

USAID Agriculture Higher Education Project

Announces call for proposal under the Competitive Research Grants for Faculty

Call Announcement Date: 22 May 2023

Call Submission Deadline: 23 June 2023

INTRODUCTION

USAID Agriculture Higher Education Project aims to award research grants to faculty in AFU pursuing research activities addressing Nepal's food and nutrition security. The grant envisions high potential research within AFU. It aims to support ecosystem to disseminate science by encouraging research faculty to publish and/or protect their research findings.

We invite the innovative faculty of all disciplines to apply to pursue research work. Female faculty and faculty from marginalized groups are highly encouraged to apply.

QUANTUM OF GRANT

Each grant will be up to a maximum of NPR 1,30,000.

KEY TIMELINES

RFA announcement date	22 May 2023
Online Q&A Session for any queries	8 June 2023
Deadline for submission of a complete application	23 June 2023
Notification for presentation by few applicants (in case of tie in scores or more details/clarifications needed)	19 July 2023
Presentation by notified applicants	24 July 2023
Anticipated Final Award of the Research Grants	28 July 2023

All applications must be submitted before 5:00 pm Nepal time on the above date. Written questions regarding this solicitation must be submitted to Afufacultyresearch@gmail.com.

KEY FEATURES OF THE CALL

The purpose of the Competitive grants is to:

- Foster high potential research in the university,
- Foster an ecosystem to disseminate science by encouraging faculty to publish and/or protect their research findings,
- Encourage research faculty to present their research results in scientific forums.

WHO CAN APPLY?

Faculty pursuing research from any discipline at AFU are eligible to apply for the research grants as a single applicant or with an additional co-applicant.

WHAT CAN THE RESEARCH BE ON?

The research theme should be aligned with the priorities of the food and nutritional security of Nepal.

DURATION OF GRANT

Maximum of 12 months from the Award.

SCOPE OF COMPETITIVE RESEARCH GRANTS

The competitive research grants will support scientific research work by funding:

1. Procurement of consumables/labware, software & database subscriptions, etc. for use in research by the applicants
2. Research Studies/surveys relating to the proposed research area
3. Prototype development and validation by (applicant) researchers
4. Use of infrastructure/ services within or outside the university
5. Cost of publication and/or protection of intellectual property of research results
6. Submission of research results in scientific forums.

The competitive research grants **will not** support the following:

1. Salary/stipend
2. International travel
3. Office or Lab Equipment procurement
4. Mere attendance at conferences without any presentation of research results by applicants

PROPOSAL SUBMISSION

Mode of submission:

1. Proposals are required to be submitted online only. The applications may be submitted here: <https://rb.gy/0jz31>
2. You must log in with your Gmail account to fill out the online application form.

Type of submission

- The online application will open on **22 May 2023 at 8:00 am** Nepal Time and close on **23 June 2023 at 5:00 pm** Nepal Time.
- Only one application submission per lead applicant will be allowed.
- The Lead applicant can be a co-applicant in an additional application.

General instructions:

- The applications have to be in English
- Only completed forms will be considered

Form Guidelines:

Title Page

- Project Title & Summary
- Duration of the project:

The number of months for the project must be specified. It should not exceed more than 12 months.

- Total budget requested (NPR)

Total budget requirement for the project not exceeding NPR 1,300,000.

Technical Narrative

- Clear project-specific objectives
- A brief overview of the technical approach, the rationale for the approach, and anticipated results and impacts

Timeline

- Schedule or timeline of activities over the life of the project (1 year)

Timelines must include deliverables and milestones of the project for one year.

Budget

The applicant must submit a detailed budget highlighting the details of each cost component for the following in the online application:

1. Procurement of consumables/labware, software & database subscriptions etc., for use in research by the applicants
 2. Research Studies/surveys relating to the proposed research area
 3. Prototype development and validation by (applicant) researchers
 4. Use of infrastructure/ services within or outside the university
 5. Cost of publication and/or protection of intellectual property of research results
 6. Submission of research results in scientific forums.
- Budget Justification of budget expenditures by way of narrative for each expenditure component with the cost elements.

EVALUATION AND DECISION MAKING

The process of evaluation broadly comprises the following steps:

- Complete and compliant proposals will be reviewed and scored to shortlist the eligible proposals.
- External experts will review applications.
- Applicants with tie in scores or applications in which clarifications are needed may be called for a presentation by the committee.
- Final grants will be awarded to selected applicants.

DISBURSEMENT OF GRANTS

Each annual grant disbursement will be disbursed in one or more instalments based on the research plan approved.

The Project reserves the right to modify any terms during the grant, including the scope, amount, duration, criteria for selection, and other terms of the award.

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

1. What are the areas supported under this grant?
Areas of research supported under this grant may relate to any discipline at AFU.
2. What is the duration of the grant?
The duration of the grant is maximum of one year, but it will be decided on case-to-case basis.
3. I'm thinking about applying for Competitive Research Grant. Where should I start?
Please visit <https://rb.gy/0jz31> and apply online. Please upload the details regarding the project, approach and methodology in the prescribed format. If you have any doubts, please email us at: Afufacultyresearch@gmail.com
4. Do I have to use the online application system?
Yes, proposals for this call are only accepted when submitted by filling the Google form here: <https://rb.gy/0jz31>.
5. Are there deadlines for submitting applications?
Yes, the deadline for this application is **23 June 2023**. As our deadlines are strict, please be sure to submit before the specific time, which is 5pm Nepal Time. Any applications submitted after the cut-off time will automatically be deferred to the next round of applications.
6. When can I submit my application?
Applications will be accepted once the call is active from 22 May till the submission deadline on 23 June 2023, 5:00 pm Nepal time. In order to avoid last minute technical challenges, we advise filing of the application ahead of the deadline.
7. Can I submit more than one application at the same time?
No. We do not accept more than one application at a time from any faculty as a lead researcher.
8. Can I submit the application with a co-applicant?
Yes, you may submit your application with a co-applicant. Having a co-applicant is optional and not mandatory.
9. Can I make updates to my application after submission?
No, you cannot update an application once it has been submitted.
10. What needs to be included as part of my application?
A complete application will include filing the details in the online form including:
 - a. Proposed project summary
 - b. Technical approach
 - c. Timelines for the project
 - d. Budget of the project
11. Should I include supplementary materials?
No, you should not include any materials in your proposal other than those details listed above.
12. Can I request funding for a project I am already working on?
Yes. But the objective of the current proposal should be aimed at research elements that are not funded by any other agency.
13. What are the maximum budget amounts of funding for each proposal?
Each proposal, if selected will receive a maximum funding of NPR 1,30,000.

14. Are there budget restrictions on salary or other forms of support?
The budget may be used for services but not for salaries or equipment (lab & office). The grant will not support international travel. It will only support the travels approved in the proposal.
15. Does the Grant fund conferences and workshops?
The Grant does not support travel to international conferences and mere participation in conferences. But the grant will support conferences where the applicant is presenting their work.
16. How does Competitive Research Grant select grantees?
The award will be based on competitive review process.
17. When can I get to know the final decision made by the evaluation Panel?
After the applications close, the panel's final decision will be announced on the website.
18. Will I have to present my proposal?
Only few applicants, in case of a tie or if any clarifications are needed by the review committee, may be invited to present their proposal.
19. What are the expectations if I am selected for the grant?
Successful applicants whose proposals are selected for funding support and who successfully complete an internal due diligence check will be expected to sign a contract which memorializes the terms and conditions of the award. Once the contract is signed, you will be expected to submit quarterly progress reports, and a final report 12 months after the project's completion date.
20. I have another question that is not listed in the FAQ, who should I contact?
If you have further questions, please contact us by email at Afufacultyresearch@gmail.com.
Alternatively, you may attend the online Zoom Q&A session scheduled on 8 June 2023. The details of the Q&A session are below:
Date: 8 June 2023, Thursday
Time: 2 pm – 4 pm Nepal Time
Zoom Link:
<https://us06web.zoom.us/j/82608817193?pwd=bmZrQVpGODRRQlZzSkIHWUVzOHdBT09>
Meeting ID: 826 0881 7193