to policy development and implementation processes related to Africa-Europe cooperation.

Gender Mainstreaming: Integrating gender perspectives into all aspects of the research Consortium's activities, ensuring gender equality in participation, leadership, and the outcomes of research projects.

Conflict sensitivity and environmental issues should be included.

5. Financial allocation provided by the Contracting Authority

5.1 Indicative allocation

The overall indicative amount made available under this Call for Proposals is **300,000.00** Euros.

The contracting authority reserves the right not to award all available funds. Equally, this amount could be reviewed during the implementation phase should more funds become available.

AEF expects to award between 3 to 8 research projects that will implement the overall research programme.

Within the overall budget envelope, the AEF expects to award funding for selected research projects of between 20,000.00 Euros and 100,000.00 Euros.

5.2 Percentage of the total of eligible costs of the project

All costs related to the project are eligible to be financed through this grant.

The grant may cover the entire eligible costs of the project (100%).

III. Rules for this Call for Proposals

These guidelines set out the rules for the submission, selection, and implementation of the proposed research projects financed under this Call for Proposals, in conformity with the AEF internal rules that are based on the PRAG rules¹.

1. Eligibility criteria

There are three sets of eligibility criteria, relating to:

(1) The actors:

The “lead applicant”, i.e. the entity submitting the application form (See Part II Section 2.1.1 of these guidelines).

The “co-applicant”, i.e. the entity that will jointly implement the research project.

Where it is not specified, otherwise the lead applicant and its co-applicant, are hereinafter jointly referred as “applicant(s)” and/or “partnership”.

(2) The projects:

Proposed research projects for which a grant may be awarded (See Part II Section 2.1.2 of these guidelines).

(3) The costs:

Type of cost that may be taken into account in setting the amount of the grant (See Part II Section 2.1.3 of these guidelines).

1.1 Eligibility of the applicants (i.e. lead applicant and co-applicant)

The partnership: must ensure the “1+1 formula” for an Africa-Europe partnership approach, whereby if the lead is an African organisation, the co-applicant will be a European organisation (and vice-versa).

Additional affiliated organisations are considered added value for the reach, impact and sustainability of the overall initiative.

Lead applicant:

(1) In order to be eligible for a grant, the lead applicant must:

1. Be a legal person; **and**
2. Be non-profitmaking; **and**

¹ Procurement and Grants for European Union external actions, Practical Guide, applicable as of 24 June 2022

3. Be a non-governmental civil society organisation², and more precisely research institution and/or Think Tank and/or an organisation qualified to undertake research in the Africa-Europe cooperation; **and**
4. Be directly responsible for the preparation and management of the project with the co-applicant, not acting as an intermediary; **and**
5. Have proven experience of having implemented at least 4 projects with a budget equal to or higher than the value of the financial allocation awarded by this Call for Proposals; **and**
6. Have proven capacity, experience, and access to expertise to be able to address the priority themes of this Call for Proposals (See Part I Section 4.4 of these guidelines),**and**
7. Applicants' capacity of producing research outputs in other languages will be considered as an added value.

No nationality restriction from African and European countries applies to applicants and co-applicants.

Please note that the international organisations are not eligible under this Call for Proposals³.

- (2) Potential applicants may not participate in Calls for Proposals or be awarded grants if they are in any of the situations listed in section 2.6.10.1 of the PRAG (including art. 135 and 136 of the EU Financial Regulation).

In the Annex 4, Declaration on Honour, (See list Section II. 7. 7. A of these guidelines) the lead applicant must declare that the lead applicant himself, the co-applicant are not in any of these situations.

Lead applicants, and co-applicant, in case of legal entities, persons who have powers of representation, decision-making or control over the lead applicant, the co-applicant and the affiliated entities are informed that, should they be in one of the situations of early detection or exclusion according to section 2.6.10.1 of the PRAG, personal details (name, given name if natural person, address, legal form and name and given name of the persons with powers of representation, decision- making or control, if legal person) may

² To follow EU considerations, **CSOs** are to include all non-State, not-for-profit structures, non-partisan and non-violent, through which people organise to pursue shared objectives and ideals, whether political, cultural, social or economic. Operating from the local to the national, regional, and international levels, they comprise urban and rural, formal, and informal organisations. They include membership-based, cause-based and service-oriented CSOs. Among them, non- governmental organisations, organisations representing indigenous peoples, community – based organisations, advocacy organisations, organisations representing national and/or ethnic minorities, diaspora organisations, migrants' organisations in partner countries, local traders' associations and citizens' groups, cooperatives, employers' associations and trade unions (social partners), organisations representing economic and social interests, organisations representing person with disabilities, organisations fighting corruption and fraud and promoting good governance, civil rights organisations and organisations combating discrimination, local organisations (including networks) involved in decentralised regional cooperation and integration, consumer organisations, women's and youth organisations environmental, teaching, cultural, research and scientific organisations, universities, education institutions, churches and religious associations and communities, the media and any non-governmental associations and independent foundations, including independent political foundations.

³ International (inter-governmental) organisation as defined by Article 156 of the EU Financial Regulation: International organisations are international public-sector organisations set up by intergovernmental agreements as well as specialised agencies set up by them.

be registered in the early detection and exclusion system, and communicated to the persons and entities concerned in relation to the award or the execution of a grant contract. In this respect, provisionally selected lead applicants, and co-applicants are obliged to declare that they are not in one of the exclusion situations through a signed declaration on honour together with the application (Annex 4 – Declaration on Honour).

- (3) Applicants included in the lists of EU restrictive measures (See section 2.4 of the PRAG) at the moment of the award decision cannot be awarded the contract⁴.

The lead applicant must act with a co-applicant as specified above.

Co-applicant:

A local organisation (with or without legal personality) must be understood as established in one of the countries where the action is taking place (See Part II Section 2.1.2 of these guidelines). An organisation is considered “local” when its charter demonstrates that the organisation has been established by an instrument governed by the national law of the country concerned (only for entities with legal personality) and that its head office is located in that country.

The choice of the co-applicant must be justified in the proposal as part of the project design. The composition of the partnership will be taken into account in the evaluation process.

Each member of a partnership must have a precise and clearly identified role in the implementation of the project. A partnership should be composed in such a way as to allow the achievement of the project objectives in the most effective and cost-efficient manner.

The role of each member of the partnership (lead and co-applicant) must be clearly explained in the proposal (description of the action). It is strongly recommended that the lead applicant and its co-applicant draw up an agreement defining their partnership as well as their respective technical and financial roles and obligations. A clear allocation of responsibilities and costs will contribute to the partnership’s success.

The co-applicant participates in designing and implementing the project, and the costs it incurs are eligible in the same way as those incurred by the lead applicant.

⁴ The updated lists of sanctions are available at www.sanctionsmap.eu.

Please note that the sanctions map is an IT tool for identifying the sanctions regimes. The source of the sanctions stems from legal acts published in the Official Journal (OJ). In case of discrepancy between the published legal acts and the updates on the website it is the OJ version that prevails.

The co-applicant must satisfy the eligibility criteria as applicable to the lead applicant itself. The co-applicant must sign the mandate in Annex 1 (See list Section II. 7. 7. A of these guidelines).

If awarded the grant contract, the co-applicant will become beneficiary in the project (together with the lead applicant).

Number of applications and grants per applicant

An organisation may not submit more than one application as lead applicant under this Call for Proposals. Should this be the case, the Evaluation Committee will only consider the first proposal arrived (based on the date and hour of submission) and any other additional proposal will be rejected.

A co-applicant may be co-applicant in more than one application under this Call for Proposals.

A lead applicant may be a co-applicant in another application.

1.2 Eligible projects: actions for which an application may be made

Definition:

A project is composed of a set of activities.

Duration:

The initial planned duration of a project may not be lower than 2 months nor exceed 15 months.

Location:

The action must involve organisations, practitioners and experts based in both Africa and in Europe, based on the “1+1 formula”.

(Annex 6: list of eligible countries as project location)

The partnership’s proposal must indicate the countries where the project will take place.

The regional focus of the project does not preclude activities for dialogue, advocacy and coalition building at international and global level.

Geographical balance will be taken into account by the evaluation committee at any stage of the evaluation process.

Type of projects:

Projects must consist of a set of innovative, autonomous, and coherent research and dissemination activities, with clearly defined objectives, target groups and tangible results, in line with the general objective and specific objectives and priorities listed (See Part I Sections 4.1, 4.2, 4.3 of these guidelines) of this Call for Proposals.

Research projects must be innovative, have an impact, and build on work/body of evidence already available, if possible, with potential for transcontinental scaling. They must include measures to ensure policy application through tangible policy recommendations.

To increase impact and sustainability, all projects must include an element of capacity building and an of enabling environment for Research in the field of Africa-Europe cooperation.

Projects must be designed and prepared in consultation and close coordination with all partnership members to create synergies and strengthen common approaches.

Projects that support emerging local actors are encouraged.

The following types of projects are ineligible:

- Projects which discriminate against individuals or groups of people on grounds of their gender, sexual orientation, religious beliefs or lack of them, or their ethnic origin;
- Projects directly and financially supporting specific political parties/leaders;
- Projects supporting proselytism, supporting violence;
- Projects concerning procurement of equipment.

Types of activities

The applicants of the partnership should design and identify the set of activities necessary for the achievement of the project's objectives, which need to be aligned with the specific objectives of this Call.

List of potential activities (non-exhaustive) foreseen under this Call for Proposals:

- **Gathering, compiling, researching and analysing**, evidence building and policy development;
- **Assessing, and evaluation** of initiatives and projects implemented as part of the AU-EU commitment;
- **Networking, interregional coalition building, and peer exchange** among research stakeholders for sharing knowledge and experiences, vision, and ideas about Africa-Europe cooperation in the themes targeted through the Call for Proposals;
- **Communication campaign** aimed at promoting and monitoring Africa-Europe cooperation;

- **Dissemination** and **publication** of the results of the research.

Financial support to third party

Financial support for third parties is not allowed under this Call for Proposals

Visibility

The applicants must take all necessary steps to publicise the fact that the Africa-Europe Foundation has financed or co- financed the project they implement.

1.3 Eligibility costs/ineligible costs

Only “eligible costs” can be covered by a grant. The categories of costs that are eligible and non-eligible are indicated below. The budget is both a cost estimate and an overall ceiling for “eligible cost”.

The reimbursement of eligible costs shall be based on the following form:

- Actual costs incurred by the beneficiary(ies) (applicants and co-applicants) in connection with the projects implemented under the present Call for Proposals.

Recommendations to award a grant are always subject to the condition that the checks preceding the signing of the grant contract do not reveal problems requiring changes to the budget (such as arithmetical errors, inaccuracies, unrealistic costs, and ineligible costs). The checks may give rise to requests for clarification and may lead the Contracting Authority to impose modifications or reductions to address such mistakes or inaccuracies. It is not possible to increase the grant or the percentage of AEF co-financing as a result of these corrections.

It is therefore in the applicants' interest to provide a **realistic and cost-effective budget**.

Eligible direct costs:

The following direct costs of the beneficiary(ies) shall be eligible⁵:

- a) the cost of staff assigned to the project, corresponding to actual gross salaries including social security charges and other remuneration-related costs (excluding bonuses); salaries and costs shall not exceed those normally borne by the beneficiary(ies), unless it is justified by showing that it is essential to carry out the project;

⁵ List inspired by the “General conditions applicable to European Union-financed grant contracts for external actions”, Article 14.

- b) travel and subsistence costs for staff and other persons taking part in the project, provided they do not exceed those normally borne by the beneficiary(ies) according to its rules and regulations;
- c) purchase costs for supplies specifically dedicated to the purposes of the project;
- d) depreciation, rental or leasing costs for equipment (new or used) and supplies specifically dedicated to the purposes of the project;
- e) costs of consumables specifically dedicated to the project;
- f) costs of service, supply and work contracts awarded by the beneficiary(ies) for the purposes of the project;
- g) costs deriving directly from the requirements of the contract (dissemination of information, evaluation specific to the project, audits, translation, reproduction, insurance, etc.) including financial service costs (in particular the cost of transfers and financial guarantees where required according to the contract);
- h) duties, taxes and charges, including VAT, related to the purposes of the project, paid and not recoverable by the beneficiary(ies), unless otherwise provided.

The following costs are not eligible:

- Debts and debt service charges (interest);
- Provisions for losses or potential future liabilities;
- Costs declared by the beneficiary(ies) and financed under/by another project/work programme by one/several other donor(s);
- Purchases and rent of land or buildings;
- Purchases of new or used equipment;
- Currency exchange losses;
- Credits to third parties;
- Salary costs of the personnel of national administrations.

1. 4 Ethic clauses and code of conducts

a) Absence of conflict of interest

The applicant must not be affected by any conflict of interest and must have no equivalent relation in that respect with other applicants or parties involved in the projects. Any attempt by an applicant to obtain confidential information, enter into unlawful agreements with competitors or influence the evaluation committee or the contracting authority during the process of examining, clarifying, evaluating, and comparing applications will lead to the rejection of its application and may result in administrative penalties according to the Financial Regulation in force.

b) Respect for human rights as well as environmental legislation and core labour standards

The applicant and its staff must comply with human rights. In particular and, in accordance with the applicable act, applicants who have been awarded contracts must comply with the

environmental legislation including multilateral environmental agreements, and with the core labour standards as applicable and as defined in the relevant International Labour Organisation conventions (such as the conventions on freedom of association and collective bargaining; elimination of forced and compulsory labour; abolition of child labour).

Zero tolerance for sexual exploitation, abuse, and harassment:

The Africa Europe Foundation applies a policy of 'zero tolerance' in relation to all wrongful conduct which has an impact on the professional credibility of the applicant.

Physical abuse or punishment, or threats of physical abuse, sexual abuse or exploitation, harassment, and verbal abuse, as well as other forms of intimidation shall be prohibited.

c) Anti-corruption and anti-bribery

The applicant shall comply with all applicable laws and regulations and codes relating to anti-bribery and anti-corruption. The Africa Europe Foundation reserves the right to suspend or cancel project financing if corrupt practices of any kind are discovered at any stage of the award process or during the execution of a contract and if the contracting authority fails to take all appropriate measures to remedy the situation. For the purposes of this provision, 'corrupt practices' are the offer of a bribe, gift, gratuity, or commission to any person as an inducement or reward for performing or refraining from any act relating to the award of a contract or execution of a contract already concluded with the contracting authority.

d) Unusual commercial expenses

Applications will be rejected, or contracts terminated if it emerges that the award or execution of a contract has given rise to unusual commercial expenses. Such unusual commercial expenses are commissions not mentioned in the main contract or not stemming from a properly concluded contract referring to the main contract, commissions not paid in return for any actual and legitimate service, commissions remitted to a tax haven, commissions paid to a payee who is not clearly identified, or commissions paid to a company which has every appearance of being a front company.

Grant beneficiaries found to have paid unusual commercial expenses on projects are liable, depending on the seriousness of the facts observed, to have their contracts terminated or to be permanently excluded from receiving AEF funds.

e) Breach of obligations, irregularities, or fraud

The contracting authority reserves the right to suspend or cancel the procedure, where the award procedure proves to have been subject to substantial breach of obligations, irregularities, or fraud. If substantial breach of obligations, irregularities or fraud are discovered after the award of the contract, the contracting authority may refrain from concluding the contract.

2. How to apply and procedure to follow

To apply to this Call for Proposals, the lead applicants must:

- 1) Provide information about the proposed research project in the documents (Annexes 1, 2, 3) (See list Part II. Section 7. 7. A of these guidelines).
- 2) Provide information about the organisations involved in the action (Annexe 6) (See list Part II. Section 7. 7. A of these guidelines).

An application understood as the applicant's proposal is **composed by the Concept Note form duly completed and the Annexes (see list Part II Section 2.2.7 of these guidelines) required to be added and filled out.**

2.1 Where and how to send the application

The application/proposal that means (Concept Note + requested Annexes) will be addressed to the following AEF email address: research@africaeuropefoundation.org.

A single application per partnership, sent in a single file by the Lead applicant.

Applications must be written **in English**.

Applicants must use only the Concept Note and Annexes forms provided to prepare their application, as only these model forms will be assessed. It is therefore of utmost importance that this document contains ALL relevant information concerning the action. Hand-written Concept Notes will not be accepted.

No additional annexes than those requested should be sent.

Clarification will only be requested when information provided is not sufficient/unclear and thus prevents the contracting authority from conducting an objective assessment.

2.2 Deadline for submission the application

The deadline for the submission of the application (Proposal: Concept Note + Annexes) is: **23rd May 2024 (17.00 Brussels, 18.00 Addis Ababa)**

The lead application is strongly advised not to wait until the last day to submit its application. The contracting authority cannot be held responsible for any delay due to such aforementioned difficulties.

Any application submitted after the deadline will be rejected.

2.3 Further information about the application: Q&A

Questions may be sent by e-mail no later than **16 days before the deadline** for the submission of Concept Notes to the address below, indicating clearly that the email refers to the Call for Proposals “Establishing an Africa-Europe Research Partnership”.

E-mail address: research@africaeuropefoundation.org

The contracting authority has no obligation to provide clarifications to questions received after this date. Replies will be given no later than **11 days before the deadline** for submission of Concept Notes.

To ensure equal treatment of applicants, the contracting authority cannot give a prior opinion on the eligibility of lead applicants, co-applicants, a project, or specific activities.

Individual replies will not necessarily be given to questions. The Africa-Europe Foundation (AEF) will ensure all important notices and feedback on aggregated questions are published on the AEF Website.

2.4 Evaluation and selection of applications

The evaluation and selection of applications will follow the AEF's internal rules to offer a **flexible and simple mixed procedure**, while drawing on the PRAG rules.

Evaluation

Applications will be examined and evaluated an evaluation committees made up of external assessors and AEF's internal evaluation committee members, who will be responsible for the technical and financial evaluation.

All applications will be assessed according to the same following steps and criteria previously presented and detailed.

Selection in two steps

(Step 1): Opening and administrative checks and, Concept Notes and annexes evaluation

This step will open a competitive selection phase of Concept Note including three sections:

Section 1. Relevance of the proposed research project;

Section 2. Design of the proposed research project;

(These two first sections will be enhanced by a Section 3).

Section 3. Financial and operational capacity including additionally some elements of budget and cost-effectiveness of the project will also be taken into consideration.

See Annex 5 Evaluation grid for specific evaluation criteria.

(Step 2): Direct negotiation conducted by the AEF with the stakeholders of the selected partnership(s)

Based on the selection step 1, highest scored “1+1” partnerships will be shortlisted.

The AEF will engage in direct negotiation with the pre-selected “1+1” partnerships.

Then, on the basis of the thematic expertise of the shortlisted "1+1" partnerships, it will be up to the AEF (via the Evaluation committees) to combine the organisations to establish the overall collaborative research partnership (the Research Consortium) which will implement the various research projects which will achieve the expected results (See Part I, section 4.4 of these guidelines), based on the overall research programme.

2.5 Notification of the Contracting Authority’s decision

The lead applicants will be informed in writing of the Contracting Authority’s decision concerning their application and, if rejected, the reasons for the negative decision. This letter will be sent by-email to the address indicated by the lead applicant of each partnership(s) that will have applied to this Call for Proposals.

2.6 Indicative timetable

	DATE	TIME
1. Deadline for requesting any clarifications from the contracting authority	7 th May 2024	12:00
2. Last date on which clarifications are issued by the contracting authority	12 th May 2024	-
3. Deadline for submission of applicant’s proposal (Concept Note <u>and</u> the Annexes)	23 rd May 2024	(17.00 Brussels, 18.00 Addis Ababa)
4. Information to lead applicants an opening, administrative checks and Concept Notes evaluation	May	-

5. Notification of award (after the eligibility check)	June	-
6. Contract signature	July	-

All times are in the time zone of the country of the Contracting Authority – Central European Summer Time.

This indicative timetable refers to provisional dates (except for date 1, 2, 3) and may be updated by the Contracting Authority during the procedure. In such cases, the updated timetable will be published on the AEF website.

2.7 List of annexes

A: Documents to be completed by the applicants of the partnerships at the application stage:

Annex 1: Concept Note Form including Declaration of Lead Applicant and Mandate for Co-applicant

Annex 2: Logical Framework Form

Annex 3: Budget Form (Excel file)

Annex 4: Declaration on Honour

B: Documents shared for information at the application stage:

Annex 5: Evaluation grid for specific evaluation criteria

Annex 6: List of eligible countries as project location

C: Documents to be completed by the applicants of the partnerships at the contracting stage:

Annex 7: Legal Entity Form

Annex 8: Financial Identification Form