

REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS (RFP)
Release Date: August 31, 2012

Texas A&M University-CONACYT: *Collaborative Research Grant Program*

Deadlines:

Letter of Intent (Required): September 19, 2012, 12:00 p.m. (CST)

Full Proposal: November 2, 2012, 12:00 p.m. (CST)

Introduction

Texas A&M University and the Consejo Nacional de Ciencia y Tecnología (CONACYT) are pleased to announce a program to encourage research collaborations between faculty at Texas A&M University and faculty at higher education institutions in Mexico or CONACYT research centers. The program aims to facilitate faculty-to-faculty collaboration and to further research ties yielding preliminary results that will enable joint applications to various extramural funding programs.

Types of Awards

Principal investigators may apply for a Regular Research Award providing up to \$24,000 in joint funding **or** a Special Research Project Award providing up to \$75,000 in joint funding. PIs may not submit proposals to both award programs.

Regular Research Awards are intended to provide support for projects that advance scientific knowledge and will lay the basis for proposals to external funding agencies by one or both PIs. Up to 10 regular research awards will be made under current funding plans.

Special Research Project Awards are intended to provide support for projects that build on existing extramurally funded research activities. PIs will need to demonstrate that a Special Research Project Award will result in a sustained bi-national research project supported by external funding. The immediate result of the award is expected to be a highly competitive proposal to an external funding agency and commercial applications, patents, or high impact publications in leading professional journals or books. A maximum of 2 special research project awards will be made under current funding plans.

Terms of the Award

This program is open to all areas of research that are mutually supported by the CONACYT and Texas A&M University.

The award must involve a joint research project directed by two principal investigators – one from Texas A&M University and one from a higher education institution in Mexico or CONACYT research center.

A research award is for a period of one year beginning January 14, 2013. PIs may request a six-month, no-cost extension with satisfactory progress on the project.

Upon completion of the 12-month project, the principal investigators are required to file a report on progress of the research project. PIs must file a final report 36 months after receipt of the award that summarize the status of the project and presents evidence that they are seeking additional funding to continue the research program.

Eligibility

A principal investigator (PI) is required from both Texas A&M University and a higher education institution from Mexico or a CONACYT research center. The PI from the United States must be a tenured or tenure-track faculty member at Texas A&M University. The PI from Mexico must: (1) be part of the National System for Researchers (SNI), and (2) be a full-time faculty member from any institution of higher education in Mexico or a CONACYT research center that is registered in El Registro Nacional de Instituciones y Empresas Científicas y Tecnológicas (RENIECYT). Other investigators may include faculty from a higher education institute in Mexico or from The Texas A&M University System, and projects may include postdoctoral students, graduate students, or research staff. In addition to the two lead PIs, up to six other investigators are allowed for each proposal.

In contrast to eligibility in previous Texas A&M – CONACYT research collaboration programs, a NEW feature of this program is that the collaborating PI in Mexico must be a principal or co-principal investigator for a CONACYT grant received in the previous five years. The Texas A&M University investigator must be a principal or co-principal investigator for a competitive award from a federal agency within the previous five years.

PIs are limited to one submission each per year. Any individual PI is precluded from receiving an award in two successive years.

Deadlines

Letter of Intent: September 19, 2012. A Letter of Intent must be received by 12:00 p.m. Central Standard Time. It must be e-mailed to conacyt@tamu.edu. **A letter of intent (in English) is a requirement for eligibility to submit a full proposal. Only one LOI is required, and it may be signed by only one PI.**

Invitation to Submit Full Proposal: October 1, 2012. PIs will be notified via email if they are invited to submit a full proposal.

Full Proposals: November 2, 2012. Full proposals (in English) must be submitted, routed electronically for appropriate signatures, and received by 12:00 p.m. Central Standard Time. **No late applications will be accepted. See “Online Submission Process” instructions on page 5.**

Notification of Awards: December 10, 2012. Notification of awards will be made electronically.

Availability of Funds: January 7, 2012. Funds will be made available by this date. Any compliance issues must be cleared and investigators from Mexico must provide wire transfer information before transfer of funds can occur. It is helpful for Mexican investigators to have their financial information ready to submit if awarded. If we do not receive this information when requested, there may be a delay in the transfer of funds and the project will be placed on hold.

Formatting Guidelines

The letter of intent, abstract, and project narrative should be prepared using Times New Roman 12-pt font, single spaced, with one-inch margins. Please insert the page number as a footer at ½-inch from the bottom of the page.

Letter of Intent Instructions

To be eligible to submit a full proposal, a letter of intent (LOI) is **required** (in English). Only one LOI is required, and it may be signed by only one PI. LOIs enable Texas A&M University and CONACYT to verify eligibility of the PIs. PIs should submit LOIs as early as possible in advance of the due date.

The LOI must include the following (all in English):

- **Type of Award** – Indicate whether the proposal will be for a **Regular Research Award** or a **Special Research Project Award**
- **Abstract** – A brief **one-page** summary describing the project's objectives; proposed methodology; anticipated results in layman's terms; and possible extramural funding sources for continuation of the project. The abstract must be in English.
- **Title** – Proposed title of project.
- **PI Information** – Detailed contact information for the lead PIs, including:
 - Names of the Texas A&M and Mexican principal investigators
 - PI titles and positions, including full name of the higher education institution in Mexico or CONACYT research center, followed by acronym, and the **RENIECYT registration number** of the Mexican institution.
 - The CONACYT grant number for grant awarded to the Mexican PI within the previous three years
 - Information regarding the competitive award to the Texas A&M University PI within the previous three years
 - Contact Information for PIs – mailing addresses, phone and fax numbers, and e-mail addresses
 - Names of other investigators and institutions

The letter of intent must be submitted via e-mail to conacyt@tamu.edu no later than 12:00 p.m. Central Standard Time on September 19, 2012

Full Proposal Instructions

All proposals submitted for the *Collaborative Research Grant Program* must be submitted electronically using the online application system at <https://eproposal.tamu.edu>. A proposal will consist of the information listed below and should be in English. The abstract, project description, investigator resumes, and current and pending support. PIs may submit a proposal that is a revision of an **unfunded** proposal that was submitted in prior Texas A&M University-CONACYT *Collaborative Research Grant Program* competition. PIs should specify what changes have been made in the revised proposal that address reviewer comments. **Failure to follow the guidelines will automatically disqualify a proposal without a scientific review.**

General Information (online): Contact information for each investigator (limit 6), compliance reporting, key words for project, and report codes must be included.

- **Type of Award** – Indicate whether the proposal will be for a **Regular Research Award** or a **Special Research Project Award**
- **Abstract** (upload): A brief **one-page** summary describing the project's objectives, methodology, and anticipated results in layman's terms is to be included. **Please** include the title of the proposal.
- **Project Description** (upload): The project narrative is limited to **eight pages** (note: the average submission is 5-6 pages). The narrative should include any illustrations, figures, data, or other information and should address the following details in the order listed. Literature cited or references are not included within the 8-page limit.

Use the following bold headings within the proposal text.

1. **Project Overview**
 - a. **Scientific or Scholarly Merit and Impact.** State the specific objectives of the project. Explain the scientific or technological significance of the work and its possible importance in economic, social, or other terms.
 - b. **Bi-national Problems.** Provide evidence that project has direct application to solving bi-national problems. As appropriate, describe the project's importance to solving industrial, governmental, or societal problems.
 - c. **Anticipated Results.** Describe the anticipated results of the project.
 - d. **Future Funding.** Outline specifically the likely sources of future external funding to sustain this collaborative relationship.
2. **Qualifications and Balance of PIs and Research Team/Existing Inter-Institutional Relationships.** Identify the role of both PIs and any other members of the research teams involved in the project. If applicable, the PIs should demonstrate evidence of an existing inter-institutional relationship. If graduate or post-doctoral students are involved, list their names and university/program affiliations. Also describe how the project is relevant to their graduate study and what provisions have been made to supervise their participation. *Students already funded by CONACYT are not eligible for additional funding through this program.*
3. **Methods.** Describe the work to be performed, the tasks of each person, and the timeline for the project.
 4. **Future Funding Potential.** For **Regular Research Award** proposals include a plan for continued cooperation for research and plans to seek additional funding from other sources. For **Special Research Project Award** proposals, PIs must provide detailed discussions of related extramurally funded research and contacts between funding agency personnel and the PIs, explain how the award will enhance the competitiveness of a subsequent proposal, and what extramural programs will be the targets for subsequent funding proposals.
- **References Cited:** Please list publications or literature cited. This is not included within the project narrative 8-page limit.
- **Investigator Resumes** (upload): Resumes (two-page maximum) for all investigators should be attached to the application. Resumes should not exceed the two-page limit.

- **Funding: Current and Pending** (upload): List the source, title, date, and amount of internal and external funding support received or pending during the previous three years (for all investigators) *relevant* to the project.
- **Industry or Government Agency Partner** (online): If industry or government agency partners are to be involved with the project, please include a description of the partner's role and support for the project. A letter of support from the proposed partner must be included in the submission.
- **Budget** (online): Not to exceed \$24,000 for Regular Research Awards and \$75,000 for Special Research Project Awards (see budget criteria below).
- **Budget Justification** (online): Specifically itemize each budgeted item, especially graduate participation. The PIs must agree upon and specify how funding will be spent at their respective institutions. If there are matching funds, please include details in this section.
- **Financial Contacts** (online): Include the contact name, phone number, and email address for financial contacts at Texas A&M (departmental business administrator) and the Mexican higher education institution or CONACYT research center. Mexican investigators must provide wire transfer information before transfer of funds can occur. It is helpful for the Mexican investigators to have their financial information ready to submit if awarded. If we do not receive this information when requested, we cannot guarantee funds will be transferred by posted date.

All letters of support should be addressed to the following and uploaded with the full proposal using the online application system:

Review Committee

Texas A&M- CONACYT: *Collaborative Research Grant Program*
 c/o Texas A&M University
 1112 TAMU
 312 Jack K. Williams Administration Building
 College Station, Texas 77843-1112

Online Submission Process

Online Submission Process: All proposals submitted for the Collaborative Research Grant Program must be submitted in English electronically using the online application system, which is available to submit proposals at: <https://eproposal.tamu.edu>. This site is password protected. Once logged in, select which type of application, either: "CONACYT – Regular Research Award" or "CONACYT – Special Research Project Award."

Texas A&M University tenure or tenure track faculty PIs may use their NetID to access the system.

PIs from Mexico will be given instructions on how to create a logon ID and password once a letter of intent is submitted and accepted. The PI from Mexico must set up an account in the online system. If the Mexican PI has previously submitted a proposal through this system, the same username and password is valid, and they will not receive instructions.

More information can be found here: <http://conacyt.tamu.edu/how-to-use-igps>.

Evaluation of Proposals

A joint review committee will evaluate all proposals according to the following review criteria:

- Scientific or scholarly merit and impact (50%)
- Qualifications of and balance between the PIs and/or research teams, including graduate student participation (25%)
- Plans for and the likelihood for sustained extramural funding after receipt of the Texas A&M – CONACYT award (25%)

The Review Committee: The Review Committee will consist of representatives from both Texas A&M University and CONACYT. Reviewers representing CONACYT will be drawn from the “Registro CONACYT de Evaluadores Acreditados” officials, who are selected by the Deputy Director General for Science. Texas A&M University administrators and faculty are selected for the Review Committee by the Vice President for Research. The Review Committee is scheduled to meet November/December 2012. As appropriate, special peer review panels will be appointed to review Special Research Project Award proposals.

Notification of Award: Recipients will be notified via e-mail December 10, 2012.

Transfer of Funds: The transfer of funds, awarded in U.S. dollars, will be made by **January 7, 2013**, assuming all financial information is provided by the PIs and all compliance issues have been cleared by the appropriate compliance committee(s). *Failure to provide timely and accurate financial contact information will result in delayed transfer of funds.*

Budget

Grants issued under this agreement will fund research projects up to \$24,000 for **Regular Research Awards** and \$75,000 for **Special Research Project Awards** with a project duration of up to 12 months. The project may receive a six month no-cost extension upon request from both PIs and approval by the Texas A&M and CONACYT officials. The budget should clearly indicate how the funds will be distributed between Texas A&M University and the Mexican higher education institution or CONACYT research center in the budget justification section. Eligible costs are limited to:

- **Travel:** This includes travel-related expenses for PIs and/or other members of the research teams to visit partner institutions or potential funding sources and registration fees for professional conferences and meetings. As one of the underlying aspects of this cooperative program, bi-directional travel by the PIs, or senior members of the research team, is expected. Each home institution is responsible for providing medical insurance during travel. *Expenses incurred on behalf of the State and submitted for payment should be reasonable, necessary and appropriate. Employees or prospective employees may be reimbursed for the actual cost of meals and lodging on overnight travel. Other allowable expenses include: transportation costs (both ground and air). Expenses for incidental lodging costs should be excluded, such as for laundry care or movie rentals.*
- **Graduate student support:** The award money can be used to fund graduate students' salaries and tuition payments; however, *this project will not fund salaries for investigators, undergraduate students, or postdoctoral students.* The funds for these grants are not fringe-bearing. Fringe benefits must be included for all U.S. graduate student salaries listed in the budget. Instructions for calculating fringe benefits are located at: <http://finance.tamu.edu/budget/guidelines/FY2013-Budget-Guidelines.pdf>.

- **Symposia/Workshops:** Expenses related to hosting focused symposia and workshops on topics fall within the scope of this initiative.
- **Scientific equipment and supplies:** Personal computers **cannot** be purchased with this award.
- **Facilities and Administrative Costs** (F&A Costs/Indirect Costs) are not allowed.
- **Matching support** is not required, but it is strongly encouraged.

Reporting Requirements

Award recipients are required to submit two reports.

The first report is due after the 12-month funding period and should:

- 1) describe accomplishments, findings, or discoveries that may be of interest to decision makers and the general public,
- 2) identify additional funding that has been received or requested as a result of this grant,
- 3) identify the granting agencies, industry sponsors, or end users to which a future proposal has been or will be submitted and the date of submission, and
- 4) identify any publications that have resulted from this grant.

The Report form is available at: <http://vpr.tamu.edu/funding/conacyt/finalreport.doc>.

The second report is due 24 months after the first report. It should update all information submitted on the first report and, based on the preliminary work supported by this award, indicate proposals submitted and award(s) have been received, as well as the source of funding.

PIs who fail to submit the final reports showing evidence that they have submitted a proposal to an external granting agency or sponsor may not be eligible to participate in future applications to the *Collaborative Research Grant Program*.

Additionally, PIs are required to present the results of their research at a symposium or workshop sponsored under this program after the 12-month funding period to present the results of their research. Funding for this meeting will come from the Texas A&M University-CONACYT Research Agreement pool of funds and is not required to be included in the project budget. In addition, during the project period, grant recipients are encouraged to participate in seminars, conferences, and educational activities that would advance their joint research program.

Program Contacts

Questions concerning the Texas A&M University-CONACYT: *Collaborative Research Grant Program* should be directed to:

Texas A&M University: Ms. Monica Holder (m-holder@tamu.edu or conacyt@tamu.edu; 979.847.9391)

CONACYT: Dr. Luis Humberto Fabila Castillo (lfabila@conacyt.mx (55) 5322 7700 Ext. 6100)

Information on Internet: Information about the CONACYT-Texas A&M Agreement and the *Collaborative Research Grant Program* is available on the Web at:

- CONACYT's Web site: <http://www.conacyt.mx>
- Texas A&M University's Web site: <http://conacyt.tamu.edu>

Both of these web sites will have the following information easily and readily available:

- Request for Proposals
- Frequently Asked Questions and Answers
- Official Agreement
- Administrative Support
- Online Help