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**PARTNERSHIP**

# Partnerships for Innovative Research in Africa (PIRA) Grant Program

Q&A and Grant Proposal  
Development Workshop

# Housekeeping

- Facilitators
- Webinar format
  - Introduce yourself in the chat
- Interpretation
- Q&A

# Agenda

- Session A: Welcome & Overview (8:00-8:40AM)
  - Welcome & Overview of AAP: Richard Mkandawire, Director AAP Africa Office
  - Introduction to Global IDEAS: Allan Hruska, Director Global IDEAS
  - PIRA Grant Overview & Context: Amy Jamison, Co-Director, AAP MSU Office
- Session B: Proposal Development (8:40-9:25AM)
  - Ann Allegra & Callista Rakhmatov, Global IDEAS
- Session C: PIRA Grant Budgeting (9:25-10:00AM)
  - Lisa Hinds, Office Manager, African Studies Center
- Session D: Q&A on PIRA Grant Program (10:00-11:00AM)
  - Derek Tobias, Tony Milanzi, Isaac Minde & Jose Jackson-Malete, AAP



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# Welcome & Overview of AAP

Richard Mkandawire

# AAP Team



Amy Jamison  
Co-Director



Jose  
Jackson-Malete  
Co-Director



Richard  
Mkandawire  
Director,  
Africa Office



Justin Rabineau  
Program Liaison



Derek Tobias  
Program Manager



Elaina Lawrence  
Professional Aide



Lisa Frugé  
Managing Coordinator  
for International  
Projects and Events



Lisa Hinds  
Fiscal Officer



Tony Milanzi  
Assistant Director,  
Africa Office



Isaac Minde  
Associate Director,  
Africa Office



Wisdom Nelson  
Communications  
Coordinator

# AAP African Consortium Universities



- [Egerton University](#) - **Kenya**

Egerton Focal Point - **Alexander Kahi** akahi@egerton.ac.ke

- [Lilongwe University of Agriculture and Natural Resources \(LUANAR\)](#) - **Malawi**

LUANAR Focal Point - **Agnes Mwangwela** amwangwela@luanar.ac.mw

- [Makerere University](#) - **Uganda**

Makerere Focal Point - **Mukadasi Buyinza** buyinza@rgt.mak.ac.ug

- [Universite des Lettres et des Sciences Humaines de Bamako](#) - **Mali**

ULSHB Focal Point - **Bourema Konate** bourema07@yahoo.fr

- [United States International University-Africa](#) - **Kenya**

USIU Focal Point - **Amos Njuguna** amnjuguna@usiu.ac.ke

- [Universite Cheikh Anta Diop](#) - **Senegal**

UCAD Focal Point - **Mame Samba Mbaye** msmbaye@yahoo.fr

- [University of Botswana](#) - **Botswana**

UB Focal Point - **Edward Dintwa** dintwae@ub.ac.bw

- [University of Dar es Salaam](#) - **Tanzania**

UDSM Focal Point - **Lulu Kaaya** lulutunu@yahoo.com

- [University of Nigeria, Nsukka](#) - **Nigeria**

UNN Focal Point - **Anthonia Achike** anthonia.achike@unn.edu.ng

- [University of Pretoria](#) - **South Africa**

UP Focal Point - **Frans Swanepoel** frans.swanepoel@up.ac.za

# AAP Background

## VISION

To transform lives through co-created, research-driven initiatives that address shared challenges

## MISSION

To initiate and support innovative, sustainable and equitable partnerships among African institutions, MSU and other collaborators

## GUIDING PRINCIPLES

Accountability  
Equity  
Inclusivity  
Sustainability  
Transparency

## OUR APPROACH

To transform lives through co-created, research-driven initiatives that address shared challenges



### Building Bridges

Bringing people and organizations together to work toward common goals.



### Transforming Institutions

Guiding institutions toward sustainable partnerships, enhanced resources, and increased capacity.



### Transforming Lives

Turning research into real-world impact that improves African lives and livelihoods.

## PRIORITY AREAS



Agri-food  
Systems



Water, Energy  
& Environment



Culture



Youth  
Empowerment



Education



Health  
& Nutrition



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# How to Contact AAP

- [aap@msu.edu](mailto:aap@msu.edu)
- MSU Office
  - Derek Tobias – [tobiasde@msu.edu](mailto:tobiasde@msu.edu)
  - Justin Rabineau – [rabinea1@msu.edu](mailto:rabinea1@msu.edu)
- Africa Office
  - Richard Mkandawire – [mkandaw2@msu.edu](mailto:mkandaw2@msu.edu)
  - Isaac Minde – [mindeisa@msu.edu](mailto:mindeisa@msu.edu)
- Facebook / Twitter- @aapmsu
- Website – [aap.msu.edu](http://aap.msu.edu)



## Introduction to Global Innovations in Development, Engagement, and Scholarship (Global IDEAS): Allan Hruska

- New unit at MSU in International Studies and Programs, serving as a nexus for international development at MSU.
  - Facilitates Communities of Practice to bring the MSU community together to discuss global challenges and propose solutions, innovations, and research to engage in solutions.
  - Works closely with faculty and partners on high quality proposals to implement international development projects that respond to global and local challenges.
- Staff:

- |   |  |
|---|--|
| • Allan Hruska, Director                              | • Ann Allegra, Proposal Coordinator      |
| • Gina Melendez, Program Manager                      | • Anne Stanton, Administrative Assistant |
| • John Bonnell, Capacity Development Specialist       | • Tracie Carr, Finance Officer           |
| • Callista Rakhmatov, Proposal Development Specialist | • John Whims, Data Analyst               |
|   | • Rebecca Irvine, Gender Specialist      |



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# PIRA Grant Overview & Context

Amy Jamison

# Partnerships for Innovative Research in Africa (PIRA) Grant Program



**Teams may apply at any funding tier in one of four funding categories**

- Small grants (up to \$50,000)
- Planning grants (up to \$100,000)
- Scaling grants (up to \$200,000)

## Youth Transformation

Teams must include 1 PI from MSU, 1 PI from an African AAP university, and representation of a youth leader and/or a youth-serving organization

## Africa – Asia Transregional Grants

**Team must include at least 1 PI from MSU, 1 PI from an African AAP university, and 1 PI from an Asian university**

## Early Career Researchers

Teams must be led by early career PIs (obtained a PhD within the past 10 years) and include 1 PI from MSU and 1 PI from an African AAP university

## Global African Diaspora Grants

Teams must include at least 1 PI from MSU, 1 PI from an African AAP university, and 1 PI from a Latin American and/or a Caribbean university

[aap.msu.edu/funding/pira](http://aap.msu.edu/funding/pira)



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# PIRA ISP Partners



- [African Studies Center](#)
- [Asian Studies Center](#) / AsiaNexus initiative
- [Center for Latin American and Caribbean Studies](#)
- [Global Youth Advancement Network \(GYAN\)](#)

# Eligibility

- Lead investigators
  - MSU
  - AAP African university
  - Asian university for Africa – Asia Transregional grants
  - Latin American and Caribbean universities for Global African Diaspora grants
- Other partners
  - Other institutions globally
  - Private sector, governments, civil society organizations, and Pan-African/global institutions
- PIs / Co-PIs on grants under round 1 of AAP partnership grants not eligible to lead proposals under this call
- MSU ISP staff are not eligible to lead proposals

[aap.msu.edu/funding/pira](https://aap.msu.edu/funding/pira)



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# What is needed to apply

- Cover sheet
- Proposal narrative that includes (max. 5,000 words)
- Budget and Budget narrative (in provided templates)
- CVs/Resumé of PIs (1-page maximum)
- Letters of support

# Ineligible expenses

- Indirect costs (IDC) for all institutions
- Equipment exceeding \$5,000
- Construction-related costs
- **UPDATE:** Salary is an allowable expense, but total salary across all institutions cannot exceed 30% of the total project budget. MSU salary does not require fringe.

# Selection criteria

- Evidence of AAP partnership principles
- Alignment of proposed activities and program goal(s) to AAP's **three pillars** and **six research priority areas**
- Potential for impact in discipline and people's lives
- Potential for leveraging additional external funding
- Contingency planning for COVID-19
- A thorough MEL plan
- Diversity and inclusion integration

## PRIORITY AREAS



Agri-food  
Systems



Water, Energy  
& Environment



Culture



Youth  
Empowerment



Education



Health  
& Nutrition



Building Bridges



Transforming Lives



Transforming Institutions



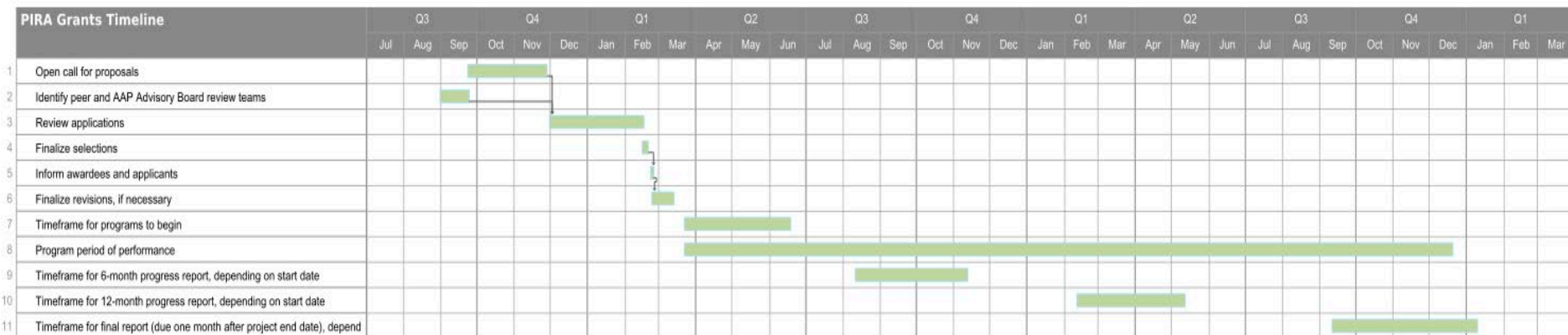
# AAP Partnership Principles



- A research team structure and project design that reinforces **accountability** and is **equitable**
  - Shared vision – mutual benefit, mutual capacity building
- A proposal that is **inclusive** in its approach
  - Diversity and inclusion reflected on the research team and in the project's design and approach
- Collaboration must be **sustainable** beyond initial grant cycle, with a view toward long-term collaboration
  - The proposal should also reflect sustainable effort at addressing a problem and transforming lives
- A proposal development process that is **transparent** with all partners engaged from the beginning
  - Objectives, activities, resource mobilization, and resource allocation plans are developed jointly



# Timeline

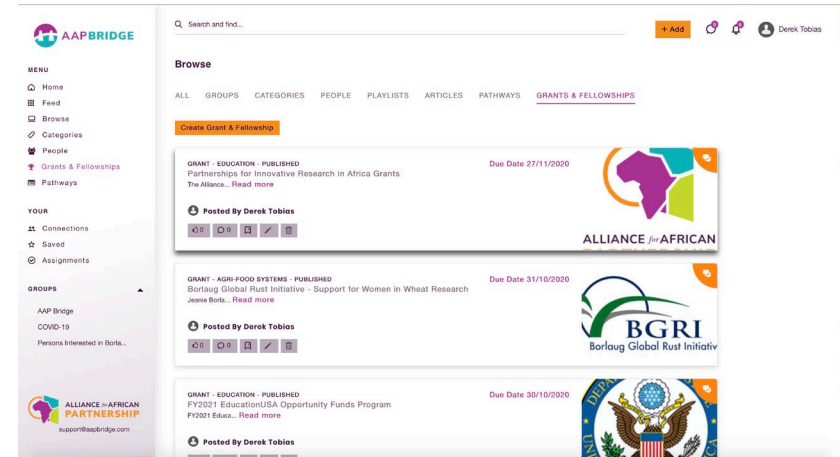


- **September 23, 2020** - Launch of call
- **October 14, 2020** - Q&A session and AAP / Global IDEAS grant writing workshop
- **November 27, 2020** – Application deadline
- **February 22, 2021** – Announcement of awards
- **March 12, 2021** – Deadline for awardees to finalize budget and workplan
- **June 14, 2021** – Deadline to begin period of performance

[aap.msu.edu/funding/pira](http://aap.msu.edu/funding/pira)

# Accessing the PIRA CFP

- Find the PIRA call for proposals under Grants & Fellowships on AAP Bridge to learn more,
- You can also indicate your interest, and find potential partners there
- The PIRA call for proposals is also available on AAP's [aap.isp.msu.edu/funding/pira](https://aap.isp.msu.edu/funding/pira)





# **Proposal Development:** Callista Rakhmatov & Ann Allegra

# PIRA Proposal Elements

- Cover sheet with title of proposed project, along with institution affiliations and titles of all PIs
- Description of partnership, which includes:
  - a. Capacity statements from each partner, and strengths related to their roles in the partnership
  - b. description of past or ongoing partnership
  - c. rationale for partnership and information on how it's is/will be equitable, sustainable, and mutually beneficial.
- Problem statement
- Objectives

## PIRA Proposal Elements (continued)

- Program activities description
- Monitoring, Evaluating, and Learning Plan
- Potential sources of additional funding
- Timeline of activities
- One appendix for works cited
- Letter(s) of support from each partners' department, institution, or organization
- CV or resume for each PI
- Line-item budget and budget narrative (Lisa will talk about this)

# Where do you start with writing your proposal?

Before you start writing, think about these questions:

- What is your plan and how will it be implemented?
- What is the timeline? What are the activities?
- What is the impact? Who will it impact? How will you know if it has had an impact?
- Who will do the work?
- How much will it cost?

A tool that can help the project planning process is the  
**Project Design Chart**



# Project Design Chart

- Use to create 1-pager
- Ensures proper structure
  - Problem you're trying to solve (Is it a problem the funder is also trying to solve? Is it a real problem? What's going to happen if no one solves it?)
  - Goal of your research (should be to solve problem)
  - Objectives (3 is a good number; collectively should meet the goal)
- Activities
  - Expected results/outcomes
  - Impacts
  - Evaluation
- Ensures plan is realistic
  - Timeline
  - Budget
  - Resources
  - Personnel

Goal: \_\_\_\_\_

Objectives	Tasks/Activities	Begin/End Dates	Personnel	Outcomes			Evaluation	Budget
				Short	Mid	End		
A.	1.							
	2.							
	3.							
B.	1.							
	2.							
	3.							
C.	1.							
	2.							
	3.							





**Now you're ready to start writing the narrative.**

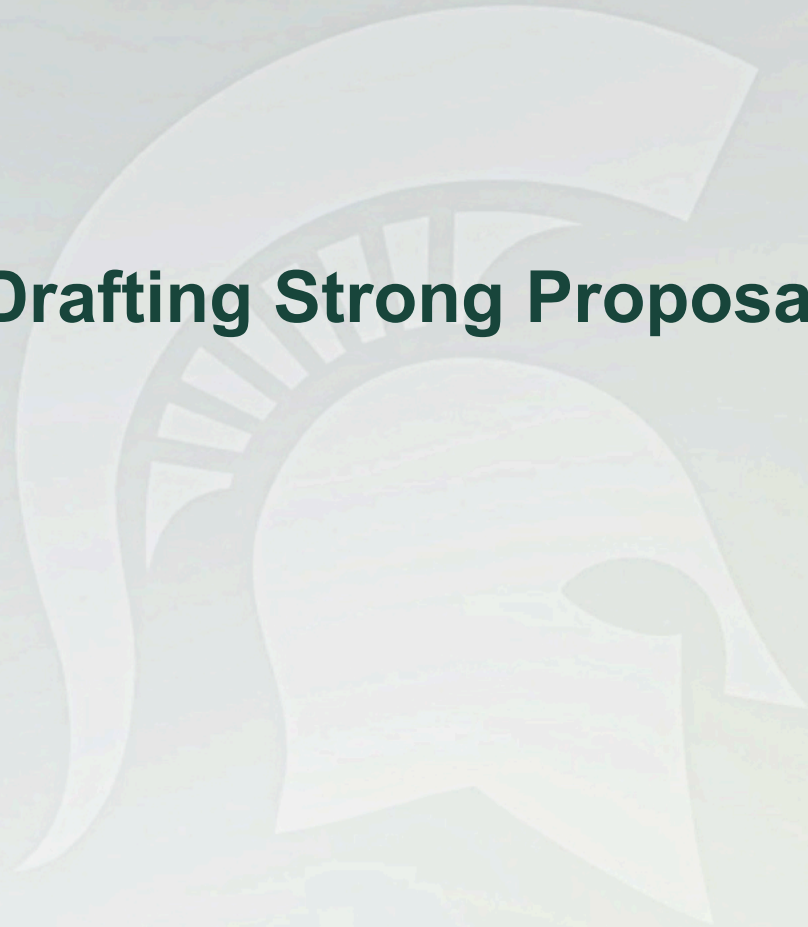
## Use the project design tool and clearly describe your approach

Include at least the following items in your discussion:

- Describe all proposed objectives and activities; also include rationale, planned inputs, and anticipated outputs.
- Provide a timeline.
- Provide a general organizational structure and describe how the project will be coordinated.



# Tips for Drafting Strong Proposals



## General tips for drafting strong proposals

- Related to goals: Use words that can be measurable, for example “increase”, “improve”, “create”, and “reduce” in certain contexts, e.g., “reduce mortality rate in rural areas by 5%”.
- Create measurable objectives, which will more easily demonstrate impact and will facilitate necessary adjustments throughout project implementation.
- Stress the utility of or innovative idea of your project.
- Identify partners and on-board them early in project design.
- Collaborative and equitable partnership.
- Discuss the sustainability of your project. Resources to find funding:

Global IDEAS funding newsletter and database: [globalideas@msu.edu](mailto:globalideas@msu.edu), <https://globalideas.isp.msu.edu/>

ISP Area and Thematic Centers: <https://www.isp.msu.edu/international-centers-units/area-and-thematic-studies-centers/>

Office of Research and Innovation: <https://vp.research.msu.edu/find-funding>

College Corporate/Foundation Relations (CFR)/Advancement team (Engineering, Business, ANR, ISP) or MSU's Office of Foundation Relations: <https://vp.research.msu.edu/msu-foundation-relations>

## Specific tips for drafting strong PIRA proposals

- Alignment of activities and program goal(s) to AAP's call.
- Potential for deliverables to contribute to respective academic, technical, or technological field(s).
- Potential to create innovative models of community engagement that positively impact people's lives.
- Contingency planning to maintain progress and achieve results if COVID-19 pandemic prevents travel/original plan.
- Potential for PIs to attract and/or leverage external funding.
- Gender equality, equity, and inclusion.  
MSU's Center for Gender in Global Context: <https://gencen.isp.msu.edu/>
- A thorough MEL plan linking activities to outputs and outcomes.



# Common Reasons for Declined Proposals

What reviewers usually pay attention to:

- Nature of the Problem
  - It is doubtful that new or useful information will result from the project
  - The basic hypothesis is unsound
- Approach to the Problem
  - Research plan is vague and not presented in concrete detail
  - Research plan has not been carefully designed
  - Proposed methods will not yield accurate results
- Experience of the Investigators/Researchers
  - Applicants need to acquire greater familiarity with the relevant literature
  - Problems to be investigated are more complex than the applicants realize
  - Applicants propose to enter an area of research for which they are not adequately trained
  - Reviewers do not have sufficient confidence in the applicants to approve it

# Review Proposal Carefully

- Remember to:
  - number the pages
  - identify the lead PIs by name, and include one-page CVs
  - align/list the project objectives, activities, etc.
  - include section headings to guide the reviewers
  - check word count on proposal narrative (5,000 word maximum)
  - review call to ensure that all required elements are included

**Good luck!**



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# Orienting our Work Towards Impact: Creating an MEL Plan



# What is a Monitoring, Evaluation, and Learning Plan?

- A framework that describes the proposal team's intention to:
- Document project activities
- Answer evaluation questions
- Show progress toward project goals and objectives, and
- “Actionalize” information



# What is generally included in MEL plans:?



- A brief project overview
  - Theory of change
  - Project goals and objectives
- Monitoring component
  - Methodology
  - Tools
  - Schedule and frequency
- Evaluation component
  - Impact evaluations
  - Performance evaluations
- Partner self-evaluations
- Learning component
  - Adaptive management
  - Information dissemination
- MEL Roles and Responsibilities
  - Who, what
- MEL Timeline
  - When

\*Adapted from USAID “[Project M&E Plan](#)”

# Outputs, Outcomes, and Impact:

- Output: Something produced by the program's activities
- Outcome: The change caused by the program's activities
- Impact: The tangible effect of the program's activities, usually at the individual, community, or environmental level (i.e. how the changes realized by the program's activities addressed the original problem). Impact is often thought of as longer-term results of a program's activities



# Project Indicators:

- **Definition:** Indicators are signs of progress – they are used to determine whether the project or program or intervention is on its way to achieving its objectives and goal.
- Think S.M.A.R.T.
  - **S**pecific
  - **M**easurable
  - **A**chievable and Attributable
  - **R**elevant and Realistic
  - **T**ime-Bound

# PIRA Grant Budgeting:

Lisa Hinds



## Budgets help to provide -

- A framework for project design and plan
- Reasonable estimates of the work that will be funded
- Clarity for collaborators to determine budget amounts for each activity
- Clear guidance to PI's who are responsible for appropriate use of funds entrusted to them

## Creating Budgets – typically differ by funder

When developing a concept note for a specific funder, pay attention to their guidelines as they:

May not allow certain expenses, e.g., fringe or travel

May have specific language and descriptions for budget categories

# Personnel Expenses:

**Who is doing the work? What are they doing? How much time are they devoting to the project?**

## Salaries & Fringes

Faculty

Technician

Research Associate

Graduate Student

Undergrad Student



## Non-Personnel Expenses: What else is needed to carry out the project?

Equipment

Travel

Participant Support Costs

Other Direct Costs

# Equipment

Definition: Article of nonexpendable, tangible personal property with a useful life of more than one year, e.g., lab equipment

Typically, the cost of the item must be \$5,000 or more to be classified as equipment. For the PIRA awards, equipment that exceeds \$5,000 is not allowable. Items that are less than \$5,000 may be listed in the supply category.

# Travel

- Distinguish between domestic and international travel
  - International - Keep in mind currency exchange rates, hotel, transportation, etc. (the rates from OANDA should be used <https://www1.oanda.com/currency/converter/>)
- Calculating Travel Costs
  - Most funders require specific details for determining travel amounts
  - Who is traveling, where, and for how many days
  - Include airfare, mileage, lodging, and per diems, visa fees
  - Costs for international travel may not exceed OCONUS rates (international) [https://aoprals.state.gov/web920/per\\_diem.asp](https://aoprals.state.gov/web920/per_diem.asp) or CONUS rates (domestic US) <https://www.gsa.gov/travel/plan-book/per-diem-rates>

# Participant Support Costs

A participant is defined as a non-employee who is the recipient (not the provider), of a service or training associated with a workshop, conference, seminar, symposium, etc.

- Event registration fees
- Event support costs for lodging and meal expenses paid to the event facility
- Training materials
- Stipends – predetermined amount paid directly to participant
- Subsistence allowance – predetermined amount for lodging, meals and laundry. \*Local area participants are exempt from having these costs covered
- Travel costs when the sole purpose of the trip is to participate in the project activity

*\*NOTE – faculty PI travel should not be budgeted as a participant support expense*

## Other Direct Costs

- Materials and supplies (provide the cost breakdown)
- Publications
- Graduate tuition and fees (\*this does not go under fringe benefits)
- Computer services and equipment rental fees
- Consultants: use a reasonable rate (hourly)
- Rental fees; space
- Computers, if essential and allocable, allocated based on anticipated use and provide a direct benefit to the project

## Facilities and Administrative Costs (a.k.a. F&A and indirect costs)

- Typically a percentage of direct costs
- Indirect costs **ARE NOT** an allowable expense on PIRA awards, however, items normally covered by indirect costs may be added as line items under direct costs



# PIRA Specific Budget Guidelines

Indirect costs are not allowable

Equipment (exceeding \$5k) is not allowable

Total project salary & fringe cannot exceed 30% of total combined project budget. (Note that MSU salary will not need to budget for fringe as these are GS funds and fringe is centrally funded for these types of funds).

Cost share for consortium and partner PI's should be shown for in-kind/cost shared project expenses and will be positively noted as part of the proposal evaluation.

# Budget Justification/Narrative

## Follow

Follow the same order as the budget categories

## Provide

Provide details for all expenses

## Explain

Explain unusual circumstances or requests

## Avoid

Avoid using a lot of \$ amounts in the justification

## Match

Your budget justification must match your budget!



# Sample Budget Justification

c) *Phase III/V – U.S. Participant visit to South Africa/Tanzania*

(1) *Lodging and Per Diem expenses in South Africa:* One MSU staff member will accompany the U.S. delegation during Phase III to assist with logistics and programming. International per diem rates are based on the published State Department's Foreign rates for this location, combined \$550 for Cape Town, South Africa.

(2) *Lodging and Per Diem expenses in South Africa:* Two MSU faculty/staff will participate in the interview process in each country. International per diem rates are based on the published State Department's Foreign rates for this location, combined \$272 for other cities in South Africa.

(3) *Lodging and Per Diem expenses in Tanzania:* International per diem rates are based on the published State Department's Foreign rates for this location, combined \$273 for Dar es Salaam, Tanzania.

# Final Points on PIRA Budgets

One budget should be submitted per project (note the template has a tab for each partner budget that rolls into a project summary total)

In addition to collaboration among PIs, the MSU faculty PI should work with their unit research administrator or fiscal officer to complete the budget and will be responsible for submission of the overall project budget and management of grant funds if awarded.

Consortium and other partner PIs will need to follow all procedures of their institution and note that any paid effort on the project is paid to the institution to support their effort.

The completed budget and justification will be evaluated as part of the overall project.

# Question & Answer



Please submit any questions you have using the Q&A button below.



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Thank you for  
joining us!

Be sure to submit your proposal  
to [aap@msu.edu](mailto:aap@msu.edu) by Nov. 27