

PROGRAMMATIC REPORTING TEMPLATE

This is an annual report, but shorter quarterly reports comprising sections 1a-c should also be submitted alongside financial reporting to provide an update on progress against milestones. This template will be reviewed annually.

General Information			
Programme Title	Alliance for Accelerating Excellence in Science in Africa (AESA)		
Programme Outline	<p>AESA is established as a partnership between the African Academy of Sciences (AAS), the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD), the Wellcome Trust, the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation (BMGF), and the UK Department for International Development (DFID). AESA will initially focus on health research, expanding to other scientific research areas such as food and nutrition, energy, water and sanitation, and environment. This pan-African platform offers an opportunity for the long-term development of research leadership, scientific excellence and innovation that impacts on global health and development.</p> <p>AESA will identify challenges that hinder rapid scientific advancement in Africa, run open calls for proposals with transparent review processes, actively manage grants and evaluate and measure the impact of such investments. Further, AESA will leverage funding from African sources and also from a broad range of funders from within and outside Africa so as to secure long-term sustainability. It is envisaged that such a platform, which would be Africa-led, African-centred and Africa-specific in its agenda for strategic research and development, will forge strong alliances globally with organizations that have similarly aligned objectives and interests.</p> <p>AESA will play a key role in building a world class scientific and programmatic unit that will also serve as a think-tank in setting priorities and aligning them with funders and governments. Although initially the platform will be an implementing body, its development over time as a think tank is important. The vision is that the platform will evolve beyond just being an implementing partner to become a strategic thought partner, setting and aligning a programmatic agenda.</p> <p>AESA and its funding partners will be guided by three key areas of focus:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • People: support bright African scientists with the best ideas through competitive grant award mechanisms in key priority areas of research, and within the R&D pipeline, support career paths from early, mid and eventual senior research leadership roles. Through this platform and the various programs implemented, the platform will attract and encourage the best minds in Africa to work in global public health. • Places: Building scientific capacity and excellence will foster the right environments to attract and retain excellent people. • Programs: support the mobilization of sufficient resources from multiple sources that will sustain adequate funding of STI programs in Africa in order to realise positive impacts in global health and development. 		
Total Grant Value	USD 5.5M	Report Submission Date	15th December 2015
Grant Start Date	1st March 2015	Report Period Start Date	1st October 2015

Grant End Date	1st March 2020	Report Period End Date	15th December 2015
Programme Director	Thomas Kariuki	COO	Anne Kimari
Email	t.kariuki@aasciences.org	Email	a.kimari@aasciences.org

Submission Information

By submitting this report, I declare that I am authorized to certify, on behalf of the grantee, that I have examined the following statements and related attachments, and that to the best of my knowledge, they are true, correct and complete.

Submitted by	Thomas Kariuki	Date	15 th December 2015
Position	Director AESA	Email	t.kariuki@aasciences.org
Organisation	AAS	Phone Number	+254 (20) 806 0674

1. Progress and Results

a. Summary of activities and progress achieved in this reporting period. Please include progress achieved against each milestone during this reporting period

Despite the year drawing to a close, there has been sustained momentum over the last quarter of 2015 to continue laying the foundations for AESA as a research funding platform and think-tank. This report provides a summary of activities and progress against our milestones from October 1st 2015 to December 15th 2015. Please note that there is some overlap with the previous Quarterly Progress Report due to overlapping reporting periods.

Grand Challenges Africa (GCA)

Grand Challenges Africa program implementation

Progress with Grand Challenges Africa can be summarised against the four objectives of the initiative:

Objective 1: Consolidate and improve on the gains made through Grand Challenges support to African scientists over the last decade

1. Setting up a Grand Challenges Africa - Innovation Network (GCA-iN)

AESA is working with Alexis Bonnel (USAID) to join an existing initiative called Global Innovation Exchange (<http://www.globalinnovationexchange.com/region/africa>). USAID will tailor-make an e-marketplace page for AESA on this platform. On this page AESA will showcase innovations which will have gone through internal review and are deemed promising. The cost of development for this will be minimal as USAID will use their existing developers for the AESA page. The aim is to launch this at the GCA meeting in February 2016. Registration to join the GCA-iN network is taking place using the newly acquired Ishango Grants Management/CC Technologies system. The GCA-iN webpage will be housed under AAS /AESA/GC Africa which is currently in development.

2. Convene existing African Grand Challenges grantees (Gates, Grand Challenges Canada and USAID) in Africa from Feb 24th - 26th 2016 in Nairobi:

The venue is set for InterContinental Hotel and AESA are in the process of finalising the contract with them to host a meeting of 350-400 participants. A draft agenda has been developed and invitations to the meeting have been sent.

3. Provide scientific coaching and mentorship to existing Grand Challenges grantees:

A proposal writing 'boot-camp' is being planned to coincide with the February meeting, on February 22nd and 23rd 2016. Thirty participants will be selected from the grantees who will be responding to calls from Grand Challenges Explorations which was announced in November/December 2015 with a submission deadline of March 2016. Fredros Okumu (Ifakara Health Institute, one of the most successful African institutions in securing Grand Challenges grants) has been selected to be the lead facilitator. The application process for the bootcamp will be run using the Ishango CC Technology system which went live in December 2015.

4. Support new Grantees (PIs and Co-PIs) of the *All Children Thriving* (40 grantees) and *Putting Women and Girls at the Center of Development* (60 grantees) initiatives of the B&MGF.

Inception meetings for these initiatives will also be held in Nairobi to coincide with the Grantees meeting from February 21st to 23rd 2016. B&MGF have confirmed the number of participants and the cost of these meetings has been accounted for in a successful proposal sent to B&MGF (OPP138501) for USD1M. African participants will stay on for the main grantees meeting from 24-26th February 2016.

Objective 2: Undertake outreach and awareness campaigns to extend the reach of the Grand Challenges funding model.

Tom Kariuki, Evelyn Gitau and Berhanu Abegaz attended the annual Grand Challenges Meeting held in Beijing

China from the 17th -21st October 2015. There were more than 800 attendees at this meeting, serving as a large forum with which to engage on AESA and GCA. Tom served as a panelist at the opening session moderated by the foundation President for Global Health Trevor Mundel, as well during the closing session moderated by Ayo Ajayi, the BMGF Director for Africa. Evelyn ran a successful roundtable discussion which solicited valuable feedback on how to proceed with GCA.

AESA was featured prominently in two speeches by HE Ameenah Gurib-Fakim, President of Mauritius who addressed the closing session and by Sue Desmond-Hellman, the CEO of B&MGF.

Objective 3: Define and set the agenda for future grand challenges in health programs in Africa

A number of meetings have been held with current and potential new partners. During the February convening of African grantees, AESA will use the opportunity to stimulate debate and get feedback on priority areas that will inform new calls under grand challenges Africa. AESA will also use the occasion to gauge whether basing future GCA calls on the new SDG targets for health (SDG3) has wide continental support.

A survey on key challenges has also been set up and shared with grantees and will be sent to a wider audience over the coming weeks: <https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/GrandChallengesAfrica>

Objective 4: Jointly and/or independently craft, run and manage future Africa-centric Grand Challenges calls:

AESA has been able to make bold steps and decisions towards securing engagement with the Institut Pasteur (Anna Kehres) and B&MGF. Institut Pasteur have an interest in the Grand Challenges Exploration model as a way of expanding collaborations between French-speaking West and Northern Africa, and the rest of Africa. For the first phase up to 20 applications could be funded: 10 by Institut Pasteur for African applicants working in any of the 10 Pasteur institutes in Africa and 10 by BMGF for applicants from the rest of the continent. The call will place a strong emphasis on regional collaborations, and will be launched in French and English in February 2016. An MoU between AAS and Institut Pasteur has been drafted.

Developing Excellence in Leadership, Training and Science (DELTAS) Initiative

AESA has been working in close partnership with the Trust on issuing the remaining award letters for the DELTAS programmes. AESA would like to salute the major decision by the WT and DFID to commit additional funds to support the remaining four programmes as recommended by the DELTAS Committee.

DELTAS Site Visits

The site visits have provided important opportunities for AESA to build relationships with the grantees and to train the programme staff. Conducting the site visits jointly with the Trust has also provided assurance to the grantees that AESA is working in close partnership with the funders and will uphold and enhance their key values, procedures and policies. Two site visits were conducted in this quarter, in conjunction with the Wellcome Trust team:

- 7 – 8th December 2015 at the Université Cheikh Anta Diop de Dakar: Malaria Research Capacity Development in West and Central Africa, PI: Oumar Gaye
AESA staff: Thomas Kariuki (AESA Director), Alphonsus Neba (DELTAS Programme Manager), Hannah Ngugi (Finance and Admin Manager)
- 9 – 10th December 2015 at the Centre Suisse De Recherches Scientifiques: Afrique One – African Science Partnership for Intervention Research Excellence, PI: Bassirou Bonfoh
AESA staff: Thomas Kariuki (AESA Director), Alphonsus Neba (DELTAS Programme Manager), Hannah Ngugi (Finance and Admin Manager)

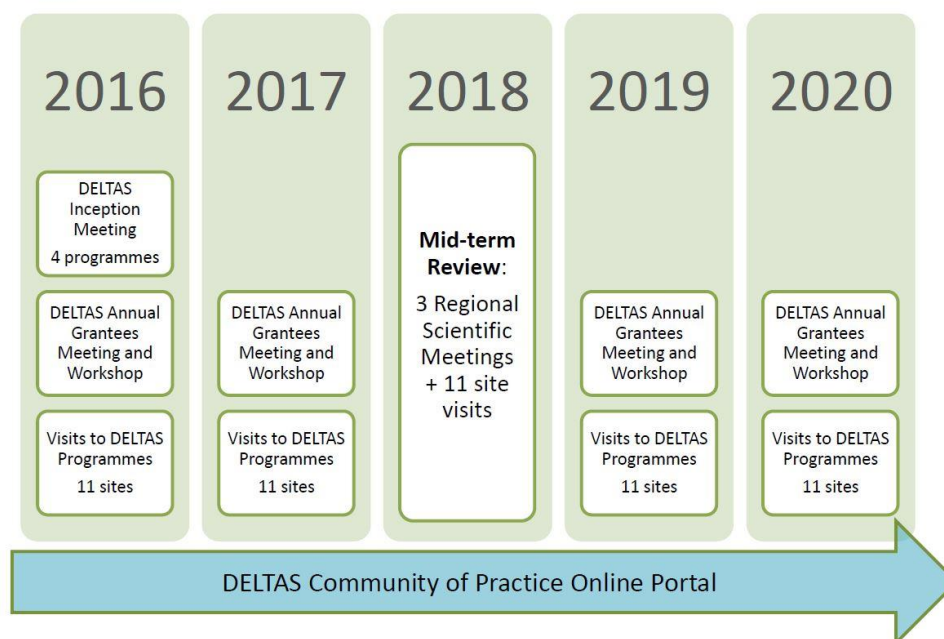
Five year DELTAS Activity Plan:

AESA's five year activity plan for management of the DELTAS portfolio forms the basis for the 2016-2020 budget proposed to the Trust and DFID for approval in January 2016. A summary of the activities appears below, with a

more detailed document attached to this report.



DELTA Five Year Activity Plan



DELTA Inception Meeting

An Inception Meeting for the 4 additional awards is planned in early 2016. This will involve 5 participants each from the 4 new DELTA programmes (MARCAD, CARTA+, THRIVE-2, and Afrique-One ASPIRE). A two day face to face inception meeting is preferred to a webinar or other form of non-physical engagement because it provides an opportunity to improve working and interpersonal relationships.

Annual DELTA Meetings:

One annual DELTA Grantees meeting is planned to take place in Nairobi each year. Each meeting will seek to address identified programmatic issues and other identified thematic issues, and will integrate a Train the Trainer Workshop in specific areas to address cross-consortia gaps in training and short courses that DELTA programmes have proposed.

The Royal Society for Tropical Medicine and Health (RSTMH) and the AAS are partnering to organize the 2016 DELTA grantees meeting adjacent to the Royal Society's first scientific meeting in Africa. This is an exciting partnership for AESA, and will offer DELTA grantees and RSTMH fellows a mutually beneficial networking opportunity. The DELTA meeting will take place from July 4th – 6th, followed by a joint scientific meeting with the RSTMH on the 7th and 8th July in Nairobi.

The theme of the meeting will be “ the epidemiological transition” and different aspects of research relevant to this theme will be incorporated into the programme. A line-up of keynote speakers, including DELTA grantees Dixon Chibanda and Alison Elliott, have confirmed their availability and willingness to participate. Registration for this meeting will be opened early in 2016.

Mid-Term Site Visits & Combined Regional Grantee Meetings

Three groups of mid-term review site visits are planned to cover all 11 DELTA awards - one to cover the West Africa region (DELGEME, WACCBIP, MARCAD & Africa-One ASPIRE), one to cover the Southern Africa region (AMARI, SANTHE and S2ACABAT) and the last one to cover the East Africa region (MUII, CARTA +, IDEAL,

Thrive-2). These site visits will occur in advance of a regional grantee meeting.

Annual visits to all 11 DELTAS programmes

It is endeavoured that each site has at least two AESA staff visit each year. The visits would be short opportunities to monitor programme implementation, meet with programme staff and fellows, identify and seek to address challenges and do high level advocacy work on the programmes with Senior Institutional Administration and Management staff and other high level policy maker to continue to drum up support for programmes.

DELTAS Community of Practice

An online portal will be created as a means of actualising the DELTAS Community of Practice. The site is envisaged to be interactive and hold comprehensive information on all the 11 DELTAS programmes, including programme objectives and focus areas, PIs, network members, partners, Supervisors, mentors, ISABs, Profiles of PIs, Fellows and mentors, publications, training materials, training opportunities, fellowship opportunities, Wellcome Trust/AESA materials and resources, grant and funding opportunities, and opportunities for collaborations, joint supervision etc.

Progress with Milestones

A summary table of AESA's progress against the milestones can be found in the Annex.

AESA's progress against the outstanding milestones are summarised below:

Milestone 5: Think Tank Established

Target Date: October 2015

Deliverable: Think tank and first draft of scientific strategy developed

Key to the development of AESA's think tank function is the recruitment of the Strategy and Policy Manager. The role was advertised in June 15th 2015 and interviews of a high calibre of shortlisted candidates were conducted in August 2015. Evelyn Namibiru-Mwaura, who brings a strong track-record of relevant expertise and experience for the role, was selected and will start in January 2016. She will lead horizon scanning activities and contribute to the development of new schemes and initiatives, working in partnership with other funders where appropriate. The manager will also play a key advocacy role and mobilise African and international resources towards the support of research in Africa. She will lead on the development of AESA's scientific strategy.

On October 7th, Tom Kariuki, Kevin Marsh, and Nidhee Jadeja met with the Global Health Security and Africa Programme teams at Chatham House in London. Chatham House is a leading policy think-tank based in London, and the purpose of reaching out to them was to inform them of AESA, its development of a think-tank function, and discuss opportunities for partnership. It was a very positive meeting, and there was mutual interest in developing a relationship where there are overlapping activities and areas of interest. In the immediate term, we discussed the opportunity to coordinate with Chatham House and its network as AESA's think-tank capacity and advocacy portfolio for science and innovation in Africa are developed, including short-term AESA staff placements at Chatham House. Chatham House have also indicated their interest in liaising with AESA on a new Global Health Leaders Programme.

Deliverable: Formal and informal agreements made with a network of pan-African stakeholders

NEPAD continues to play a key advocacy role for AAS/AESA in mobilising African governments and other stakeholders for support and has provided the first major assignment to AESA as a think-tank. The AU/NEPAD has prioritized the development of a new Africa Health Sciences Strategy for the period 2015-2030 and AESA has been tasked to lead on developing the African Health Research and Innovation Strategy to be incorporated into the final health sciences strategy. A road map leading to the development of this strategy by early 2016 has been jointly developed with NEPAD. A technical working group including AAS was convened by NEPAD to kick-start the process and AESA subsequently convened an advisory AAS experts working group in September 2015 in Nairobi. A draft concept paper has been developed for sharing with the specialized Technical Committee (STC) of African ministers of Education, Science and Technology during their October meeting in Addis Ababa. AAS and NEPAD are also searching for a consultant from among AAS fellows to lead the process and to consolidate inputs and produce a final document by early 2016.

Discussions have been held with the AfDB Regional Director on securing future support for core and program activities of AAS-AESA and a formal proposal has been submitted for consideration. This agenda is being pursued by NEPAD and the AAS.

HE Ameenah Gurib-Fakim, the President of Mauritius, has been a key champion for AESA in recent months. Her attendance and full engagement during and after the launch events have helped propel the vision of AESA into pan-African and international dialogue on the future of science in Africa. HE Ameenah invited Tom Kariuki (Executive Director) and Kevin Marsh (Senior Adviser) to attend the launch of the Planet Earth Institute in Mauritius on November 3rd 2015. This was a successful event attended by approximately 200 guests. This was an important opportunity to engage with pan-African stakeholders and African philanthropists Alvaro Sobrinho (founder and main benefactor of PEI) and Iqbal Surve, a leading business magnate in South Africa. A discussion with Lord Paul Boateng, member of the UK House of Lords, also revealed an interest in the AAS given his Chairmanship of the AGRA new Africa Enterprises Challenge Fund based at AGRA Nairobi. We will pursue all these leads in the leads in the new year with a view to developing strong partnerships.

We have continued to pursue a stronger relationship with our host, the government of Kenya. Building on the pronouncement made by the Minister for Education, Science and Technology during the AESA launch in September 2015, we are pursuing a new host country agreement, possible contributions to the AAS endowment fund, and have approached the relevant department of government on possible launch of Grand Challenges Kenya in future.

We have also been keen to strengthen our relationship with the government of South Africa and were invited by the Minister of Science and Technology Ms Naledi Pandor to be profiled at a science forum organized by her ministry in December 2015. Berhanu Abegaz and Evelyn Gitau attended the science forum and hosted a side meeting profiling AESA. An interactive round table session was held to discuss ideas on how AESA can engage African partners (Academic institutions, Governments, businesses, private NGOs and investors and philanthropists) on how Africa can develop an enabling environment to support Africa's leading scientists and innovators. President Ameenah Gurib-Fakeem sent a video which was played before other panellists. The link is available at: <https://drive.google.com/file/d/0B2cdjZIWUShdNXFySDN1NUdHX2s/view?usp=sharing>. The meeting was a great success with over 200 participants in attendance.

Milestone 6: AAS core financial and operational management capability

Target Date: October 2015

Deliverable: Business plan developed

A draft business plan for AESA has been developed. This will sit under the overall vision of the AAS and its strategic plan (2013-2018), but will set out a specific roadmap for AESA's goals and plans to achieve them.

The development of AESA's business plan is a five stage process:

Stage 1 (September 23 rd – 30 th 2015)	Mobilization: Exploration, Analysis, and Framing
Stage 2 (October 1 st – Nov 15 th 2015)	Draft development
Stage 3 (November 15 th – Dec 15 th 2015)	Refining of draft
Stage 4 (January 18 th – Jan 22 nd 2016)	Completion: Validation workshop with staff
Stage 5 (Feb 2016 – December 2020)	Implementation

The draft business plan is included as an attachment to this progress report.

Deliverable: Annual budget and 5-year forecast developed for AAS/AESA agreed and approved by the funders

The 2015 budget and 5-year forecast (2016 – 2020) was submitted to the Partners in July 2015. Following discussion, a revised budget was discussed in a joint face-to-face meeting between the grants management and finance teams of AESA and the Trust during the AESA training programme in November 2015 in London. Feedback and comments from the Partners have been incorporated and addressed into a refined version which is attached to this progress report. This will be discussed for approval by the Partners during the face-to-face Partners meeting on January 8th 2016 in London.

Deliverable: Appropriate financial and operational controls, policies and procedures implemented including internal

and external audit functions, finance system and management planning and reporting

A number of financial and operational controls and activities have been created and improved over the past quarter. Key improvements include:

1. The AAS is currently in the process of finalizing upgrades to the Procurement, HR, Travel, and Financial Accounting Policies and Manuals. The Investment, Risk Management, and Business Planning and Disaster Recovery Policies are currently under development. It is expected that the revision of existing documents as well as the finalization of the new policy documents and Manuals will be done in time to be passed through the Senior Management Team before the end of Quarter 1 2016. Those policies that involve Risk, Investments, Procurement and Finance will be passed through the ARC in its Quarter 1 meeting in March 2016, for a formal review before being presented to the Governing Council for final approval.
2. A Document Management plan is currently being implemented across the AAS.. This lays out the protocol for managing information in electronic documents including finding, sharing, storing, securing, and archiving as well as ensuring version control. A task-force for overseeing an AAS-wide electronic document migration is working with the ICT administrator to ensure a transition to the new centralized servers by internal deadline of 28th February, 2016.
3. On October 23rd the AAS Audit and Risk Committee (ARC) Chair presented the ARC report which included the AESA risk register to the Governing Council. The report was adopted with the recommendation that there needs to be finalization of the Risk Process started by the ARC.
4. The AAS is in the process of examining the possibility and options for creating an internal Audit and Risk function. The process of looking for a consulting firm to take up the Internal Audit function was sanctioned by the 3rd meeting of the ARC on 2nd December, 2015.

Delivery: Recruitment and training of suitably qualified and experienced finance staff

Following recruitments over the past year, a qualified and experienced Finance team to more appropriately be able to support the AAS' growth in operations has now been established.

The current Finance staff complement is:

- Anne Kimari: COO
- Hannah Ngugi: Finance and Administration Manager
- Isabel Imbuye: Grants Accountant
- Kenneth Ochola: Finance and Administration Assistant

The support offered by the Trust finance office (Genny Kiff, Robert Coutts, and Frankie Stone) has been invaluable to the Finance team. Furthermore, the training programme at the Trust in November/December further strengthened the capacity of the team in developing the relevant principles and skills for AESA's key finance functions.

New recruitments in Finance and Operations include:

- A Finance Officer who will be responsible for Procurement has been recruited. Emmanuel Odongo reported on 16th November 2015.
- An in-house ICT Administrator has been recruited. Joel Salano will report on 5th January, 2016

Deliverable: Grants management and IT systems established and staff training completed

Finance Management System (FMS):

The implementation of the new Financial Management System (FMS) is currently underway, with a target completion date of January 2016. In order to improve the effectiveness of the financial management arrangements, Techno Brain Limited have been commissioned to develop and install the new integrated FMS.

The contract and project charter have been finalised. The software requirement specification (SRS), template reviews, and data migration processes are under review.

Grants Management System (Ishango GMS):

The contract with CC Technologies has been signed and work has commenced to meet the deliverables for early 2016. These include the GMS to handle the 2016 nominations for AAS Fellowships and Affiliates, Batch 3 of

CIRCLE, and registration of the Grand Challenges grant holders for the GC Africa Network, Innovators Meeting, Phase2 Calls, and a new call with BMGF and Institut Pasteur in early 2016. The final implementation phase is to be completed by February 2017. The African Academy of Sciences is liaising closely with CCT on the execution of the project.

IT system:

Upgrades to the AAS IT system are almost complete as an integral requirement to support the upcoming finance, grants management, and web-based application systems to be established. The upgrades will also ensure the AAS meets the required system resilience, business continuity, and disaster recovery capabilities currently not in place.

Over the past quarter, the following updates can be reported on:

- The structured cabling and implementation of the Local area Network is complete.
- Three servers have been procured and installed to create local storage of data and systems
- Upgrades to the server room is complete
- Internal internet security has been created through creation of a firewall and separate access for guests.
- Improvement of internet access has been achieved through the creation of more Wifi Access points
- Further, the improvement of the Internet Access will be more visible with the implementation of a dedicated service rather than the 'pooled' internet service that has been a cause of the fluctuating availability of Internet.
- Video conferencing material are in the process of procurement, an RFP went out to various suppliers for the same and it is expected that the equipment will be in place by January, 2016.
- The new AAS website has gone live at www.aasciences.ac.ke The Email domain consequently has changed from .org to .ac.ke from 1st December, 2015, to provide better advantage to staff in accessing science and academic material over the web.

Good Financial Grant Practice (GFGP) Initiative:

Progress continues with the GFGP Initiative, in partnership with the MRC and the Trust. The vision is to develop a) an agreed framework for the development of excellence in financial grant management that will enable the assessment of the financial management capacity of grant recipients (by funders and the grant recipients themselves) and b) agreed standards that grant recipients can apply to grant funds received. This initiative allows AESA to undertake a key mandate to monitor and evaluate financial investments made by AESA partners in supporting African science more effectively. An MoU has been agreed between the Wellcome Trust, the MRC, Oxford University, and the AAS for Michael Kilpatrick (MRC) will serve as a Senior Adviser to the AAS to progress developments. A programme manager to lead the development of the new standard for GFGP was recruited in November 2015. However, She did not take up the appointment and instead a decision was made to send out an RFP for a 'Programme Manager' consultancy. Currently, the preferred candidate is being engaged with a hope that he can start in January, 2016. A request for proposal for a supplier consultancy firm for development of the standard was competitively carried out and PricewaterhouseCoopers is the firm that has been engaged to carry out the exercise.

On October 6th 2015, Tom Kariuki attended the launch of the GFGP initiative at the Trust offices in London, UK, chiefly organized by the AAS Senior Adviser, Michael Kilpatrick (MRC). The meeting was convened by the International Financial Governance Working Group, which is a global group of funders, such as the Wellcome Trust, the Swedish International Development Aid, the Medical Research Council and the European & Developing Countries Clinical Trials Partnership, and included the major participation of Mango, a UK based organization that helps NGOs to achieve financial management quality standards. Participants endorsed AAS-AESA as the implementing organization and agreed on the outcomes that they will pursue for this initiative i.e. Rather than focusing on accounting or financial reporting, this quality standard will focus on the internal controls and processes that will give funders assurance that recipients are using their money well and for the purpose intended. It will also include development of a self-assessment tool and database of responses to be hosted at AAS to give funders and recipients an overview of training and development needs. The project will play a vital role in supporting ongoing improvement amongst recipient organisations in their grant management and reporting practices and reduce the waste of resources caused by a current lack of donor harmonisation.

Staff Training:

The AESA Change Manager is working closely with the Wellcome Trust team to shape a comprehensive training programme for AAS staff, which has involved periods of training in both Nairobi and at the Wellcome Trust. Emma Ralph (WT Senior Grants Adviser), is supporting Grants Management training for AESA at 50% of her time. From the 12th to the 20th October, she conducted invaluable training on Grants Management for the AESA team at the AAS office, providing introductory sessions on the principles of Grants Management in preparation for the two week programme at the Trust.

From November 2nd – 6th 2015, Josephine Karuri (M&E Manager), Susan Gichoga (Grants Officer), and Nidhee Jadeja (Change Manager) visited the Wellcome Trust/DBT India Alliance Programme in Hyderabad, India to observe their funding Committee and fellows meetings. During this visit AESA staff also held meetings with India Alliance staff to gain perspective on their grants management processes and policies, roll-out of the CCT grants management software, staff roles and responsibilities, and experiences and challenges. The supportive hand of Shahid Jameel and the India Alliance has been greatly valued and we hope to continue exchanging knowledge, practices, and staff visits over the coming years in a mutually beneficial way.

From November 23rd to December 4th 2015, nine AAS staff members participated in an intensive training programme at the Wellcome Trust in London. The AAS team included Anne Kimari (COO), Hannah Ngugi (Finance and Admin Manager), Isabel Imbuye (Grants Accountant), Evelyn Gitau (Programme Manager), Alphonse Neba (Programme Manager), Benjamin Gyampoh (Programme Manager), Josephine Karuri (M&E Manager), Susan Gichoga (Grants Officer), and Olivia Osula (Program Assistant). This programme was developed by a core team of representatives from the Trust including Nidhee Jadeja (Change Manager), Emma Ralph (Senior Grants Adviser), Frankie Stone (International Financial Analyst), and Sophie Mathewson (International Operations Adviser). Shaped as a 'train the trainer programme', it aimed to provide participants with a greater understanding of the principles of Grants and Financial Management and key activities, including the processing of applications, committee operations, post-committee activities and the management of awarded Grants. AAS staff feedback was very positive. The full training programme schedule is attached in the Annex.



AAS and Wellcome Trust programme staff during the training programme in London, November 2015

Milestone 7: AESA Platform grant awarding capability

Target Date: October 2015

Deliverable: Peer review pool established (with agreements)

During our inception phase, AESA will take advantage of the existing network of the AAS Fellows as a review pool (as relevant and appropriate for the specific need). The AAS has four fellowship categories: Fellows, Associate Fellows, Honorary Fellows, and Affiliate Members. There are more than 350 scientists from 36 African countries representing a wide range of disciplines including strong representation in the health sciences. AAS fellows were solicited for external peer review during the Proposal Development Workshop selection process, and the interaction worked well. The fellows have also been engaged in experts groups and as consultants to develop the AAS-NEPAD led Research and Innovation Strategy for Africa. This is seen as a valuable way to engage the network of fellows in AESA's activities.

Deliverable: Independent grant decision making committee established) with agreements

AESA will continue working with the Committees already established and in operation for DELTAS and CIRCLE. AESA is currently in the process of forming independent decision committees for Grand Challenges Africa and the GFGP initiatives respectively. The MOU signed between WT, MRC and AAS for the GFGP programme sets out the composition/representation of the key committees for this programme. Discussions to agree the key principles and actions for the independent decision committee for Grand Challenges Africa were held in Beijing between BMGF, Institute Pasteur and the AAS.

Milestone 8: Funders Review

Target Date: November 2015

From November 17th to 19th 2015, a team of representatives on behalf of the funders visited the AAS to:

1. Assess progress in setting up the AESA platform as an entity embedded in AAS
2. Review progress against agreed milestones and deliverables
3. Assess the capability of AESA (currently and as proposed) to deliver identified organisation objectives
4. Review organisational plans
5. Provide feedback on feasibility of plans to transfer existing and take on new funding schemes
6. Identify key areas of risk or concern

The funders review team consisted of Sean Hussain (WT), Anna Curson (WT), Benjy Smith (WT), Joe Torres (BMGF) and Stephen Porter (DFID). Their discussions with AAS staff focused on governance, management, organisational development, organisational structure, grant management capability, and financial management capability. The funders review provided an invaluable opportunity for us to take stock of our achievements to date, but also to reflect on priorities for future development and how they will be achieved. Overall, we received positive feedback from the funders review team, but look forward to discussing the detailed recommendations generated from the report to inform our strategic planning and operational work-plans for the coming year.

Developments towards other milestones:

- **Independent Strategic and Scientific Advisory Board established**

Following development of an ISSAB Terms of Reference and incorporating feedback from the Partners on its remit, a proposed list of members was agreed and approached. The ISSAB draws from all the scientific areas in line with the AAS strategic plan and mission of AESA, and from the AAS Experts Committees. The main remit of the ISSAB will be to 1) provide, predominantly via its meetings, advice, support, and guidance to the Director of AESA on AESA's scientific and strategic direction, operations, and the furtherance of its mission; and 2) to provide reports of its meetings to the Director of AESA, which can then be subsequently made available to the Executive Director of the AAS and to the AESA Board of Partners. An inaugural meeting is planned in early 2016.

The eight confirmed AESA-ISSAB members are:-

	Nominee	M/F	Affiliation	Nationality	Expertise
1	Akica Bahri	F	African Water Facility	Tunisian	Water & sanitation
2	Abdallah Daar	M	University of Toronto	Omani	Health
3	Aida Opoku-Mensah	F	UNECA	Ghanaian	Health
4	Charles Mgone	M	EDCTP	Tanzanian	Health

5	Christian Borgemeister	M	University of Bonn	German	Agriculture
6	Paul Sagnia	M	Standard Chartered	Gambian	Finance
7	Francisca Mutapi	F	University of Edinburgh	Zimbabwean	Health
8	Fil Randazzo	M	Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation	American	Health

The Terms of Reference and status report on members is attached to this progress report as requested by the Partners.

Leveraging additional buy in and partnerships

AESA continues to engage actively with potential partners and donors. The Swiss Government is currently reviewing its strategy for supporting science in Africa and has favourably responded to a potential collaboration over support for DELTAS. Tom Kariuki and Kevin Marsh were invited to present AESA to Dr. Mauro Dell'Ambrogio, State Secretary for Education, Research & Innovation in the Swiss Government in November 2015 this year. The state secretary is planning a visit to Kenya early next year and will confirm whether his itinerary will allow him to visit AAS for further discussions.

In September 2015, we responded to a call for expressions of interest for the Science Granting Councils Initiative in sub-Saharan Africa. Jointly funded by the UK Department for International Development (DFID), Canada's International Development Research Centre (IDRC), and South Africa's National Research Foundation (NRF), the call aims to select organizations to support Science Granting Councils to:

1. Manage research
2. Design and monitor research programs based on the use of robust science, technology, and innovation indicators
3. Support knowledge exchange with the private sector
4. Establish partnerships with each other and with other science system actors

Activities will include exchange and training, forums on evidence and best practices, online training, individualized on-site coaching, and collaborative research as requested by each participating Council. Following review of 56 applications, we were selected to submit an extended Expression of Interest for objectives 1. and 4. above and detail our strategy, timelines, and budget. This is currently being prepared. If successful, this would be a great opportunity for us to deliver on our mission and demonstrate our capability as a centre of excellence for strengthening capacity for research management across the continent.

AESA has also been presented at the following meetings and forums:

- Tom Kariuki (AESA Director) presented AESA at the GFGP launch meeting in London in October 2015. Participants endorsed AAS-AESA as the implementing organization and agreed on the outcomes that they will pursue for this initiative.
- Tom Kariuki presented AESA at the meeting of the specialized Technical Committee on Education, Science and Technology at the AU offices in Addis Ababa in October 2015.
- Kevin Marsh presented AESA at the UNESCO - Merck Africa Research Summit, 19th to 20th October 2015, Switzerland
- Tom Kariuki and Kevin Marsh presented at the launch of the Planet Earth Institute in Mauritius on November 3rd 2016
- Berhanu Abegaz and Evelyn Gitau presented at a science forum organised by the Minister of Science and Technology Ms Naledi Pandor in Johannesburg on ** December 2015.
- Tom Kariuki participated in a panel discussion on programs to support neglected tropical diseases (the panel included Stephen Gordon, the head of the WT/Liverpool Centre) in Blantyre Malawi at a meeting organised by the African Network for NTDs (ARNTD) on November 18th 2015. ARNTD is an organisation that sets the agenda for NTD research in Africa which Tom helped to create and previously served on the Board.

b. Summary of lessons learned in this reporting period

The past year has been an intense and incredible period of growth and activity, with activities largely focused on establishing the foundations of the AESA platform, recruiting and training the team, and strengthening the AAS structures, policies, and systems within which we operate. With these in place now, the priorities over the coming months will be to deliver on key programmatic milestones with DELTAS and Grand Challenges Africa, building on lessons learned over the past year on how we work as a team and with our Partners. This will involve early and ongoing communication over expectations, operational work-plans, and timelines.

c. Description of programme adjustments or actions undertaken to change or improve the programme

Our direct approaches to African governments for future support will continue and will be intensified in the coming years. However we have also quickly realized the value of identifying key champions for AESA, who ideally should be political or high profile figures who can speak on our behalf and enhance our brand name across the continent through the power of their offices or voices. This is the reason why we are working closely with HE Ameenah Gurib-Fakim, the President of Mauritius; we have also recently met Ms Nalendi Pandor, the South African Minister for Science and Technology to discuss a future partnership between her department (DST) and AESA. We are also strengthening our relationship with the office of the AU commissioner for HR, Science and Technology, Martial De Paul Ikounga through annual submission of reports to his office in line with our status as a STISA 2024 implementing partner for AU/NEPAD.

Annex: AESA Summary of Progress Against Milestones

Milestone & Timeline	Deliverable	Status	Notes
1. Start Funding for AESA January 2015	MoU Agreements Signed	Complete	MoUs signed between: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> AAS and NEPAD (Oct 2014) Wellcome Trust, DFID, and the BMGF (Feb 2015) DFID and the Wellcome Trust (Feb 2015).
	All relevant funding agreements/award letters signed	Complete	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Funding agreement signed between the BMGF and the AAS (Dec 2014). Wellcome Trust and DFID issued an award letter (Feb 2015).
	Key Staff recruited	Complete	Roles Recruited: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> AESA Director AAS COO AESA Programme Managers (2) AESA Programme Assistant AESA Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) Manager AESA Grants Officer AAS Communications Manager AAS Grants Accountant Strategy and Policy Manager
	Development of training programme plan for staff	Complete	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Training programme plan developed Grants life-cycle training workshop held on 22nd April 2015 in advance of DELTAS Committee meeting Training programme for key programme staff at the WT office in London in development WT Senior Grants Adviser (Emma Ralph) will be seconded to the AAS for 50% of her time in the Autumn to support training needs
2. Management Structures Established	Partners Group Established	Complete	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> First meeting held April 27th 2015 via teleconference First face to face meeting to be held July 9th 2015

April 2015	Independent Strategic and Scientific Advisory Board Established	Complete	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ISAB ToR developed • List of members agreed within AAS • Invitations sent following consultation with Partners Group • Inaugural meeting planned for early 2016
3. Initiation of AESA grant-making systems and function May 2015	Recruitment of first batch of programme staff	Complete	Roles Recruited: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • AESA Director • AAS COO • AESA Programme Managers (2) • AESA Programme Assistant • AESA Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) Manager • AESA Grants Officer • AAS Communications Manager • AAS Grants Accountant
	Grants Management and IT procurement process initiated and staff plans developed	Complete	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Restricted tendering procedure currently underway with CC Technology for a Grants Management System • Draft ICT strategy currently undergoing review • ICT Project Manager selected to lead and manage the implementation of this ICT strategy
	Ability to run calls for proposals (RFP) developed	Complete	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Staff training programme in development • AESA policies and procedures in development • Grants Management, IT, and Finance systems currently being established • Ability to run calls recently demonstrated by the programme staff team in organising the Proposal Development workshop to be held July 20-23 in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia
	Grant-making policies agreed	In process	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Internal working group established and leading on the development of the AAS' grant-making policies, in collaboration with the WT and India Alliance • Policies to be approved in Quarter 1 of 2016

4. Launch of AESA scheduled June 2015	Launch meeting scheduled with appropriate stakeholders	Complete	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • June 2015 launch was delayed following advice from NEPAD • A successful and high profile launch event was held on September 10th 2015 in Nairobi
	Attendance and engagement of pan-African stakeholders and funders arranged	Complete	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • More than 300 participants attended the launch events including HE Ameenah Gurib-Fakim (President of Mauritius), high level representation from the government of Kenya, African Union, major African and non-African scientific networks, African academic and research organizations, members of the diplomatic community, representatives of global organizations that support health sciences and development, and other AAS-AESA collaborators, funders and partners.
5. Think Tank Established October 2015	Think tank and first draft of scientific strategy developed	In process	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Evelyn Namibiru-Mwaura, has been selected as Strategy and Policy Manager to lead on AESA's think tank functions. She will start in January 2016.
	Formal and informal agreements made with a network of pan-African stakeholders	In process	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • AESA has been tasked to lead on developing the African Health Research and Innovation Strategy to be incorporated into AU Health Sciences Strategy 2015 - 2030. • Discussions for partnership are progressing with the AfDB. • AESA working with the Minister for Education, Science, and Technology of Kenya for a host country agreement, with a possible contribution to the AAS endowment. • Invited by the Minister of Science and Technology, Ms Naledi Pandor, to be profiled at a science forum organized by her ministry in December 2015.
6. AAS core financial and operational management capability October 2015	Business plan developed	In process	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A business-plan development/brainstorming workshop was held with AESA staff on September 23rd 2015. The outcomes of this workshop have been incorporated into a written draft business plan for further discussion.
	Annual budget and 5-year forecast developed for AAS/AESA agreed and approved by the funders	In process	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • An annual budget for 2015 and 5-year forecast (2016-2020) was submitted to the Partners in December 2015. It will be discussed for approval at the Partners Group meeting in January 2016.

	Appropriate financial and operational controls, policies and procedures implemented including internal and external audit functions, finance system and management planning and reporting	In process	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Upgrades to the Procurement, HR, Travel, and Financial Accounting Policies and Manuals are underway. The Investment, Risk Management, and Business Planning and Disaster Recovery Policies are currently under development. • The risk register for AESA was presented to the AAS Audit and Risk Committee and will continue to be reviewed in the ARC meetings as well as the AAS Senior Management Committee meetings on a quarterly basis. • The AAS is in the process of examining the possibility and options for creating an internal Audit and Risk function.
	Recruitment and training of suitably qualified and experienced finance staff	Complete	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A qualified and experienced Finance team has been recruited • Emma Ralph conducted training on the principles of Grants Management for the AESA team at the AAS office in October 2015. AESA staff (Josephine Karuri, Susan Gichoga, and Nidhee Jadeja) also visited the Wellcome Trust/DBT India Alliance in November 2015 to observe their funding Committee and fellows meeting, and meet with the programme staff team. The training programme for AESA staff at the Trust took place from November 23rd to December 4th 2015.
	Grants management and IT systems established and staff training completed	In process	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The AAS selected CC Technology to deliver its new customized grants system following a robust tender process. Work has commenced by CC Technologies, with the final implementation phase to be complete in early 2017. • The ICT strategy is being implemented in prioritised phases. Phase 1 covers implementation of the ICT Strategy to the end of 2015 in the first instance, subject to review for subsequent year implementations. • The new AAS website has gone live at www.aasciences.ac.ke
7. AESA Platform grant awarding capability October 2015	Peer review pool established (with agreements)	Complete	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Initially, AESA is currently taking advantage of the existing network of the AAS Fellows as a review pool. • dffd
	Independent grant decision making committee established) with agreements	In process	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • AESA will continue working with the Committees already established and in operation for DELTAS and CIRCLE. AESA is currently in the process of forming independent decision committees for Grand Challenges Africa and the GFGP initiatives respectively.

8. Funders Review November 2015	Interim funders' review of platform	Complete	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> From November 17th to 19th 2015, a team of representatives on behalf of the funders conducted a review of the AESA platform with overall positive feedback.
	Interim funders' audit of platform		
	Review of status to prepare for transfer of existing or new grants programme		
9. Grants management – establishing a track record 2016 (to be agreed after funders review)	Grants are awarded through transparent decision-making		
	Due diligence checks of new grantees conducted within x time of award		
	Performance metrics on time from grant award to contracting?		
	Grant activity is monitored and actively mentored and managed		
	Audits of grantees		
	Mid- and full-term evaluation of funding schemes is undertaken (including an external element)		
10. Development of Monitoring and Evaluation capacity of AESA 2016 – 2017 (to be agreed after funders review)	Grant monitoring processes established		
	Business plan is fully implemented and funding is leveraged		