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**THE AFRICA THINK TANK PLATFORM (ATTP) PROJECT**

**FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS (FAQ)**

## 

1. **Project Overview & Background**
2. ***What is the primary objective of the Africa Think Tank Platform (ATTP) project?***

The ATTP project aims to strengthen the capacity of the African Union Commission (AUC) for policymaking and implementation by harnessing resources from national and continental think tanks. It focuses on translating the ambitions of Agenda 2063 into tangible development outcomes for the continent, fostering an integrated, prosperous, and peaceful Africa. Ultimately, this initiative is intended to operate as a sustainable policymaking tool.

1. ***Who are the beneficiaries of the ATTP project?***

The direct and immediate beneficiaries are the relevant stakeholders who will benefit from support for strong policy-making capacity. This includes regional entities such as the AUC, its specialized agencies and RECs, African governments, think tanks, and Africans as the ultimate beneficiaries. Participating think tanks will receive various benefits, including support for research and analytical work on cross-boundary policy issues, policy engagement, policy adoption, and institutional capacity building. It is expected that approximately 15, or 1 percent, of the 1,300 think tanks on the continent will directly benefit from the project.

1. **Financial Management**
2. ***How is the ATTP project financed, and what is the total funding amount?***

The ATTP project is financed through an International Development Association (IDA) grant from the World Bank amounting to US$50 million. This funding is allocated for both regional and African initiatives within the project. The project life cycle is from July 2024 to June 2028.

1. ***What are the key components of financial management within the ATTP project?***

Financial Management (FM) for the project involves several crucial aspects, including budgetary controls, clearly defined procedures, managed fund flows/disbursements, a robust accounting system, qualified FM staffing, effective information/accounting systems, internal controls, financial reporting, auditing arrangements, adherence to FM covenants, and a detailed FM Action Plan. This includes actions such as ensuring that Annual Work Plans and budgets (AWP&B) are submitted for the Bank's No Objection and closely following up on budget utilization. A finance officer is to be recruited or assigned to the program, and necessary account codes are maintained in the AUC’s Systems, Applications, and Processing (SAP) for this program.

1. ***What procurement guidelines and procedures must be followed within the ATTP project?***

Procurement within the ATTP project must adhere to the World Bank's "Procurement Regulations for Investment Project Financing (IPF) Borrowers," specifically [the Fourth Edition, November 2020](chrome-extension://efaidnhttps:/thedocs.worldbank.org/en/doc/178331533065871195-0290022020/original/ProcurementRegulations.pdf). This includes preparing a detailed procurement plan, utilizing World Bank standard bidding documents, following up on solicitation documents with the Bank, and adhering to guidelines for international competitive bidding (ICB), bid evaluation, and contract award procedures. The Operations Support Services Directorate (OSSD/SCMD) is responsible for consolidating procurement plans and submitting them to the World Bank for review and approval through the World Bank’s internal procurement approval system, Systematic Tracking of Exchanges in Procurement (STEP).

1. ***What are the requirements for handling complaints related to procurement under the ATTP project?***

Complaints arising from national procurement procedures when approaching the national market may be handled in accordance with the Borrower’s national procurement complaints review procedures, if those provisions are acceptable to the Bank. However, for contracts following national procurement procedures that are identified to be prior reviewed by the Bank, paragraphs 3.2 to 3.5 of Annex III of the Procurement Regulations shall also apply. Complaints arising under contracts where Bank SPDs are required will be handled in accordance with Annex III of the Procurement Regulations.

1. ***What role does the Project Procurement Strategy for Development (PPSD) play in the ATTP project?***

The PPSD is a crucial document of AUC that outlines how procurement activities will support the development objectives of the ATTP project and deliver the best Value for Money (VfM) under a risk-based approach. It justifies the selection methods in the Procurement Plan and ensures that procurement decisions are strategically aligned with project goals.

1. ***What are the conditions for the disbursement of funds to selected think tanks?***

Disbursement of funds to the successful think tanks will only occur after the AU has internally approved the submitted agreed deliverables. The AUC will establish each winning think tank as a vendor in the AUC SAP system and assign a vendor ID. The think tank will submit an invoice to the ATTP project secretariat for processing after approval of the submitted deliverable. The AUC Finance will process the payment for each submitted deliverable by the think tank within 30 working days.

1. ***What are the conditions for disbursement of funds related to the Endowment Fund within the ATTP project?***

Disbursement to the Endowment Fund will only occur after the AU has internally approved and established the Endowment Fund through its internal policy organs and appointed a Fund Manager, all in a manner satisfactory to the AUC.

1. ***What measures are in place to address fraud, corruption, and conflicts of interest during procurement in the ATTP project?***

The ATTP project incorporates measures to prevent and address fraud, corruption, and conflicts of interest. The Bank can reject proposals, sanction firms or individuals, and require audits to ensure transparency and accountability. Firms or individuals declared ineligible or sanctioned by the Bank are excluded from participation. Bidders are required to permit the Bank to inspect all accounts, records, and other documents relating to the procurement process.

1. **Project governance**
2. ***What is the governance mechanism of the Project, and what is its role?***

The main governance body of the ATTP is the Think Tank Platform Steering Committee (TTPSC). The TTPSC's role is to provide strategic guidance and oversight for project implementation, ensuring effective coordination and collaboration among participating AUC departments and directorates.

1. ***What is the composition of the TTPSC?***

The TTPSC will comprise 12 members and have pan-African representation, including representatives from the AUC, AU organs, and specialized agencies, as well as representatives of relevant regional bodies (Regional Economic Communities, the private sector, academia), and development partners supporting the AUC.

1. ***What are the frequency and modality of TTPSC meetings?***

The TTPSC is expected to meet twice a year. This may include a meeting at the beginning of the year to discuss and approve work plans and budgets, and one at the end of the year to review annual reports. However, additional meetings may be required, for example, during the selection of think tanks and addressing other implementation issues as they arise. Meetings may be conducted in person or virtually, depending on the circumstances.

1. ***How are decisions made during TTPSC meetings?***

Decision-making will be made through majority vote. That requires support from more than 50% of the members who attend the meeting if there is a quorum. In the event of a tie, the Chair of the TTPSC will cast the decisive vote.

1. **Think Tank Consortium Selection**
2. ***How is the call for proposals linked to the ATTP Project?***

The project serves as a critical enabler of Africa's economic transformation by promoting and accelerating the uptake of relevant policies identified by think tanks. African think tanks will be invited to submit proposals that present practical solutions, highlight evidence, demonstrate strong potential for impact, and align with the project's objectives. To realize this vision, the project will be executed in three components:

* Component I: Establish capacity to operate a sustainable policymaking platform.
* Component II: Strengthen the quality, relevance, and uptake of policy research on priority issues. Through a competitive, merit-based process, the project will award grants to 2-4 think tank consortia to further this goal.
* Component III: Support the sustainability of the regional platform.

The call for proposals responds to **Component II of the project.**

For more information on the components and project, please visit the [ATTP project portal](https://projects.worldbank.org/en/projects-operations/project-detail/P179804) on the World Bank Website.

1. ***What are the priority thematic areas covered under the project?***

The ATTP project will initially target six priority thematic areas that are aligned with the AU’s Agenda 2063 and other initiatives that articulate continent priorities, such as the Sustainable Development Goals and International Development Association (IDA) regional priorities:

1. **Economic transformation and governance**, including issues around debt and illicit financial flows.
2. **Climate change**, including the energy transition, adaptation capacity, and carbon markets.
3. **Regional trade** with a focus on the African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA) and promotion of regional value chains
4. **Food security with a** focus on finding solutions to address hunger and ensure food availability throughout the continent.
5. **Human capital development** with an emphasis on investing in education, health, and skills development.
6. **Digitalization** to leverage technology for development and innovation.
7. ***What are the key areas for which the think tank consortia are expected to implement activities?***

The consortia are expected to implement activities:

1. **Producing relevant, good-quality, and collaborative policy research on continental priorities:** This area focuses on generating high-quality, collaborative research on key continental priorities in the six thematic areas, identifying and bridging critical gaps in the policy cycle, including design, implementation, evaluation, and feedback. Research must be relevant to the challenges faced on the continent and in the policymaking cycle.

1. **Developing and implementing activities for effective policy engagement and influence regionally and nationally:** This area focuses on developing strategies to promote more effective engagement at the regional and national levels, aiming to influence policy formulation and implementation at the continental and country levels. Strategies must also seek to strengthen think tanks’ efforts to enhance the communication, dissemination, and outreach of their policy research, analysis, and recommendations, ensuring uptake by relevant stakeholders.

**Note:** Policy research and policy engagement supported by the ATTP project will need to demonstrate: (i) that it has relevance for more than one country in the region; and (ii) is expected to generate significant positive externalities or mitigate negative externalities through, for example, its regional/cross-border approach to policymaking.

1. **Building institutional capacity to enhance sustainability:** This area aims to build the long-term sustainability of think tanks by supporting activities that improve financial sustainability plans, strengthen research capacity, promote staff retention, and foster the development of young researchers and their capacity pipelines.
2. **Enhancing the representation of female policy professionals:** This area focuses on promoting gender inclusivity and increasing female representation in the policy arena, providing mentorship, visibility, outreach, and supportive environments.
3. ***What are the key eligibility criteria that will be used for the selection of the think tanks?***

To be eligible for this project, applicants must meet the following criteria:

1. Apply as a consortium comprised of 3-5 African think tanks, with a lead think tank.

Think tanks are defined as independent policy research organizations registered in continental Africa and engaged in public policy research and engagement. The application must include documented evidence of at least three years of operation of all member think tanks (including the lead think tank) since the think tank’s official constitution was established, including legal registration, a board of trustees, and audited financial reports.

1. Applications include comprehensive activities in at least four of the six priority themes. The application must clearly indicate the priority themes it covers.
2. Demonstrate a strong commitment to aligning with and contributing to regional integration priorities, which involve addressing regional and cross-border issues, harmonizing research and policy endeavors, and supporting regional cooperation.
3. Submit a signed Commitment Letter from all consortium members and the lead organization confirming adherence to the consortium plan and commitment to ensuring participation and task execution according to the plan.
4. ***How are think tanks and a consortium of think tanks defined in the context of the ATTP Project?***

In the context of this project, a **consortium** refers to a collaborative association specifically comprised of African research think tanks.

**Lead Think Tank**: In addition to serving as a member of the consortium, the Lead Think Tank will steer and coordinate the consortium’s activities. This will involve providing strategic direction and guiding the consortium's endeavors, facilitating cooperation, and ensuring the accomplishment of shared objectives, including aiding fellow consortium members in achieving project goals.

**Consortium Member Think Tanks**: Consortium Member Think Tanks are the entities within the consortium, excluding the Lead Think Tank. They undertake a range of roles, including activities outlined in the consortium proposal, such as research, policy engagement, capacity building, and promoting inclusivity for female policy professionals. These think tanks also serve as focal points for specific themes, engaging in technical discussions with AUC thematic directorates. Researchers, analysts, and experts from each member think tank must actively contribute their expertise to collective efforts, fostering a dynamic environment for collaborative research and insights on regional and continental topics.

1. ***How is the selection process of the Think Tanks and the Consortium of Think Tanks conducted?***

The selection process will entail an initial screening step to ensure that the submitted proposals meet the eligibility criteria. After the initial screening process, an Independent Committee of Experts (ICE) will undertake a two-step review process involving a desk review followed by site visits to successful consortia.

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1. **Screening**

After the submission deadline, AUC staff will screen all proposals to ensure eligibility. Only applications that meet the eligibility criteria set forth in the call for proposals will proceed to the independent review stage. Each proposal will be carefully evaluated for completeness, compliance with the requirements, and adherence to the proposal format and guidelines. **Any applications that do not meet the eligibility criteria will be disqualified**. Applicants will receive notification of screening results and instructions for the independent review process if they are selected to advance to the next stage.

1. **Peer review**

After the initial screening step, an ICE hosted by the AUC will review all eligible proposals submitted for consideration. The ICE will evaluate the proposals based on a set of criteria, and each proposal will receive a score for three key areas: the quality of the proposal and its relevance to the ATTP objectives, the capacity of key personnel and operational systems to implement the proposed activities, and the proposed budget. The evaluation results will guide the ICE in recommending the final proposals for funding to the project’s key decision-making body, the Think Tank Platform Steering Committee (TTPSC), for approval. Selected think tank consortia will undergo an institutional capacity assessment to develop and supplement existing capacity-building activities. A critical area of grant support will be to help think tanks strengthen their financial sustainability. Receipt of funds will be contingent upon the think tank consortia's agreement to implement recommendations from these assessments. Consortia will also be required to develop a more detailed annual budget upon selection.

Proposals will be evaluated based on a set of criteria, and each proposal will receive a score in the various areas.

1. **Site visits:**

The TTPSC will utilize the scores obtained to decide which proposals merit funding. Before selecting the consortium of think tanks, ICE, representatives from AUC, and independent observers from international think tanks will conduct site visits to assess the capacity and capability of the finalist think tanks to undertake the proposed work.

1. ***How will funds be allocated to the selected consortium of Think Tanks?***

Think tank consortia will be selected depending on the quality of proposals and availability of funds. It is expected that the ATTP project will provide support to 2-4 competitively selected think tank consortia, granting a set amount per consortium over a 4-year period.

Each consortium’s funding will adhere to the following principles:

* 1. Think tanks within each consortium can receive a maximum of 30% of their annual operating budget for each of the project’s four years.
  2. The maximum grant for a consortium is $15 million during the project life cycle.

1. ***What are the key timeline of the selection process?***

The selection process is expected to have the following timeline:

1. **Proposal submission deadline**: 22 August 2025
2. **Screening**: 29 August 2025
3. **Evaluation and selection of proposals**: 12 September 2025
4. **Award notification**: 3 October 2025
5. **Grant disbursement**: 14 November 2025
6. ***What languages does the application support?***

The proposals should be submitted in English. Applicants can include an additional copy in one of the official African Union working languages (Arabic, French, Portuguese, Spanish, or Kiswahili).

1. ***How many proposals can be submitted per consortium?***

Only one proposal per consortium is allowed, and only complete proposals will be considered.

1. ***How will the proposals be submitted?***

Applicants are required to use the provided templates and submit their proposals to [LINK] (submission website) by the specified deadline. Applicants should note that the call for proposals will be open from Monday, June 30, 2025, to Friday, August 22, 2025. During this period, the Consortia will be provided with login credentials to make any necessary changes to their submission upon submitting their initial proposal. No changes will be allowed after the due date.

1. ***How will the consortium's performance be monitored and measured under the ATTP Project?***

The Think Tank’s performance will be measured by its success in meeting or surpassing the set of performance targets stipulated in the Project Results Framework. To assess overall performance, progress toward achieving the end target will be measured annually. The methodology for measuring performance shall focus on the difference between the planned target and the actual performance. Therefore, the Think Tank must set realistic targets.

The Project performance and funding utilization shall be reviewed annually. If a think-tank fails to meet expected results for a given year (Year N) and demonstrates appropriate use of allocated funds (See Annex 1), the AUC and TTPSC may withhold up to 10% of the think-tank’s funding for the following year (Year N+1). These withheld funds can be released to the Think Tank upon full completion of Year N activities.

The project’s mid-term review shall serve as an opportunity to reallocate funds based on performance in relation to the achievement of targets and the use of project financing.

* + 1. If performance against agreed-upon targets after two years of implementation is less than 75%, then financing shall be reduced by at least 10% of uncommitted funds, unless otherwise agreed under exceptional circumstances.
    2. If the proportion of funding used after two years of implementation is less than 50%, the financing shall be reduced by a maximum of 10% of the uncommitted amount that exceeds 50% of the funding, unless otherwise agreed upon under special circumstances.

The combination of i) and ii) cannot lead to a cut of more than 10% of future funding.

Should a think tank not show evidence of progress toward achieving stipulated performance targets according to the timeline for implementation detailed in Annex 1 result framework or of use of funds, the AUC and the TTPSC, following consultation with the World Bank, may re-allocate funding from a non-performing Think Tank to other Think Tanks or project components with the mid-term review serving as the mechanism for re-allocation of funds that provide room for sanctions and rewards based on performance and achievement of agreed upon targets.

1. ***How are disputes under the project settled?***

Any dispute arising under this Agreement, which cannot be amicably settled between the parties to this Agreement, shall be referred to the Think Tank Platform Steering Committee, which is the arbiter of all disputes. The decision of TTPSC is final.

1. ***Will the ATTP Secretariat organize an informational session for potential applicants?***

The AUC will organize informational sessions to assist potential applicants of the ATTP project. These sessions are designed to support consortia of think tanks interested in applying for the project, providing essential knowledge and guidance on the program requirements, grant proposal development, and the proposal submission process. It is strongly encouraged that all eligible think tank consortia attend these sessions to engage with field experts and have their questions addressed. By organizing these sessions, the AUC aims to create a platform for participants to learn, exchange experiences, gain a comprehensive understanding of the project objectives, and ultimately submit stronger proposals.

1. ***Who and how to contact the ATTP Secretariat if the applicants have additional questions or requests for clarification?***

For further information or clarification, applicants are invited to contact the ATTP Secretariat using this email address: [attpinfo@africanunion.org](mailto:attpinfo@africanunion.org)

1. **Roles and responsibilities of institutions**
2. ***What are the roles and responsibilities of the various institutions in relation to the project implementation arrangement?***

**African Union Commission**

Coordinating Office (Partnerships Management & Resources Mobilization Directorate)

* Overall management and ensure achievement of project goals and objectives
* Manage secretariat support to TTPSC
* Coordinate activities, organize meetings, and facilitate effective communication among implementing bodies
* Facilitation for meetings, workshops, and conferences related to the project
* Management of the think tank's competitive selection process
* Secretariat for Platform Steering Committee meetings
* Managing the general fund and establishing an endowment fund
* Environmental and social risk management (including GRM), M&E, and project-level reporting (financial and progress) to the World Bank.

AUC thematic departments (priority areas)

* Intellectual leadership on research on regional economic priorities
* Oversight of think tanks’ work plans and proposal implementation
* Facilitator of policy engagement (e.g., TTs and STCs)

Directorate of Finance

* Financial Management responsibilities

Operation Support Service Directorate

* Procurement responsibilities

**African Capacity Building Foundation (ACBF)**

* Organizing forums and knowledge exchange events between policy researchers and policymakers
* Fellowships and secondment programs
* Training and capacity building of policymakers, civil society, and other key stakeholders
* Capacity building of think tanks (research quality, communications, resource mobilization, twinning arrangements, and partnerships)
* Creating a database of African and global think tanks
* Creating an online African Knowledge Repository
* Peer network for female professionals
* Study on good practices to improve female participation in policy research
* Policy community survey

**African Union Development Agency (AUDA-NEPAD)**

* Technical advisory support to think tanks' research in priority areas (e.g., promoting national adoption of research policies, collaboration on research activities, etc.)
* Contributing to the development of policy research agenda (e.g., engagement with think tanks, thematic directorates, and Specialized Technical Committees).