

Research & Development Office  
Collaborative Research Project Initiative  
*Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)*

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## Summary

The purpose of this Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ) document is to provide answers to common questions of the Collaborative Research Project Initiative that the RDO expects stakeholders will ask.

## Frequently Asked Questions

### Collaborative Research Project

#### 1. Can a researcher collaborate with international companies?

Yes, researchers may collaborate with international companies but have to be operating in Saudi Arabia. All proponents of the project must take place in Saudi and must have a primary goal of developing and enhancing Saudi research capabilities which will in turn, support society as a whole.

#### 2. Can a researcher engage in more than one Collaborative Research Project?

Yes, a researcher can get involved in three projects during the course of the grant cycle. Researchers are eligible to submit proposals to be a **PI on one project and can be a CO-PI on two.**

#### 3. What is the value of the Collaborative Research Grant?

Grants allocated for each Collaborative Research Project are valued between SAR 200,000 and SAR 500,000 over the course of two to three years, depending on the size and scope of the project.

#### 4. Are there specific fields that will be required to engage in such projects?

The Collaborative Research Project initiative has been developed to give researchers (university) and industry an opportunity to develop impactful research projects. Projects are required to be STEM based and R&D related and priority will be given to industries identified in the Guidelines.

#### 5. Is match funding required by industry?

For this initiative, in order to ensure commitment from the industry partner, it is required for the company to contribute funds and if match funding is provided, the researcher will enhance his/her chances of being selected. The industry partner is required to provide a confirmation of funding contribution or match funding within the Letter of Intent (Stage 1) which is non-binding, and within the binding Letter of Support in the Comprehensive Proposal Application (Stage 2).

#### 6. What should be included in the Expression of Interest Letter of Intent?

A Letter of Intent (LOI) is a short non-binding Letter that precedes the Letter of Support (Stage 2), confirming the industry partner's commitment to the projects.

This Letter of Intent should at-least provide:

- Initial confirmation of intended partnership

- Initial confirmation of intended project
- Initial confirmation of capacity for the project
- Initial confirmation of capabilities to execute the project
- Initial confirmation for match funding and percentage of contribution

## 7. How are such projects communicated to industry?

Researchers wishing to engage in this initiative are responsible for seeking out industry partners who have appropriate and relevant capabilities in the identified research field.

Industry players that wish to engage in such collaborative projects can also increase their chances of getting involved in this initiative by getting in touch with relevant deans or influencers within the universities that may be interested in collaborating on the selected research.

## 8. I am a PI who has an annual contract with the university that can only be renewed for another year, am I still eligible to apply for the collaborative research project.

Yes as long as the academic rank in the contract is assistant professor or above.

## 9. Does the industrial partner contribution have to be in the form of cash to the university, or can it be used to fund some of the industrial partner team who is working on the project w/ the university?

It is not required for the industrial partner contribution to be in the form of cash to the university; it can be used to fund some of the industrial partner team. However, the industry partner should specify the total amount of funding that they will be contributing to the project, and the full breakdown of the funding should be specified in the Comprehensive Proposal (Stage 2) Spend Plan. If some of the contribution will be used to fund the team of researchers, the exact monetary value must be provided based on the number of resources, hours that will be spent on the project and must also provide clear details of their responsibility. Contribution from the industry partner will not be paid directly to the university, the company will specify the expenses to the RDO through the Expenditure Statement provided and the industry partner will be reimbursed accordingly.

## 10. Who dictates/negotiates the IP Ts&Cs, is it the university or MoE?

The Ministry of Education is not responsible for the negotiation of IPs and should be clarified between stakeholders prior to commencing the project to avoid any discrepancies. The industry partner is expected to clarify commercial rights and IP expectations with the university/researcher prior to commencing work on the project. The RDO does not get involved in the contractual agreements between both parties.

## 11. What is the overall timeline for this initiative?

For the Collaborative Research Projects Grant, submission for the EOI is February 21st and the successful candidates will have another 2 months to develop the Comprehensive Proposal (Stage 2). The specific date will be communicated when the candidate has received a notification from the RDO of his/her success in the EOI stage.

## 12. How can an applicant increase his chances of being selected?

The total amount granted for the project from the RDO will be based on the scale of the project, time needed and output expected. The optimal funding distribution for industry and university contribution is 50%/50% and candidates that will have a 50% contribution from industry will increase their chances of being selected.

## 13. I am interested in applying for the Research & Development Office Collaborative Research Project Initiative can you please inform me how I may submit the Letter of Intent and Expression of Interest?

On the RDO initiatives tab, navigate to the university-industry partnership initiative page. A link for Collaborative Research Projects is clearly shown on the page and by clicking on the EOI link, you will be re-directed to the EOI form where you will be able to attach the Letter of Intent at the end of the application.

## 14. What would be the business benefit for the industry for participating in this proposal, in terms of duration (say five years) and exclusive commercial rights?

In regards to the benefit for industry with participating in such projects, the following are only a few of the many benefits companies can realize from collaborating with universities:

- 1- Stimulate companies' internal research and development programs
- 2- University researchers can help industrial scientists identify current research that will be useful for the design and development of innovative processes and potential products
- 3- Reduce the time needed to move a potential product as a result of the project, from the lab to the market
- 4- Enhances a company's reputation
- 5- Result in joint publications which strengthens the company and the university's global position and reach
- 6- Build trade secrets that could lead to new and potentially profitable patents thus becoming industry leaders
- 7- Company employees learn new research techniques with their university partner

## 15. Is there a list of international companies that have operations in the Kingdom?

Any company that falls under the criteria that is specified on the guideline is acceptable