



2020 Guidelines
for
Academic Consortium for the 21st Century (AC21)
Special Project Fund
(REVISED: October 2019)

Application Period:

November 1, 2019 to January 31, 2020

AC21 Special Project Fund

1. Purpose

The AC21 Special Project Fund (SPF) was created in order to promote the development of research and educational exchange between AC21 members by providing "seed funding" for a variety of collaborative research projects and activities. Although research collaboration between AC21 members is important, this fund is not intended to support particular or individual research projects. It is awarded to projects that include as many participants as possible. For example, a symposium jointly held by three or more institutions, featuring speakers from these institutions, and open to all AC21 members, as well as to the general public, will serve our goal of internationalization and cooperation between members more effectively compared to simple research projects conducted by one or two individuals per institution.

Events can include mini-symposia, mini-workshops, schooling projects, start-up funds for long term research projects, or small international forums, as well as traditional research proposals that attempt to include as wide a circle of contacts and participants as possible.

2. Application Eligibility

Applicants must be academic staff members of an eligible AC21 member institution who hold faculty positions. Students of an AC21 member institution, either undergraduate or graduate, shall not be eligible to apply for the SPF.

If a student has a research project that meets the purpose of the SPF and wishes to have the project submitted, the student must consult with his or her advisor in advance for review of the project and, upon approval thereof, the application shall then be prepared and submitted by said advisor.

AC21 member institutions with unpaid membership fees are ineligible. A list of AC21 members eligible for this year's SPF can be found in the Appendix on page 6.

3. SPF Award

- Up to 10,000USD per project
- Maximum of three awards per year; however, if the AC21 Steering Committee (STC) determines, based on the review results, that the proposals demonstrate high standards across all criteria in **6. Review/Selection Process**, up to two additional awards may be considered.
- Awarded in April, as a single payment, to a designated bank account

4. Application Period

November 1, 2019 to January 31, 2020

5. Requirements and Restrictions

- 1) **The application deadline must be observed. Late applications will not be accepted.**
- 2) Each project shall have a Project Group Leader who acts as a representative applicant to fill out and sign the Application Form. The university which the Project Group Leader is affiliated with will also be regarded as a representative of the project.
- 3) Applications should include:

- a) a completed Application Form (designated form in MS Word Format); and
- b) a detailed Budget Proposal (free form).

Incomplete applications will not be considered.

- 4) Projects should include at least **three** AC21 member universities, from at least **two** different countries.
- 5) As the SPF is intended to serve as "seed money" to help launch new projects, a proposal designed as a continuation of a past SPF-awarded project may not be submitted.
- 6) In order to avoid any confusion or multiple submissions, Project Group Leaders shall submit a complete set of application materials to their affiliated university's **AC21 Communicator** (see page 5), who shall then submit it to the AC21 General Secretariat.

6. Review/Selection Process

- 1) A peer-review process will NOT be used to evaluate SPF applications.
- 2) All applications will be reviewed and scored by the AC21 Steering Committee (STC), in accordance with the criteria and weighting described below.
- 3) Based on the STC's evaluations, the General Secretariat will announce the final selection results to the applicants in late March.

[Evaluation Criteria and Weighting]

Applications will be evaluated and selected according to the following criteria:

- **Contribution to AC21 activities 40%**
Does the proposal stimulate international collaboration that involves as many member universities from as many different countries as possible, and have the potential to be developed as an ongoing AC21 project contributing to the fields of research, education, management and international exchange?
- **Quality of the proposal 20%**
Does the quality and theme of the event or project reflect positively on the goals and missions of AC21 as a motivator for international exchange and collaboration?
- **Accountability of the budget 20%**
Is the budget spending plan realistic and legitimate? Budget plans may not include salaries, scholarships for students, course fees, or office equipment (computers, furniture, etc.), as specified in the application guidelines.
- **Sustainability and continuation of proposed collaboration 20%**
Does the proposal have the potential to continue as a long-term project with academic and public impacts? Are there any expected outcomes which could serve as a basis for future collaborations?
How can the proposal be financially sustainable? Are there any plans to continue the project if you do not receive the SPF?

7. Project Examples

- ✓ Forum for graduate students
- ✓ Small international forums
- ✓ Mini workshops
- ✓ Joint mini-symposia related to certain research areas
- ✓ Joint research between small groups
- of researchers
- ✓ "Seed" funds for schooling projects
- ✓ "Seed" funds for startup long-term research projects or centers
- ✓ Any other project that meets the objectives of the fund

8. Guidelines for Budget Use

- 1) Expenses may include:
 - Forum expenses
 - Travel expenses
 - Stationary and other consumables
 - Other costs directly related to the project

- 2) Expenses may **NOT** include:
 - Salaries
 - Scholarship for students
 - Course fees
 - Office equipment (PCs, furniture, etc.)

9. Fund Recipient Obligations

- 1) Fund Recipients must submit **three final documents by December 25** of the project year:
 1. **A final project report**
 2. **A final financial report**
 3. **A 400-600 word article for the use in the AC21 Newsletter**Failing to submit these documents will render applicants' ineligible for future applications.

- 2) Fund Recipients are requested to acknowledge the support received from AC21 in presentations, publications, events and publicity materials.
(e.g. AC21 logos to be placed on each document)

10. Consent to Disclosure

Applicants must consent to the disclosure of information, details of which can be found below. The submission of applications will be regarded as acceptance thereof.

- The following information will be disclosed via email to unsuccessful applicants who submit individual requests, limited to if and when the request is received and approved by the General Secretariat:
 1. The content of each successful proposal as provided in their Application Forms, excluding personal information such as names and contacts, etc.
 2. A list of successful proposals with the total scores indicated, along with the total score of the requestor's proposal

11. Submission

- **Applicants (Project Group Leader) should submit applications to their university's AC21 Communicator**, who will then collectively submit all applications from the university to the AC21 General Secretariat by January 31, 2020. The submission should be made via email both in **original (MS Word, Excel, etc.) and PDF** formats.