



Research and Development Office  
Ministry of Education



وزارة التعليم  
Ministry of Education

Research & Development Office  
Collaborative Research Project Initiative  
*Guideline*

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## Summary

### Overview

The Research and Development Office (RDO) of the Ministry of Education (MoE) was established in 2017 to transform the Research and Development (R&D) ecosystem through strategic initiatives to enhance the research capacity in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia (KSA).

In this initiative, the RDO aims at funding a number of collaborative research projects between university and industry investigating important R&D related fields in the Kingdom as it moves towards Vision 2030.

Through this process, the RDO signals the importance of Collaborative Research Projects and the importance of strengthening university-industry partnerships in the Kingdom.

### Objectives

Collaborative Research Projects are deemed to accelerate the transfer of knowledge between academic experts and industry. These projects should revolve around the development of world-class research and its translation into practical applications through university-industry collaborative projects. The Collaborative Research Project initiative aims to:

- A. Strengthen the capacity of the R&D ecosystem in KSA to produce high quality research with increased strategic impact
- B. Develop long-term partnerships with industry in conducting R&D that has a joint institutional interest
- C. Enable researchers to work in an industry setting and allow for industry to work in an academic setting to gather skills while fostering knowledge exchange
- D. Promote a sustainable R&D culture of collaboration across disciplines

The initiative will focus on basic and applied research where possible solutions to key challenges and problems are addressed.

### Initiative Outline

The Collaborative Research Project grant is an initiative that aims to enhance research projects between academic partners and the industrial sectors in KSA. Researchers from KSA universities and companies are invited to carry out basic research projects and translate it into applied research that will contribute to solutions to technical issues shared across the industrial sector and society in the region. In addition to solving technical issues, this initiative facilitates a collaboration between both parties to receive feedback and align efforts of research projects from the perspective and knowledge of contrasting sectors.

University researchers and firms sometimes pursue basic research projects, while other times they prefer the higher benefits from applied research projects. This Collaborative Research Project initiative intends for the partnership to select a project that takes into account the interest of both participants and is required to be R&D related. Researchers from KSA universities are invited to submit proposals with an industry partner based in KSA. For a project to be considered eligible, the industry partner is required to contribute or for better chances, match the funding granted and is required to provide a letter of intent and support confirming its commitment to the project.

## Approach

The competition will be open to **researchers/research teams in KSA universities, that partner with industry**. The funding available will be in the form of competitive grants to be selected based on a peer review process, and will represent a substantial investment in growing the Kingdom's R&D network.

A **two-staged application** process is applied where projects are shortlisted based on initial Expressions of Interest (EOI) and given additional time to submit the Comprehensive Research proposal.

Initial EOI would only highlight high-level details on the research question, roles and responsibilities of Principal Investigator (PI) & Co-Principal Investigators (Co-PI), expected benefits (social, economic, etc.), etc and will require the industry partner to submit a high level Letter of Intent displaying their initial, non-binding commitment to the project. This will allow the panel to quickly evaluate initial applications and make a decision on which candidates to shortlist. Comprehensive Research proposal should include all required details about the project, including project management, financials, timeline and the industry partner is required to provide a binding Letter of Support detailing the commitment to the project.

An evaluation method will be developed by the panel to assess applications. Depending on the number of proposals, applicants may have to present to the panel

## Types of Awards

Grant Value	Timeline
SAR 200,000 – SAR 349,999	2 years
SAR 350,000 – SAR 500,000	3 years

### Award: Between SAR 200,000 and 500,000 for 2-3 years

Each project will last for a minimum of 2 years and a maximum of 3 years. The research team involved is responsible for determining the optimal approach in regards to investing the funds allocated for the initiative. The total amount granted by the RDO for each research project will be determined on a project basis. That said, for projects to be considered eligible for this grant, **match funding or at the very least contribution from the industry partner is required**. The more contribution generated from industry, the better the chances will be for the researcher applying for the grant.

All funding requests must be submitted in accordance with the Collaborative Research Project scope, and applicants must submit an outline of the priorities and uses of such funds. Note that the set amount of funding to be distributed at the beginning of the grant may be subject to change in the case that the university or company fail to comply with the Collaborative Research Project Guidelines.

## Eligibility and Governance

This section outlines the eligibility criteria and requirements for some of the key parties involved.

### Eligibility for Funding

#### Project Eligibility

- Projects are required to be STEM based and fields mentioned in the scope are prioritized
- Project must take into account the applicability of the output
- Project should aim to incorporate both basic and applied research, if only basic, the research should contribute to the R&D ecosystem within the Kingdom
- Project should be aligned with national objectives and Vision 2030
- Project must contribute to knowledge and practice

#### Principal Investigators Eligibility

- PI must be established members (Assistant Professor or above) of a **KSA public or private university under MoE (Saudi and non-Saudi)**
- A researcher **can only apply for one project as a PI**
- PI should be the person undertaking responsibility for directing the research and for observing the terms and conditions
- All PIs and named research staff must be able to meet the time commitment to the project as stated in the proposal

#### Co-Principal Investigator Eligibility

- Co-PI must be an established members (PhD student or above) of a **KSA public or private university under MoE (Saudi and non-Saudi)** or if possible, an employee of the industry partner and must have experience in the field of the project
- Can be a Co-PI on **up to two projects**
- Must be able to meet the time commitment to the project as stated in the proposal

#### Industry Partner Eligibility

- Industry Partner must have operations in the Kingdom
- Should assign a Project Manager to support the PI
- Industry Partner is required to provide a Letter of Intent (Stage 1)
- Industry Partner is required to provide a Letter of Support (Stage 2)
- Contribute funds or match funding for the research
- Must be able to meet the time commitment to the project as stated in the proposal

## Research Ethics

It is required that the research supported is designed and conducted in such a way that it meets specific ethics principles, and is subject to proper professional and institutional oversight in terms of research governance. Please refer to principles below:

- Research should aim to maximize benefit for individuals and industry and minimize risk and harm
- The rights and dignity of individuals and groups should be respected
- Wherever possible, participation should be voluntary and appropriately informed
- Research should be conducted with integrity and transparency
- Lines of responsibility and accountability should be clearly defined
- Independence of research should be maintained and where conflicts of interest cannot be avoided they should be made explicit

The RDO will:

- Only fund research which has an adequate and appropriate ethics statement and which takes the ethics dimensions of the research seriously
- Consider reviewer or panel member disagreement with the suggested project approach to ethics as either grounds for a conditional grant or rejection of a proposal (where it calls into question researcher competence or the feasibility or validity of a proposal)
- Consider suspension of payments and grant termination if the review shows that a project requires major changes which will alter it so much that it can no longer retain RDO support
- Only fund research organizations that have processes in place to follow the guidance in this framework and comply with the grant conditions and the RDO Policy and Guidelines
- Hold accountable the university, PI, industry partner and researchers involved in any allegations of research misconduct and breach of compliance with the grant conditions. This could result in the immediate suspension of the individual project and other projects

## Research Use Guidelines

The RDO expects the researchers receiving the funding to:

- Demonstrate an awareness of the wider environment and context in which their research takes place
- Demonstrate an awareness of the industry impact of their research, beyond usual research conduct considerations
- Engage actively with the public at both the local and national levels about their research and its broader implications
- Identify potential benefits and beneficiaries from the beginning, and through the full life cycle of the project(s)
- Maintain professional networks that extend beyond their own discipline and research community
- Publish results widely – considering the academic, user and public audiences for research outcomes
- Exploit results where appropriate, in order to secure economic impact for the Kingdom
- Manage collaborations professionally, in order to secure maximum impact and to sustain long-term partnerships with the company
- Ensure that research staff and students that are a part of the research team develop research, vocational and entrepreneurial skills that are matched to the demands of their future career paths
- Take responsibility for the curation, management and exploitation of data for future use

## Communication Policy

Effective communication between the university and industry partner is an integral part of maximizing the impact of quality research. RDO communication policy aims to enhance the communication of RDO-funded research to potential users and beneficiaries of the research. Adherence to the policy is a condition of the receipt of funds from an RDO research grant. The communication policy includes the following obligations:

- Giving initial publicity for the grant, together with the host research organization(s)
- Acknowledging RDO support as far as possible, including all external communication, such as press releases, PowerPoint presentations, papers, stationery etc.
- Giving the RDO advance notice and sight of press releases at least two working days before they are distributed and, where possible, advance notice of likely newspaper articles or media appearances. Failure to comply with this requirement will be viewed as a serious matter which could lead to action being taken
- Communicating the research findings through publications, seminars, conferences, electronic outlets and the media, to both academic and non-academic audiences, potential users and beneficiaries (especially business, government, voluntary organizations, community groups and the public). Any communications activity must not be a lobby activity.
- Submitting details of outcomes from the grant and for up to five years after the end of the grant period.

Prior permission must be sought before the RDO's name can be used in connection with the title of any unit, center, department, etc. which the RDO is supporting either wholly or in part. The words 'RDO project' may not be used as a heading in correspondence, reports or questionnaires.

## Scope

### Discipline Scope

The Collaborative Research Project initiative is intended to provide funding for projects related to the development of research and the transfer of R&D knowledge between university and industry, which includes but is not limited to the following industries and business sectors:

#### **Computer and Information Sciences**

- Computer Engineering, Computer Sciences, Information Systems, Information Technology, Management Information Systems, Networking & Communication Engineering, Software Engineering, Systems Engineering

#### **Engineering**

- Aerospace, Architecture, Biomedical, Building & Construction, Chemical, Civil, Electrical, Environmental, Industrial, Mechanical, Mining, Nuclear, Petroleum/Natural Gas, Transport

#### **Food & Agricultural Sciences**

- Agricultural Engineering, Agriculture, Animal Sciences, Food Science, Plant Sciences, Soil Science

#### **Health**

- Applied Medical Science, Clinical Laboratory Science, Dentistry, Emergency Medicine, Environmental Health, Health Sciences, Medical Rehabilitation, Medicine, Nursing, Nutrition, Pharmacy, Physical Therapy, Public Health, Radiology, Veterinary Medicine & Science

#### Sciences

- Astronomy, Biochemistry, Biology & Microbiology, Biotechnology, Botany, Chemistry, Earth Sciences, Environmental Sciences, Geology, Geophysics, Geoscience, Hydrology, Marine Sciences, Materials Sciences, Mathematics, Meteorology, Mineral Sciences, Physics, Statistics & Operational Research, Zoology

#### Other (STEM based)

- For interdisciplinary R&D, or for cases where a single classification of a discipline is impossible

## Funding Scope

The usage of the funding is divided into three categories: **mobility, data collection, equipment and consumables**. It is the research team's decision to determine allocation with **clear justification**, as long as proposed expenses fall into one of the following:

#### Mobility:

- Travel
- Accommodation
- Living costs
- Salary buy-out

#### Data collection:

- Costs to generate and collect data\*

#### Equipment:

- Items to further enable research, with a unit value of over SAR 30,000 and a life expectancy of one year or greater (Purchasing equipment is limited to KSA universities)

#### Consumables:

- Supplies and materials used in the performance of the project

\*If the proposed research requires exceptional costs to generate and collect data, this should be noted for separate consideration by the RDO.

## Submission Process and Timeline

The PI **must ensure** that the **EOI** is uploaded electronically is received by the RDO **by 4pm (16:00) on February 21st, 2019. Any incomplete application, late application, or one that does not meet the eligibility criteria of the grant will be rejected and no longer considered.** Submission method will be available in the coming weeks.

Based on the Collaborative Research Project initiative schedule, research teams must submit a number of documents over the course of funding.

The following documentation will be required throughout the initiative:

Pre-allocation:

- 1) Expression of Interest (Stage 1)
- 2) Letter of Intent (Stage 1)
- 3) Comprehensive Research Proposal (Stage 2)
- 4) Letter of Support (Stage 2)
- 5) Spend Plan (Stage 2)

Post-allocation:

- 1) Expenditure Statement (Annual)
- 2) Interim Report (Annual)
- 3) Final Outcome Report

The summary of documentation is shown below:

## Summary of Documentation

Document	Requirements
<u>Expression of Interest</u>	<p>EOI allows the panel to quickly evaluate initial applications and make a quick decision on which candidates to shortlist. It should provide details of the following information*.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Research question for proposed research</li> <li>• Broad outline of scientific methodology to be used throughout research</li> <li>• Alignment to identified key research themes and Vision 2030 as well as expected benefits to the Kingdom (societal, economic, etc.)</li> <li>• Potential contribution to knowledge and practice</li> </ul> <p>*List is not comprehensive. The final Application Form will be available along with submission method on Collaborative Research Project website in the coming weeks.</p>
<u>Comprehensive Research Proposal (For shortlisted researchers only)</u>	<p>Comprehensive Research Proposal should contain the full details of the following information*.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Research question for proposed research</li> <li>• Roles and responsibilities of PI &amp; Co-PIs</li> <li>• Summary knowledge in the field of research</li> <li>• Scientific methodology to be used throughout research</li> <li>• Proposed outcomes of the research</li> <li>• Alignment to STEM fields or R&amp;D related industries and expected benefits to the Kingdom (societal, economic, etc.)</li> <li>• Plans for involving and disseminating results to potential users (e.g., policy-makers)</li> <li>• Potential contribution to knowledge and practice</li> <li>• Compliance measures throughout Initiative cycle</li> </ul>

	*List is not comprehensive. The final Application Form will be available along with submission method on the Collaborative Research Project website in the coming weeks.
<u>Letter of Intent</u>	A letter from the industry partner addressing high level support and commitment to project.
<u>Letter of Support</u>	A letter from the industry player detailing support and commitment to the project along with reasonable assurance of research facilities and other partnership related matters.
<u>Interim Report</u>	Provide an update on ongoing outputs, impacts, and outcomes as the Grant cycle progresses.
<u>Final Outcome Report</u>	Provide a final statement on outputs, impacts and outcomes at the conclusion of the grant cycle.

## Evaluation

Submitted proposals will be evaluated based on the following criteria:

- **Relevance:** Relevance to the targeted industries under Vision 2030;
- **Applied:** The potential applicability of the results;
- **Potential Impact:** Potential benefits to academia, industry and the R&D ecosystem of KSA in its entirety;
- **Technical Merit:** Scientific and intellectual rigor, potential to create new and important knowledge, and appropriateness of the research design;
- **Partnership-Building:** Potential to catalyze the development of domestic university industry partnerships;
- **Quality of Research Team:** Capabilities and track record of the proposed research team;
- **Execution:** Coherence in the proposed execution plans, feasibility of carrying out the research (e.g., data accessibility) within the given timeframe, and the cost effectiveness.

## Reporting and Monitoring

It is a condition of RDO funding that the grant holder regularly submits details of research outcomes from their grant.

- The PI must ensure that all outcomes arising from the grant are recorded in a timely manner as soon as practically possible after their creation. The PI may delegate to CO-PIs to prepare and submit records.
- Information may be shared at any time after a grant has started, and should continue to be submitted up to five years after the grant end date and confirmed during the annual submission period. Failure to use the system to record the outcomes of RDO-funded research may result in ineligibility to apply for future funding from RDO for both the PI and Co-PI, and suspension of other RDO grants held by the PI.
- The grant holder must complete the Final Outcome report within three months of the grant end date. The report will be checked for completeness and failure will result in a request to update the report.
- The grant holder must submit all research outcomes arising from the grant electronically for up to five years after the end of the grant period.
- It is the responsibility of the grant holder to ensure that all outcomes submitted do not breach the ownership of intellectual property rights held by persons or bodies other than the RDO.
- Details shared, including reports submitted during the final reporting process, may be made publicly available.

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