



Pak-UK Education Gateway

INNOVATIVE AND COLLABORATIVE RESEARCH GRANT (ICRG)

Call for Proposals Guidance

Deadline for Project Outline Submission: **Monday, December 2, 2019**

Deadline for Full Proposal Submission: **Friday, January, 31, 2020**

I. General Information

A. Project Description:

The **Innovative and Collaborative Research Grant (ICRG)** is one of the key element of the **Pak-UK Education Gateway** which was launched in November 2018. It is Higher Education specific programme that was founded in collaboration with the UK – while British Council and HEC are its designing and implementing partners in Pakistan and United Kingdom.

The ICRG aims to support cutting-edge research and innovation in emerging disciplines of knowledge by establishing partnerships across Pakistan and UK Higher education sector and develop sustainable partnerships outside the university sector in order to engage industry and academia to address the critical challenges associated with the targeted priority thematic areas and formulate efficient solutions.

The proposal will be developed jointly by the Principle Investigator who must be a faculty member of Higher Education Institute (public and private) in Pakistan and United Kingdom.

The grant can be used by the PIs in Pakistan and the UK to develop partnerships between their universities and business: the public sector (government, departments and regional agencies) and/or the third sector (charities, not-for-profit organizations, development agencies, communities and others).

From Pakistan side the consortia will be developed by the PI of the HEI in collaboration with the center of excellence in that area of research to carry out research activities and

to execute the project in their domains.

Multilateral partnership in collaboration with researcher from any other foreign country besides Pak-UK in the project, provided the third country agrees to financially support their researcher, will be highly encouraged. The HEC and British Council will provide funding to Pakistani and UK institutions only.

ICRG awards will be selected competitively using a merit-based, independent, transparent evaluation and selection process based upon international standards. The process is described in the Sections below, as well as in the **Evaluation and Selection protocol** available on the HEC and British Council websites.

B. Priority Thematic Areas:

The Innovative and Collaborative Research Grant is focused on supporting research in any of the identified priority areas/disciplines, including:

- Medical and allied health sciences
- Energy (generation, distribution and conservation)
- Climate Change
- Artificial Intelligence
- Robotics
- Nanoscience
- Big Data – Cloud Computing
- Social Sciences

C. Anticipated Funding Amount:

The budgets for ICRG projects are anticipated to range upto Rs. 100 Million (approximately equal to GBP 500,000 i.e. Rs. 50 Million approximately equal to GBP 250,000 to each lead partner). Project will be maximum of 3 years starting from April 2020.

The ICRG awards will be made to the host higher education institution of the lead Principal Investigator in Pakistan and UK.

A detailed budget template is provided in the proposal template and **Budget Guidelines** available of HEC and British Council websites. The project budget can finance the following activities:

- a) **Human Resource Cost** for PI and co-PIs based on the amount of time spent on the project
- b) **Stipends** for bachelors, masters, doctoral students and post-doctoral scholars to help in proposed research activities as per scope of the project
- c) **Doctoral fellowship** for six months

- d) **Travel** to national and international meetings and Conferences to present research results obtained and in support of the proposed research
- e) **Equipment purchase and maintenance** as appropriate & approved to conduct the proposed research (Not more than 30% of the total project value)
- f) **Purchase of Research supplies** necessary to conduct the proposed research
- g) **Processing Fee** for open access journals/ publications for disseminating research results obtained
- h) **Project Overhead Cost**

D. Due Dates

- Project Outlines must be submitted to HEC/British Council by **Monday, December 2, 2019**
- Invited Full Proposals must be submitted to HEC/British Council by **Friday, January 31, 2020**

II. Proposal Preparation Instructions

A. Basic Guidance

All Principal Investigators interested in submitting a proposal for the ICRG must first submit a Project Outline to the Higher Education Commission / British Council. Those Project Outlines that pass an initial screening will be invited to submit a Full Proposal to the Higher Education Commission.

Project Outlines, and Full Proposals, must be submitted jointly by the higher education institution based in Pakistan and United Kingdom via the HEC/ BC online portal.

B. Proposal Formatting

- All Project Outlines should use the .docx Project Outline Template Document as the basis for the submission. The section guidance (in light grey) should be deleted prior to submission.
- All invited Full Proposals should use the .docx Full Proposal Template Document as the basis for the submission. The section guidance (in light grey) should be deleted prior to proposal submission.
- Proposals must be submitted in English.
- Full Proposals should include a Table of Contents.
- All sections of the template – either the Project Outline or the Full Proposal - must be completed prior to submission. The list of required sections – and the guidance for the content within each section – is provided in Section III below of this Call for Proposals.
- The page limit for each section must not be exceeded.
- All pages of the proposal should have a page number.

- Proposals should be submitted in 11 point, Calibri font.
- Tables should be completed in the format and length indicated in the relevant Template document (.docx).
- Proposal sections should not include URLs for additional information. Information or documentation beyond that included in the written proposal will not be used in the evaluation process.
- Proposals should follow internationally accepted academic practice in citing references throughout the proposal. References should be numbered sequentially, and listed separately as a required attachment to the proposal. References should be reported in a standard form, and include: the names of all authors; the article and journal title; book title; volume and page numbers; and year of publication. If available, a Digital Object Identifier (DOI) may be provided.

III. Required Proposal Sections

The required sections for the Project Outline submission and the Full Proposal submission are described below. All submissions should address the identified topics for each section. Do not exceed the maximum page limit for each section.

IIIa. Project Outline Submissions

All Principal Investigators interested in submitting a Full Proposal for consideration in the Innovative and Collaborative Research Grant Call for Proposals must complete and submit a Project Outline. The purpose of the Project Outline is to ensure that submitted proposals are (i) eligible for the competition, and (ii) respond to the thematic priority areas as described in the Call for Proposals. Principal Investigators must complete each section of the proposal as described in the attached link to the Project Outline Template .docx Document. The section guidance (in light grey) should be deleted prior to proposal submission.

Web Link for Project Outline Application:

[https://www.hec.gov.pk/english/services/faculty/ICRPG/Documents/Pak-UK%20%20Project%20Outline%20Template %20Final.docx](https://www.hec.gov.pk/english/services/faculty/ICRPG/Documents/Pak-UK%20%20Project%20Outline%20Template%20Final.docx)

It is expected that the Principal Investigator will have had extensive communication with all anticipated partners prior to the submission of the Project Outline, and will have obtained confirmation of participation in the project if it is selected for funding.

IIIb. Full Proposal Submissions

Full Proposals will only be accepted from those Principal Investigators who are invited to submit a Full Proposal following the evaluation of a submitted Project Outline. Principal Investigators must complete each section of the proposal as described in the attached

link to the Full Proposal Template .docx Document. The section guidance (in light grey) should be deleted prior to proposal submission.

Web Link for Full Proposal Application Form:

https://www.hec.gov.pk/english/services/faculty/ICRPG/Documents/Full%20Proposal%20Template%20-%20ICRG_Final.docx

IV. Evaluation and Selection Process

The selection of Innovative and Collaborative Research Grant awards will be made through an open, rigorous, transparent, competitive and merit-based process consistent with international standards for funding academic research projects. All Full Proposals submitted in response to this Call for Proposals will be evaluated by independent experts.

The Evaluation process consists of two sequential steps: screening of Project Outlines; Desk Evaluation of the written Full Proposal

IVa. Project Outline Review

For the Project Outline Review, an administrative review will be undertaken by the Higher Education Commission and British Council to ensure that the Principal Investigator and lead institution submitting each Project Outline is eligible to submit a full proposal.

Subsequent to the administrative review, two independent external evaluators as identified by HEC and BC will determine whether the proposed research concept aligns with one of the priority thematic areas identified above in Section I.

If the Project Outline is deemed appropriate in both elements, the Principal Investigator will be invited/ encouraged to submit a Full Proposal. For those Project Outlines that are deemed ineligible for the ICRG, the Principal Investigators will receive a letter identifying the reasons why no Full Proposal will be accepted.

IVb. Full Proposal Desk Evaluation

For the Desk Evaluation, Full Proposals will be grouped by thematic area and assigned to a Panel for evaluation. Each Panel will be composed of a team of experts - including international academic leaders and subject matter experts – who will evaluate the written proposals. Each Full Proposal will be independently evaluated by at least two members of the Panel, and additional reviews may be obtained by appropriate subject matter experts.

The expert evaluators will assess each proposal according to a scoring rubric, and will provide written comments on the proposal.

Web link for the scoring rubric for Desk Evaluation:

<https://www.hec.gov.pk/english/services/faculty/ICRPG/Documents/Evaluation%20Rubrics%20Updated-ICRG.pdf>

All members of the Panel will discuss each Full Proposal assigned to the Panel.

Following the Desk Evaluation of Full Proposals, a committee composed of two members including the chairs of each thematic Panel will identify a list of the top ranked proposals that will be considered for funding. This recommended list will be reasonably balanced across thematic areas.

The Desk Review Panel will formulate recommendations to the Higher Education Commission and British Council on the proposals that should be selected for ICRG support.

Proposals recommended for funding should meet the following criteria: the proposal must address a thematic area identified in the Call for Proposals; based upon the written proposal, there is a strong likelihood of successful implementation of the proposed project; the project team and the institutional leadership should be capable of implementing the project; and the proposal must achieve a scoring threshold as determined by the evaluators in the Desk Evaluation to ensure quality.

At the conclusion of the Selection process, the evaluations of each proposal submitted will be shared with the proposing institution. Both the scoring rubric(s) and the written comments will be made available. For the Desk Evaluations, the identities of the expert evaluators will be redacted.

Grievance procedure: In exceptional circumstances, institutions submitting ICRG Full Proposal that was not selected for funding may submit a written Notice of Grievance to the Higher Education Commission or British Council within 7 working days of selection results being announced. A Notice of Grievance is permitted only when the institution believes that the proposal was not evaluated fairly or in a reasonable manner.

V. **Negotiation and Implementation**

Following the Evaluation and Selection process, the Higher Education Commission and British Council – through the ICRG Programme Team - will enter into negotiations with the PI and the host institution on the following topics.

The final budget for each selected ICRG budget will be negotiated following the evaluation and selection process. The budget will depend upon: the proposed research and education activities; the size of the research team; the costs associated with the proposed

workplan; the resources required; the capacity of the research team to achieve the results; and the feedback to the PI provided through the Evaluation and Selection process. The negotiation on anticipated results will occur concurrently with the budget negotiation.

Prior to the formal signing of contracts and launch of the selected projects, several critical elements must be completed: (1) a revision and strengthening of the proposal in response to the comments and feedback provided in the evaluation process; (2) a fiduciary assessment and procurement plan; and (3) an environmental and social safeguards screening and management plan. In addition, a detailed implementation plan for the project must be prepared and approved.

VI. Project Websites

Full details of the Innovative and Collaborative Research Grant will be available on the Higher Education Commission and British Council website at: .

HEC: <http://www.hec.gov.pk/site/ICRG>

British Council: <https://www.britishcouncil.pk/programmes/education/higher-education/pak-uk-education-gateway>

Questions regarding the Innovative and Collaborative Research Grant may be directed to:

- i. Info-R&D@hec.gov.pk
- ii. PAK-UKGateway@britishcouncil.org