



2021 Guidelines
for
Academic Consortium for the 21st Century (AC21)
Special Project Fund

*-Focusing on thematic areas from the
United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (UNSDGs)-*

Goal #3 Good Health and Well- being

Goal #7 Affordable and Clean Energy

Goal #9 Industry, Innovation, and Infrastructure

(REVISED: May 2020)

Application Period:

October 1, 2020 to December 15, 2020

AC21 Special Project Fund

1. Purpose

The AC21 Special Project Fund (SPF) was created to promote the development of research and educational exchanges between AC21 members by providing "seed funding" for a variety of collaborative projects and activities in research as well as in learning and teaching to promote scholarly engagement. In order to seek solutions for the global challenges that we face, the AC21 aims to incorporate the United Nation's Sustainable Development Goals (UNSDGs) as a framework for all AC21 activities and efforts.

Activities funded by the AC21 SPF can include the organization of symposia, workshops, educational (or training) projects, as well as research projects that attempt to include as wide a circle of contacts and participants as possible (partners in higher education or industry, general public) and that aim at laying the foundation for enhanced cooperation in the future.

2. Application Eligibility

AC21 SPF seed funding will only support projects that aim to initiate new or novel collaboration. Projects that have already received AC21 funding are not eligible for additional funding in a future cycle, however successful projects leads or participants are not disqualified from future AC21 SPF applications.

Project lead(s) must be academic staff members of an eligible AC21 member institution who hold faculty positions or the equivalent. Administrative or professional staff (e.g. international office, innovation office, etc.) may contribute to the development and implementation of an AC21 SPF proposal. Additionally, input from students may be considered for a proposal, but students are not eligible to apply for the AC21 SPF.

AC21 member institutions with outstanding unpaid membership dues (as of September 30 each year) are ineligible to apply for the AC21 SPF, nor should be included as a potential project partner (see 5. Requirements and Restrictions, 4) Regarding "*partners*"). A list of AC21 members eligible for this year's SPF can be found in the Appendix on page 7.

3. SPF Award

- The award will range from USD \$12,000 to USD \$15,000, depending on the content of the proposal's budget
- The number of AC21 SPF awards per year should range from three to five, based on the review results that the proposals demonstrate high standards across all criteria in **7. Review/Selection Process**.
- To be awarded in February, as a single payment, to a designated bank account

4. Application Period

October 1, 2020 to December 15, 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 Lead who acts as a representative applicant to fill out and sign the Application Form. The Project Lead's university shall be regarded as the lead university pertaining to the project.
- 3) Applications should include:
 - a) a completed Application Form including signatures (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 as *partners*. In addition, non-AC21 organizations may be involved such as:
 - Universities and research institutions
 - Industry
 - Governmental / intergovernmental organizations (incl. NPO, INGO etc.)
 - Local and regional governments and councils
- 5) In order to avoid any confusion or multiple submissions, Project Leads shall submit a complete set of application materials to their affiliated university's **AC21 Communicator (see page 8)**, who shall then submit it to the AC21 General Secretariat.

6. Thematic areas

Thematic areas for the 2021 AC21 SPF should reflect how the proposed activities relate to one of the three identified UN SDG's. Applicants can select the most appropriate UN SDG in the application form (please choose one that best fits your proposal). Additionally, please elaborate the potential impact within the proposal narrative (Section 1: Contribution to AC21 activities)

For this cycle, the following three UN SDGs will be addressed:

- Goal #3 Good Health and Well-being
- Goal #7 Affordable and Clean Energy
- Goal #9 Industry, Innovation, and Infrastructure

Please refer to the UN website for details about the UN SDG's

<<https://www.un.org/sustainabledevelopment/sustainable-development-goals/>>.

7. Review/Selection Process

- 1) All applications will be reviewed and scored by the AC21 Steering Committee (STC), in accordance with the criteria and weighting described below.
- 2) Based on the STC's evaluations, the General Secretariat will announce the final selection results to the applicants in late February.

[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? How does this project relate to the appropriate UN SDG?
- **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? Items not be included in the budget plan are specified in **9. Guidelines for Budget Use (see page 4)**.
- **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?

8. Project Examples (all proposals should reflect contribution to UN SDGs)

- | | |
|--|--|
| ✓ Forum for graduate students | ✓ Joint research between small groups of researchers |
| ✓ International forums | ✓ Seed funds for educational projects |
| ✓ Workshops | ✓ Funds for startup long-term research projects or future research centers |
| ✓ Joint symposia related to certain research areas | |

9. Guidelines for Budget Use

- 1) Expenses may include:
 - Forum expenses
 - Travel, food and lodging expenses
 - Stationary and other consumables
 - Honorarium (lecturers, external speakers, debate moderators)
 - Other costs directly related to the project
- 2) Expenses may **NOT** include:
 - Salaries (for example event organizers, web designers or student assistants)
 - Scholarship for students
 - Students' course fees
 - Office and conference equipment (PCs, projectors, furniture, etc.)
 - Indirect costs (overheads, facilities and administrative costs, analysis and communication, external audit etc.)

✂Contact the AC21 General Secretariat for inquiries.

10. Timeline

Oct. 1, 2020 - Dec. 15, 2020	Application period for AC21 SPF 2021
Jan-Feb, 2021	Evaluation / selection period
Feb, 2021	Announcement
March 1, 2021 - February 28, 2022 (NOTE: Call for SPF 2022 begins Oct.1, 2021)	Grant period
September 1, 2021	Submission 1
March 1, 2022	Submission 2
May 1, 2022	Submission 3

11. Fund Recipient Obligations

- 1) Submission 1: **by September 1, 2021**
Progress report (Template 1)
- 2) Submission 2: **by March 1, 2022**
Article for the AC21 Newsletter (Template 2)
- 3) Submission 3: **by May 1, 2022**
 1. **Final project report** (Template 3)
 2. **Final financial report** (Template 4)

NOTE: Failing to submit these documents will render applicants' ineligible for future applications.
- 4) Fund Recipients are requested to acknowledge the support received from AC21 in presentations, publications, events and publicity materials stemming from project activities. (e.g. AC21 logos to be placed on necessary documents)

Please download report templates from the AC21 website
< <http://www.ac21.org/english/activities/special/> >

12. 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

13. Submission

Applicants (Project Lead) 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 December 15, 2020. The submission should be made via email both in **original (MS Word, Excel, etc.) and PDF** formats.

Appendix

AC21 Member Institutions eligible for SPF 2021 applications (As of October 1, 2020)

Australia	The University of Adelaide
China	Jilin University
	Nanjing University
	Northeastern University
	Tongji University
France	The University of Strasbourg
Germany	University of Freiburg
Japan	Nagoya University
New Zealand	University of Canterbury
South Africa	Stellenbosch University
Thailand	Kasetsart University
U.S.A.	North Carolina State University