



EXPRESSION OF INTEREST

Understanding African Universities' Capacity for
Climate Adaptation Research: Co-creating and
Implementing a Climate-focused Organizational
Capacity Assessment Tool (CO-CAT)

April 2025

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This call for expression of interest seeks to invite African universities and research institutions interested in joining a 24-month initiative to co-create and implement a climate adaptation research-focused institutional capacity assessment tool (CO-CAT). Selected institutions will play an active role in developing, testing, applying, and refining the tool. This will contribute to strengthening the role of African research institutions in driving climate-resilient research and development. The expression of interest should indicate relevant information on institutional strengths, research focus areas, infrastructure, partnerships, and commitment to climate adaptation efforts. For further information, please contact Dr. Agyemang Okyere Darko via aodarko@aau.org and copy Dr. Lorraine Dongo via lorraine.dongo@acu.ac.uk. Further details can be accessed below.

➔ Introduction

The "Understanding African Universities' Capacity for Climate Adaptation Research" project is a 24-month project that seeks to enhance institutional capacity for climate adaptation research in Africa. The project is being funded mostly (about 90%) by the UK Foreign Commonwealth Development Office (UK FCDO), and co-funded by the International Development Research Centre (IDRC), Canada, and implemented by the Association of African Universities (AAU), the Association of Commonwealth Universities (ACU) and the Liverpool School of Tropical Medicine (LSTM). This project is intended to work with 20 universities across Africa to co-create and implement a climate change adaptation research -focused organizational capacity assessment tool (CO-CAT) through a living lab-based approach. This approach will involve climate adaptation researchers from multiple disciplinary backgrounds, research professional service staff, senior university managers, and non-academic stakeholders such as non-governmental organizations (NGOs), policy makers, government bodies and community members who engage with climate adaptation research.

Through this living lab approach, the project aims to close the communication and collaboration divide among the diverse stakeholders tasked with tackling, or are affected by, the challenges encountered in relation to climate adaptation research in universities and research institutions. By employing the living lab methodology, the project will facilitate the rapid identification of tangible solutions and provide direction on how to implement these solutions.

We are now calling on interested African universities and research institutions that would like to participate in this project.

➔ Eligibility Criteria

Research institutions and universities must meet the following criteria:

- **Institutions must be based in one of the following countries**

Algeria, Egypt, Morocco, Tunisia, Côte d'Ivoire, Senegal, Ghana, Nigeria, Cameroon, Benin, Togo, Central Africa Republic, RDC, Gabon, Burundi, Kenya, Ethiopia, Tanzania, Uganda, Namibia, Zambia, Botswana.



- **Institutional Commitment**

Participating universities must demonstrate a strong institutional commitment to sustainability and climate action through established strategies and policies. They should express their active involvement in global or continental initiatives for climate action with clear leadership support and willingness to engage in the proposed project.

- **Research Alignment**

Institutions should have ongoing research activities that align with national or continental climate adaptation goals. This includes having dedicated research centres, programs, or experts in climate or environmental science, environmental sustainability, or related fields, with the capacity to contribute to evidence-based policymaking.

- **Partnerships and Collaboration**

A strong record of collaboration is essential. Universities and research institutions must have existing partnerships with international academic institutions, NGOs, governments, the private sector, or local communities. Active involvement in multi-stakeholder initiatives and the ability to engage in collaborative knowledge exchange will be highly valued.

- **Infrastructure and Technology**

Participating institutions should possess reliable ICT infrastructure that supports online collaboration and data sharing.

- **Credibility and Ethics**

Universities must show a credible track record in publishing climate-related research in reputable journals and demonstrate access to internal or external funding for climate research. Ethical research practices and a commitment to transparency and integrity are non-negotiable.

➔ Scope of Engagement

The project will employ the methods of engagement outlined below:

- The selected institutions will be engaged through a series of iterative and collaborative activities involving a diverse group of stakeholders. This will include workshops, focus groups, expert consultations, key informant interviews, and E-surveys, generating evidence to understand the current context.
- The selected institutions will participate in the joint development of a Climate Adaptation Research-centered Organizational Capacity Assessment Tool (CO-CAT). This tool will be deployed by the selected universities and research institutions, which will also take part in analyzing the findings and initiating pilot projects to tackle the identified needs for capacity building. The process will build on the evidence gathered to ensure that challenges are effectively managed rather than exacerbated.
- The Selected universities and other stakeholders will contribute not only to the refinement and finalization of the CO-CAT but also to the production of user guidelines, and development of case studies of capacity strengthening responses based on tool outcomes.

➔ Benefits

This project presents a variety of benefits:

1. An opportunity to engage with a broader community of about 551 climate adaptation research contributors and organizations across Africa associated with the Climate Change Adaptation Research (CLARE) project across the world.
2. An opportunity to engage diverse stakeholders on climate change adaptation research
3. Through this project, it is anticipated that Institutions will be responsible for Common issues identification and proffering of solutions.
4. A seed grant of USD 5,000 will be awarded to selected Institutions involved to pilot and contribute to refining the CO-CAT tool.
5. Other benefits include the opportunity for learning activities, training, workshops and exposure to virtual living lab environments and toolkits.

Project duration

The implementation phase of the project commenced in January 2025 and is anticipated to conclude in December 2026.

Preparation, Submission and Processing of applications

- Applicants are expected to respond to the call by filling out this form to express their interest: <https://forms.office.com/r/rn7brdKS7n>
- Submission of Applications
 1. The deadline for submissions is Friday, 13th June 2025. Applications received after the deadline will not be considered.
 2. All applications will be received and processed in confidentiality with the acknowledgment of intellectual property rights of the applicants.
 3. All submissions will be evaluated and reviewed by the Project Team and selected based on merit, taking into consideration responses provided.
 4. The review, selection and communication to applicants is expected to be completed by **Friday, 27th June 2025**.

CONTACT DETAILS

For further information and inquiries, contact:

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Or visit our website via <https://clareprogramme.org/project/understanding-african-universities-capacity-for-climate-adaptation-research-piloting-a-climate-focused-organizational-capacity-assessment-tool/>