



## Episode 3: Budgets

**Summary:** Episode three of the STARTcast is a discussion between START's program specialist Dr. Mzime Ndebele-Murisa and Ms. Alice McClure, the Project Coordinator of the Future Resilience for African Cities and Lands (FRACTAL) program which is one of DFID/NERC's five projects under the Future Climate for Africa (FCFA). Alice is based at the University of Cape Town's Climate System Analysis Group. Before this post Alice worked with regional initiatives in both Africa and Asia.

Alice shares her experience and advice around issues and challenges of putting together a budget and the budget narrative particularly when working with diverse teams, stakeholders and countries. She provides great tips based on her experience, and what she has seen working. Alice was also part of the consultative group who provided feedback on issues and challenges that are faced by early and mid-career scientists in writing scientific proposals which helped to set the agenda for this season of the STARTcast.



Alice McClure, CSAG, UCT

**Highlights:** "Make as many connections as possible, be brave and bold in putting together well-structured budgets"

- Best time to work on budget is alongside the proposal in an iterative manner
- Use guidelines for budget allocation and ask more experienced researchers and peers if there are no guidelines especially for costs that are not intuitive
- Experience is invaluable so ask as many questions as possible to peers, funders, and people familiar with research area for clarity, what is allowable etc.
- Allocation and prioritization in budgets require thinking about the details on things like methods, time to be spent, implementation, equipment etc.
- Include research partners as early as possible to balance budget between research partners, currencies, and regions... especially for interdisciplinary research
- Use a user-friendly template and share with research team early in the proposal writing process
- Keep track of decisions on allocations to help explain to broader team and for budget narrative
- Three Cs: Be clear, concise, and consistent as well as detailed in describing budget narrative and units used
- Budgeting for maintaining communication during times like COVID 19 is important for continuing connections remotely
- Planning (Plan B) for disruptions like COVID is important

Links: [CSAG](#) • [FRACTAL](#) • [FCFA](#)