Request for Proposals in International Development from Stanford Faculty

Issued by
Stanford King Center on Global Development

Revised: July 11, 2019

Letter of Intent and Seed Funding Proposals Due: Monday, October 21, 2019

Proposals Due: Monday, December 16, 2019

Introduction

The Stanford King Center on Global Development is a Stanford University research center working to improve the lives of the world’s poor. We stimulate and support research, inspire students, and collaborate with thought leaders and influencers to make a real-world impact.

The Stanford King Center invites proposals from Stanford faculty for multi-faculty initiatives that harness and develop Stanford’s distinctive strengths in research on global development and poverty, moving Stanford into roles of international academic leadership in initiative areas. Initiatives will be multi-faculty research endeavors that produce well-defined, cutting-edge academic outputs broader than stand-alone research projects. These initiatives will be faculty-initiated and led, and they are envisioned to provide significant ‘public goods’ that will benefit (or have the potential to benefit) a larger group of faculty and students.

To create a more cohesive community of faculty working on global development and poverty alleviation, the King Center can physically house initiative’s post-docs, research assistants, and technical staff, as well as host initiative events (conferences, seminars, internal workshops, etc.).

Because initiatives will grow from common faculty interest and will be faculty led, each will develop and launch on its own timeline and proposals for initiatives will be accepted and considered annually. The center is envisioned to ultimately support up to five initiatives at any given time. Current and past initiatives funded by the King Center for may be found at kingcenter.stanford.edu/research/initiatives.

RFP Scope

Proposals that bring together faculty in new ways are encouraged. The proposed work may involve the broad range of disciplines involved in international development, including but not limited to earth sciences, economics, engineering, medicine, political science, policy, individually or in combination. Research groups for which the additional funding for the proposed initiative would be incremental to funding already available, or proposals for which the research is already sufficiently advanced to be a good candidate for other funding, are less likely to be selected.
Seed funding of up to $100,000 for potential initiatives that need some initial support to develop into full-fledged initiatives can also be requested. Such initial support could include a faculty workshop that meets over the course of the year, or funding for data acquisition necessary to develop ‘proof of concept’ for an initiative, etc. The expectation is that the seed funding will lead to an initiative proposal through the full application process the following year. There is no guarantee that proposals that receive seed funding will be funded as initiatives, however. Please note that seed funding for initiatives is subject to the same evaluation criteria as full initiatives and seed funding is not a project funding mechanism.

Proposal Submission, Review, and Award Process

Seed Funding Proposals
Proposals for seed funding should describe the project in two pages and list the proposed faculty collaborators. Please also describe concrete deliverables for the proposed seed funding and how the seed funding will be used to develop a full initiative and provide a discussion of the evaluation criteria described below.

In an additional two pages, please include a full budget with the key intended uses of funds and describe the extent to which, if any, the proposed seed funding builds on ongoing projects sponsored by other Stanford faculty grant programs or other sources of funding.

Please submit your seed funding proposal and complete the requested information at: https://kingcenter.stanford.edu/initiative-loi-seed-funding-submission-form.

Letter of Intent Submission for Full Proposals
Faculty members who intend to submit a full proposal should first provide a brief letter of intent. The letter should describe the project in two pages and list the proposed faculty collaborators. Please also describe concrete deliverables for the proposed initiative; provide a discussion of the evaluation criteria described below; and describe the extent to which, if any, the proposed initiative builds on ongoing projects sponsored by other Stanford faculty grant programs or other sources of funding.

In an additional page, please provide an approximate annual budget with the key intended uses of funds and describe the extent to which, if any, the proposed initiative builds on ongoing projects sponsored by other Stanford faculty grant programs or other sources of funding.

Please submit your letter of intent and complete the requested information at: https://kingcenter.stanford.edu/initiative-loi-seed-funding-submission-form. Letters of intent will be screened for relevance and promise before faculty are invited to submit a full proposal. Faculty should expect to hear back from the Center about the status of their application by mid-November.
Full Proposal Submission
Full proposals (format and submission instructions described below) should be submitted online at: https://kingcenter.stanford.edu/initiative-proposal-form. Proposed budgets need not be routed through OSR for this internally funded research initiative. Proposals must be self-contained with no links to additional information.

Proposal Format
In the proposal, please include:
1. a statement of significance,
2. a brief explanation of the academic and policy context of the proposed initiative,
3. concrete objectives (including concrete outputs and deliverables),
4. activities to achieve these objectives,
5. metrics for evaluating success, including policy impact,
6. how the proposed initiative addresses the evaluation criteria for proposals,
7. an annual budget for an initial three-year period, noting any other funding and whether the funding has been secured or applications are pending,
8. any requests for center space for staff or other facilities needs,
9. a description of the role played by each faculty member and student (or type of students) involved, as well as current and pending commitments of faculty time,
10. a concrete description of faculty leadership for the initiative, and
11. longer-term goals, including a path toward sustaining the initiative’s work.

- The proposal should be approximately six pages with fonts no smaller than 11 point. This includes the text, figures, tables, and references.
- The budget and budget justification are limited to three additional pages. Proposals that contain faculty salary support will be looked upon unfavorably, unless an exceptional case can be made.
- Each Principal Investigator who will be associated with the proposed work should submit a CV.

Presentation
After the proposal is submitted, the faculty leadership will be invited to make a brief presentation on the proposal to the selection committee and answer questions from the committee. Presentations will be scheduled in January 2020.

Proposal Review and Evaluation Criteria
The objective of the review process is to identify high quality initiatives that are consistent with the goals of this solicitation. The proposals will be reviewed by the King Center’s Faculty Steering Committee. Faculty Steering Committee members who are involved in the proposed projects will recuse themselves from discussions of the relevant proposals. The committee may be supplemented by other faculty and experts with knowledge related to the areas of research but who are not involved in the proposed projects. The opinions of additional experts at Stanford or outside of it may be sought, with the requirement that the reviewer maintain the confidentiality of the proposed work.
After applying a general filter for alignment with the general themes of global poverty and development, the Faculty Steering Committee will use the following criteria to evaluate proposals:

1. Innovation,
2. Academic rigor,
3. Potential for broader social impact,
4. Creation/provision of “public goods” to the Stanford community,
5. Whether the proposed initiative would create a truly new effort that would not otherwise be possible.

The Faculty Steering Committee will vote on whether to recommend that a proposal be funded, returned with a recommendation to “revise and submit” (with accompanying committee comments), or rejected.

Awards
It is anticipated that funding decisions based on this solicitation will be announced approximately two months after proposal submission.

Eligibility for Initiative Funding
Please note that the primary Principal Investigators (PIs) must be Stanford faculty members and be eligible per Stanford policy.

Project Funding and Duration
Although there is no predetermined funding limit for each proposed initiative, value for money will be a critical component of funding decisions. The source of funding is gift funds; therefore, no initiative may charge indirect costs. Projects will be funded for an initial period of performance of up to three years.

After the initial three year period, the King Center’s Faculty Steering Committee will review progress and evaluate both promise and need (including the ability for external financial support) for additional two-year periods.

Project Reporting
PIs of initiatives will be required to prepare an interim progress report at the end of each year, and to meet on a quarterly basis with the King Center’s leadership. Release of the next year’s funding is contingent upon submission of the interim progress report. At the end of the final year of funding, a short summary report and presentation materials will be required. If any technical review sessions, workshops, or other activities relevant to the initiative are held, PIs will be expected to participate in them. Papers/abstracts and summaries of work conducted under the initiative may be posted on the center website.
Contacts

For questions associated with the initiatives please contact King Center Deputy Director Jessica Leino (jleino@stanford.edu).