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للعلوم الاجتماعية

Arab Council
for the Social Sciences

Conseil Arabe
pour les Sciences Sociales

ACSS Research Grants Program

Cycle 5 (2018-2019)

"Environmentalism, Impoverishment and Social Justice Movements:

Interdisciplinary Perspectives"

Frequently Asked Questions for Team Projects

Contents

Eligibility 3

If I have not yet obtained my PhD at the time of application, can I still apply to RGP4? 3

Can I apply as part of a research team? 3

If I am not a PhD student, can I still apply as part of a research team? 3

How many investigators can the research team include? 3

Will the ACSS RGP only fund projects that implement the research within the Arab region? 3

Does the ACSS RGP have geographical restrictions within the Arab region? 4

Your Call for Proposals specifically mentions the social sciences. Will you consider proposals from researchers in the humanities? 4

What is the expected duration of research? 4

Am I eligible to apply, if I have already benefited from a grant from the ACSS? 4

Am I eligible to apply for the ACSS RGP grant, if I am from an Arab country but not "Arab" or do not hold the citizenship of an Arab country? 4

Am I eligible to apply for the ACSS RGP grant, if I am a citizen of an Arab country but am living abroad, outside of the Arab region? 5

Am I eligible to apply for the ACSS RGP grant, if I am originally from an Arab country, or my parents/ancestors were from an Arab country but I no longer hold an Arab citizenship and am living outside of the Arab region? 5

Am I eligible to apply for the ACSS RGP grant, if I am not from an Arab country however I am a specialist interested and working on the Arab region? 5

Am I eligible to apply if the research is a "pilot" for a major research that will follow? 5

Will the ACSS RGP only fund projects based on empirical research? 5

Will the ACSS RGP only fund research proposals adopting certain methods? 6

Application Process 6

How do I apply for the ACSS RGP grant? 6

It is not possible for me to submit an online application due to technical difficulties. Does this mean I cannot apply for the RGP research grant? 6

When is the deadline for RGP Cycle 5 application? 6

Do I need to complete the online application all at once? 6

Can I ask for feedback on my application before submission? 7

If my application is not successful, will I receive feedback as to why my proposal was not selected? ... 7

Application Components 7

Who should start filling out the online application form? 7

What information will be required to complete application? 8

Do I have to submit my budget in the form provided? 9

Do I have to submit the Project Timeline and Outputs Form provided? 9

The Application Form only allows me to enter the information for four researchers. Is this the maximum size of a research team? What if I would like to have a larger team of researchers? 10

Do I need to provide written references? 10

What should the recommendation letter include? 10

How will I know that my application is complete? 10

Grant Details 11

When will award announcements be made? 11

What happens after I am selected for a grant? 11

Do I have to attend the Spring 2018 Workshop during the ACSS Research Forum? 11

Who will be invited from my team to the ACSS Research Forum and Conference? 12

When can I begin my ACSS RGP research, if I am selected for funding? 12

When must I end all ACSS-funded activities, if I am selected for funding? 12

What is the ACSS RGP grant amount? 12

What does the RGP grant cover? Conversely, what doesn't the RGP grant cover? 12

I am applying for multiple grants. Should I be awarded the ACSS grant, can I also accept funding from other sources? 13

Can I dedicate a portion of the grant to stipends or salary replacements for myself? 13

Do ACSS grants go directly to the researchers or are they channeled through a university? 13

When applying as a member of a team, does each member of the team receive funds from the ACSS? 13

What will be required of me once I am awarded RGP funding? 13

What ACSS-organized events am I expected to attend? 14

Will the ACSS share the information submitted in the proposal with other bodies? 15

Glossary:

Research Grants Program: RGP

Eligibility

If I have not yet obtained my PhD at the time of application, can I still apply to RGP4?

Yes, but only if you expect to be awarded the PhD before January 2018. Applicants must have a PhD in hand by January 1, 2018.

Can I apply as part of a research team?

Yes. The Research Grants Program is open to individual and team projects.

If I am not a PhD student, can I still apply as part of a research team?

Yes. Applicants with a master's degree or who are in a PhD program are welcome to apply as part of research teams where the lead researcher is a more senior scholar who holds a PhD. If the co-investigator is in a PhD program the proposal should state clearly how the proposed research relates (or not) to the PhD program.

How many investigators can the research team include?

The research team can be comprised of a maximum of four members and a minimum of two members. Only one researcher can be the principal investigator; other members will be considered co-investigators.

Will the ACSS RGP only fund projects that implement the research within the Arab region?

Yes and no. Proposals that focus predominantly on locations in the Arab region are encouraged. Proposals suggesting comparative research between the Arab region and elsewhere are welcome; however the majority of the ACSS funds should go towards covering the research costs in the Arab region.

Does the ACSS RGP have geographical restrictions within the Arab region?

No. The ACSS funds research in any part of the Arab region as well as in multiple sites within the region.

Your Call for Proposals specifically mentions the social sciences. Will you consider proposals from researchers in the humanities?

Yes, the ACSS employs a broad definition of the social sciences that intersects with humanities disciplines. This includes the core social sciences such as anthropology, demography, economics, political science, psychology sociology. Furthermore "allied disciplines" such as art, architecture, geography, history, law, literature, linguistics, philosophy and public health and interdisciplinary fields such as gender studies, cultural studies, media studies, development studies and urban studies are also eligible for funding.

What is the expected duration of research?

The ACSS RGP provides support for a maximum of 18 months of research. The ACSS-funded research must take place in the period between April 15, 2018 and October 15, 2019.

Am I eligible to apply, if I have already benefited from a grant from the ACSS?

ACSS grantees (principal and co-investigators) who have benefited previously from the Research Grants Program are only eligible if their grants were closed before March 2016. All other grantees from the different ACSS programs (New Paradigms Factory, Postdoctoral Fellowship, Small Grants Program, and Working Groups) can apply if their grants are closed.

Am I eligible to apply for the ACSS RGP grant, if I am from an Arab country but not "Arab" or do not hold the citizenship of an Arab country?

Yes. The ACSS welcomes proposals from researchers in the social sciences who are from an Arab country[1] or resident in an Arab country, even if they are citizenless or not regarded as

[1] Algeria, Bahrain, Comoros, Djibouti, Egypt, Iraq, Jordan, Kuwait, Lebanon, Libya, Mauritania, Morocco, Oman, Palestine, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, Somalia, Sudan, Syria, Tunisia, United Arab Emirates and Yemen.

"Arab" (by others or themselves). Applicants are eligible if they are nationals (not necessary citizens) of an Arab country living in the Arab region or the diaspora (for example citizenless Palestinians, Kurds, or other individuals/groups denied citizenship for political reasons).

Am I eligible to apply for the ACSS RGP grant, if I am a citizen of an Arab country but am living abroad, outside of the Arab region?

Yes, however, priority in the selection process will be given to those currently residing in the Arab region. The online application form will ask for details of your previous and current citizenship and residence.

Am I eligible to apply for the ACSS RGP grant, if I am originally from an Arab country, or my parents/ancestors were from an Arab country but I no longer hold an Arab citizenship and am living outside of the Arab region?

Yes, but the application form will ask you to specify your relationship to the region. Only researchers with robust research experience and engagement in the region will be considered. Priority in the selection process will be given to those currently residing in the Arab region.

Am I eligible to apply for the ACSS RGP grant, if I am not from an Arab country however I am a specialist interested and working on the Arab region?

No. Unfortunately the ACSS RGP grant is not open for this category of researchers.

Am I eligible to apply if the research is a "pilot" for a major research that will follow?

Yes. The ACSS RGP grant is open for research projects at any stage of their development including the "pilot" phase.

Will the ACSS RGP only fund projects based on empirical research?

Yes. The ACSS RGP is interested in research projects that are grounded in empirical research, and their analysis and write up, but not necessarily dependent on field work. Other data sources might include archival and textual analysis among others.

Will the ACSS RGP only fund research proposals adopting certain methods?

No. The ACSS RGP grant is open to proposals suggesting research designs using a variety of qualitative and/or quantitative research methods.

Application Process

How do I apply for the ACSS RGP grant?

You must submit an online application. This will be available through the ACSS website starting August 10, 2017.

It is not possible for me to submit an online application due to technical difficulties. Does this mean I cannot apply for the RGP research grant?

No. In extenuating circumstances, the ACSS will accept a paper application. If you wish to discuss this option, you must contact ACSS staff (grants@theacss.org) well in advance of the November 27, 2017 deadline to obtain additional instructions on how to submit a non-electronic application.

When is the deadline for RGP Cycle 5 application?

You must complete and submit your online application before 11:00 pm (Al-Quds/Beirut Time) on November 27, 2017. The principal investigator of the team project is required to start with the application process at least two weeks before the application deadline because the online application form will require several verifications from co-investigators. In case you face any technical problem using the online application system, make sure to email all the requirements to grants@theacss.org by the deadline.

Do I need to complete the online application all at once?

No. You may return to the online application as many times as necessary between August 10, 2017 and the application deadline. Be sure to save your work after you finish each section of

the application – the online application will contain detailed instructions on how to do this. Once the application has been submitted, you will no longer be able to alter the information.

Can I ask for feedback on my application before submission?

Yes and no. The ACSS will provide general feedback on whether your proposed research subject falls under the call's theme, fulfils eligibility requirements and specific issues regarding the application materials requested. However, you will not be provided with feedback on the content and quality of your application and narrative proposal.

If my application is not successful, will I receive feedback as to why my proposal was not selected?

No. Unfortunately, we are unable to provide feedback on unsuccessful applications.

As stated in the call for proposals, the criteria for proposal evaluation are:

1- Contribution to Knowledge (Research Question/ Significance and Originality)
2- Theoretical and Conceptual Coherence and Literature Review
3- Methodology including research ethics
4- Outputs (Dissemination/ Potential Impact)
5- Feasibility (CVs/ Researchers' Qualifications/ Timeline)

Application Components

Who should start filling out the online application form?

The principal investigator is responsible for starting and submitting the online application form. In case of team projects, the principal investigator should consider the following steps:

1) Start the application.
2) Create their own profile, including name, countries of citizenship, contact email, current position/institution, brief 100 word bio, education, language proficiency, employment history, relevant publications.

3) Enter the names and contact details of the co-investigators. The co-investigators will then receive a message notifying them that they have been added to the research project, and requesting that they create their own profiles. The message will expire within a week. The principal investigator should follow up with co-investigators so that they complete their profiles on time. **The principal investigator will not be able to complete and submit the application until all co-investigators have created their profiles.**
4) Attach the required documents and appendices.
5) Submit the application.

What information will be required to complete application?

You will be required to submit the following:

- **Online application form**: As a researcher seeking ACSS funding, the online application form will ask you to specify the contact and biographical details, as well as project details, including the following:
    - Project details (title, 250 word abstract, duration and location(s) of research)
    - Project history (if relevant) including earlier phases of the project and future expectations as well as collaborators who may not be participating in this phase of the project
    - Proposed outputs of the project, which may include publications (web and print); theses and dissertations, scholarly resources (e.g. websites, curricula, bibliographies), visual representations including exhibitions, film and other media.
    - Personal and professional details (including name, countries of citizenship, contact email, current position/institution, brief 100 word bio, education, language proficiency, employment history, relevant publications).
    - The name and contact information for one academic referee who can attest to the significance and feasibility of the proposed project. You are required to submit a recommendation letter from this referee.

You will also be asked to upload the following documents to the online application form.

1. **Narrative proposal** (maximum of 15-pages, double-spaced). Please see the ACSS website and Call for Proposals for more details.
2. **Appendix 1: Project Timeline and Outputs Form** (maximum of 2-pages, may be single-spaced). Please see the ACSS website and Call for Proposals for more details.
3. **Appendix 2: Project Budget Form** (completed on the form provided on the website).
4. **Appendix 3:** CVs including a list of publications for all researchers seeking support through the ACSS Research Grants Program.
5. **Appendix 4: Team Member Acknowledgment Form (Only for Team Projects):** All team members are requested to sign this form (electronic signatures or scanned hard copy) to express their commitment to the project and their roles as identified in Appendix 1.
6. **Recommendation letter from the academic referee mentioned in your application.**
7. **Copy of the passport or identification card of each investigator.**

Do I have to submit my budget in the form provided?

Project budgets may only be submitted using the **Project Budget Request Form** provided on the website. If you are not sure of any of the details of your expenses, e.g. when you expect to conduct a field trip or how much tickets cost, please provide as accurate an estimate as possible (e.g. September 2018 or September-October 2018). Incomplete forms will not be considered.
The form includes detailed instructions for its completion, but you may write to us if you have further questions about filling out the form.

Do I have to submit the Project Timeline and Outputs Form provided?

Yes. Please use the form provided for Appendix 1 and follow the guidelines stated in the form. In this form, you are required to mention the division of work between the principal investigators and co-investigators.

The Application Form only allows me to enter the information for four researchers. Is this the maximum size of a research team? What if I would like to have a larger team of researchers?

As a general guideline, we discourage team projects of more than four researchers. However, if you have compelling reasons to include more than four researchers, please explain this in a special note in your proposal and it will be considered by the Selection Committee. Please note that you can add research assistants, consultants, and facilitators (for example: focus group facilitators). The role of the individuals needs to be clearly explained in the methodology section, as well as the timeline and budget.

Do I need to provide written references?

Yes. You need to provide the name and contact details for 1 academic referee, and a written reference letter that you should submit with your application. Please submit your research proposal to your referee so that they can refer to your project in their letter.

What should the recommendation letter include?

The recommendation letter should:

a) Be written by an academic referee and addressed to the Arab Council for the Social Sciences.
b) Be submitted on official letterhead.
c) Address your relevant research experience and educational background to undertake this project.

How will I know that my application is complete?

After you have successfully submitted your application, you will receive a confirmation email from the ACSS.

Grant Details

When will award announcements be made?

All applicants will receive notification emails by February 1, 2018.

What happens after I am selected for a grant?

You will receive a provisional Award Letter confirming your selection and, if applicable, requests for clarification and elaboration from the Selection Committee.

You will then be expected to:

1) Submit a final revised proposal, timeline and budget addressing any issues raised by the Selection Committee by March, 2018.
2) Fill out the ethics questionnaire.
3) Attend a workshop during Spring 2018 where you will meet the Selection Committee members, present your project for feedback and receive orientation about ACSS reporting, financial and ethics guidelines and sign your grant contract. The workshop is part of a larger ACSS event, namely the Third ACSS Research Forum, which will be held during Spring 2018. During this event, you will have the opportunity to meet grantees and coordinators from other ACSS programs. (Costs of attendance at this event should not be budgeted for in the proposals. They will be covered directly by ACSS.)

Do I have to attend the Spring 2018 Workshop during the ACSS Research Forum?

By submitting a grant application, you are expressing your commitment to attend the RGP workshop, if your proposal receives provisional acceptance. All expenses of attending the workshop would be covered separately by the ACSS and will not come out of the grant budget.

Who will be invited from my team to the ACSS Research Forum and Conference?

The ACSS will cover travel and accommodation expenses for two members of the research team: the principal investigator and one co-investigator only.

When can I begin my ACSS RGP research, if I am selected for funding?

ACSS-funded research may begin as early as April 15, 2018 (activities conducted prior to April 15, 2018 will not be supported by the ACSS).

When must I end all ACSS-funded activities, if I am selected for funding?

The RGP grant term will end on October 15, 2019 (project-related activities conducted after October 15, 2019 will not be supported by the ACSS).

What is the ACSS RGP grant amount?

The grant amount will vary depending on the research proposal. The maximum amount for team projects is $50,000 per grant. The Selection Committee will only approve budget requests that are commensurate with the planned activities and expected outputs of the project. The Selection Committee and ACSS staff will review each budget on a case-by-case basis. The awarded budget may not necessarily correspond to the requested one.

What does the RGP grant cover? Conversely, what doesn't the RGP grant cover?

Budgets may include: fieldwork expenses (including accommodation away from the home location), travel and transportation related to the research, living expenses, honoraria for short-term consultants providing specific technical advice, and meetings/workshops costs, as well as purchase of research equipment, software, books, stationery and other supplies. Please note that you must submit receipts of all expenses incurred as part of your financial reporting.

Budgets may not include: university/research center overhead, or travel expenses/ registration fees for conferences and workshops. Under exceptional circumstances, the Selection Committee may approve the dedication of a portion of the grant to stipends or salary

replacements. However, the stipend amount cannot exceed one third of the total requested grant amount.

I am applying for multiple grants. Should I be awarded the ACSS grant, can I also accept funding from other sources?

Yes, but you cannot accept funding from the ACSS and another organization for the same expenses for the same research period. The ACSS will need a clear budget showing which expenses will be covered by which organization. The ACSS may contact the other funding organization in order to clarify the cost-sharing arrangements.

Can I dedicate a portion of the grant to stipends or salary replacements for myself?

The Selection Committee may approve the dedication of a portion of the grant, which is not more than the third of the total amount requested, to stipends or salary replacements for the principal investigator. For example, if the grant amount requested is $39,000, no more than $13,000 can be used to pay for your salary.

Do ACSS grants go directly to the researchers or are they channeled through a university?

The ACSS will follow the researcher's wishes in this regard. However, project funds cannot go towards university overhead.

When applying as a member of a team, does each member of the team receive funds from the ACSS?

When applying for team project grant, the principal investigator receives all the funds, and it is their responsibility to disburse the funds to the members of the team. It is the principal investigator's responsibility to submit all receipts and reports.

What will be required of me once I am awarded RGP funding?

If you are awarded the grant, you will be expected to abide by the following project requirements:

1. Submit a revised proposal, timeline, and budget request by March 2018, responding to requests for clarification or elaboration put forward by the Selection Committee in its preliminary acceptance decision.
2. Fill out the research ethics questionnaire.
3. Sign a contract which specifies the budget, timeline, outputs, and obligations of the researcher(s).
4. Attend a workshop during Spring 2018 to meet the Selection Committee members, present projects for feedback and receive orientation about ACSS reporting, financial and ethics guidelines and sign their grant contracts. The workshop may be part of a larger ACSS event, namely the Third ACSS Research Forum, which will be held during Spring 2018. (Costs of attendance at this event should not be budgeted for in the proposals. They will be covered directly by ACSS.)
5. Attend and present at the Fourth ACSS Conference that will be held in April 2019 in Beirut, Lebanon. (Costs of attendance at this event should not be budgeted for in the proposals. They will be covered directly by ACSS.)
6. Produce project-related content for the ACSS website (such as project descriptions and profiles of researchers)
7. Submit interim narrative and financial reports every four months (number of reports will depend on project duration). Financial reports should include the original receipts for all project expenses.
8. Submit the final narrative and financial reports within 30 days of the end of the grant term.
9. Produce the outputs identified in the submitted proposal in accordance with the project timeline (Appendix 1).

What ACSS-organized events am I expected to attend?

You are required to attend the RGP workshop during Spring 2018, as well as one other event which will be held in 2019 and announced well in advance. The workshop may be part of the ACSS Research Forum to be held in Spring 2018. In addition, the ACSS may organize panels at

conferences and workshops that aim at providing researchers with a platform to discuss or disseminate their project results. Participation in these events would be strongly encouraged but not required.

Will the ACSS share the information submitted in the proposal with other bodies?

By submitting the application, you are granting the ACSS at its own discretion the right to share information with other institutions (including donor agencies) on your research title, objectives, location and the researchers' contact information. In case of compelling circumstances, exceptions can be made on a case by case basis.