2020 ConTex Call for Proposals
UT System-CONACYT Collaborative Research Grants
Deadline to Submit Proposals: March 13, 2020

Background

On June 21, 2016, the University of Texas System and Mexico's National Council for Science and Technology (CONACYT) signed a Cooperation Agreement to establish the ConTex Program to administer cooperative bi-national academic and research activities for the mutual benefit of the United States and Mexico as neighbors and partners. ConTex launched its first call for Collaborative Research Grant proposals in November 2016 and continues offering this program on an annual basis.

Objectives and Scope

We are pleased to announce the 2020 Collaborative Research Grants Call for Proposals. Its primary objective is to provide seed funding for internationally competitive and innovative collaborative projects between researchers from UT System and Mexican institutions. The projects should allow the pursuit of shared research interests and show the potential to leverage additional extramural funding in order to create permanent ties between UT System and Mexican institutions.

ConTex welcomes proposals in all areas of research from across UT System and Mexican institutions. Interdisciplinary and multi-institutional collaborations are encouraged. Student involvement and capacity building is also encouraged.

Priority will be given to the following agreed upon topics:

- Medicine and Health Sciences
- Humanities and Social Sciences
- Environmental Sciences
- Water Resources and Management
- Sustainability
- Renewable Energies
- Biotechnology and Agricultural Sciences
- Engineering
- Urban Planning
- Migration and Human Rights
- Education

Funding

This call funds partnerships of researchers based in the UT System and Mexican institutions. Proposals must contribute to the economic development and welfare of Mexico and Texas.

Grants of up to $100,000 for twelve months are available for research teams. The amount of the grant award will vary depending on the needs of each project. The proposed budget must be fully justified. UT System and CONACYT will jointly fund projects through the ConTex office (see budget section for guidance). Most projects should begin on or around September 1, 2020. Please provide justification if a later start date is required.

Eligibility

- Each proposal must be led by at least one eligible Principal Investigator (PI) from a UT System institution and at least one eligible Principal Investigator from a Mexican institution.

- Academic participants from other UT System or Mexican institutions can serve as additional Principal Investigators, with the corresponding programmatic and financial responsibilities.

- UT System Principal Investigators must be tenured or tenure-track faculty or research scientists with principal investigator responsibilities and working full-time at their UT home institution for the duration of the grant.

- Principal Investigators from Mexican institutions must meet eligibility criteria established by CONACYT. Applicants must hold full-time academic/research appointments in a Mexican institution of higher education and/or be involved in research that is part of the *Registro Nacional de Instituciones y Empresas Científicas y Tecnológicas* (RENIECYT) [article 25- section II of the Law of Science and Technology (LCYT)].

- Postdoctoral fellows and students are not eligible to submit proposals.

- The project may be connected to the ConTex Postdoctoral Fellowships Program. However, the collaborative grant proposal must be unique and distinct enough from the proposal submitted to the fellowships program.

- Projects currently supported by other CONACYT calls or programs are not eligible to apply.

- Past ConTex Collaborative awardees must provide evidence of final report and results from previous grant project.

Budgets

Awards of up to $100,000 will be granted for a 12-month period. The budget must specify the planned distribution of funds and should clearly state amounts to be expended at each institution

using the budget format available on the ConTex website at:
http://www.contex.utsystem.edu/collaborative-research-grants-1
Proposed budget **must** be accompanied by a budget justification in narrative form.

Allowable expenses

- Undergraduate and/or graduate research assistants' salary or stipend (not tuition).

- Ph.D. students' salary or stipend (not tuition). Mexican students receiving CONACYT funding must abide by regulations stipulated on their current award.

- Students' health insurance (individual only) and other fringe benefits.

- Domestic and international travel—including transportation, lodging, and meals—for the purposes of project planning, collaborative research and training, data collection, and field, laboratory and archival research. Budgeted amounts must be calculated using the appropriate institutional per diem and travel rates.

- Equipment purchases not to exceed twenty-five percent of proposed budget. If equipment expenditures must exceed twenty-five percent of budget, a strong rationale should be provided in the budget justification.

- Supplies and services, including laboratory analyses and computing.

- Consultants' fees for specialized analyses or studies, when required.

Unallowable expenses

- Salary payments to Principal Investigators or any other academic salaries (e.g. professors, research scientists), including summer salaries, except student research assistantships.

- Undergraduate or graduate students' tuition or academic fees.

- Sub-contracts/sub-awards.

- Indirect costs or institutional overhead assessments.

Proposal Content and Submission

- Proposals must be submitted through the ConTex online platform at:
  http://www.contex.utsystem.edu/collaborative-research-grants-1

- Applications must use the ConTex budget template provided at:
  http://www.contex.utsystem.edu/collaborative-research-grants-1

- Application must be submitted by March 13, 2020. Any proposal received after this deadline will not be considered.

- A researcher may not serve as PI on more than one proposal.

- All proposals must be certified by the Office of Sponsored Projects (UT System Institutions ONLY). Note to UT Austin PIs: send proposals for certification to Leslie.Martinez@austin.utexas.edu

- Applications must be written in English. CVs, letters of support, and other supporting materials may be in English or Spanish. Budgets should be in U.S. dollars.

The following documents must be included in a single PDF document in the order indicated below. Applications that exceed the allowable page limits will not be evaluated.

1. Cover page:
   - Project title, PI names and titles, departments and institutions, emails and other contact information (including mailing address), key words, brief non-technical summary.

2. Project description (no more than one page):
   - State-of-the-art and preliminary work. Explain briefly the state-of-the-art in your field as it relates to your project. This description should make clear the context in which you situate your research and in what areas you intend to make a unique, innovative, and promising contribution. Description should be clear and concise.

3. Objectives and work plan (may not exceed 7 pages; font size 11, Times New Roman or similar font):
   - Anticipated timeline.
   - Objectives—description of the project's research goals and scientific objectives. Indicate anticipated results that may be relevant to other fields.
   - Work plan including research methods—provide detailed account of steps planned during proposed funding period, a clear description of the joint research plan (distribution of activities and methods of implementation), responsibilities of both partners, and description of:
     - expected results, as well as social impact, as appropriate to your field
     - relevance of researchers' respective expertise related to the project
     - the project's contribution to the field
     - how the project is expected to strengthen research/academic cooperation between Texas and Mexico
   - Relevant bibliography—brief list of works cited in the description of the state-of-the-art, research objectives, and work program.
   - Composition of core research group: list individuals who will work directly and regularly on the project but will not be paid with project funds. Include names,

academic titles, employment status, and type of funding—list any individuals paid by your respective institutions and those paid using other funding types (e.g. fellowships).

- o Cooperation with researchers outside the project team:
  - Researchers from other institutions with whom you have agreed to cooperate on this project
  - Researchers from the UT System and Mexico with whom you have collaborated scientifically within the past three years—this information is to avoid potential conflict of interest during the review process
  - Conflicts of interest with commercial enterprises or other entities

4. List any other pending funding proposals for this project.

5. Letter of support from the appropriate academic leadership at each institution (e.g. Center Director, Department Chair, Dean, etc.) addressed to the ConTex Review Committee. The letter should state that if the proposal is approved, any funds granted will be used in accordance with the fund's guidelines, using the existing infrastructure and academic support. If the PI is also Center Director or Department Chair, the letter should be from the person to whom the PI reports.

6. Name, title, and email address of the individual who has the authority to sign the agreement on behalf of each institution, should the project be awarded.

7. Memo certifying that the proposal has been reviewed by the Office of Sponsored Projects (for UT System institutions only).

8. Institutional Review Board approval for human or animal subjects, if applicable (or plan for submission according to project's timeline).

9. Proposed Budget (use ConTex budget template).

10. Budget Justification—specify the cost to support activities at each institution and justification for all requested items. Amounts in U.S. dollars.

11. Abbreviated CVs of Principal Investigators (in English or Spanish). Must include a list of the most current/relevant publications (up to three pages for each PI).

Note: ConTex does not offer pre-review of proposals. Only complete proposals will be reviewed. Reviewer comments will be provided upon request by PIs after awards are announced.

Administration of Awards

All funds will be administered by ConTex in accordance with UT System policies and procedures and in observance of CONACYT's institutional requirements. The portion of the grant awarded to each Principal Investigator will be transferred directly to her/his respective institution under terms previously determined and agreed upon by ConTex and the institution. All Principal Investigators are responsible for accurate and appropriate administration of funds, accounting of expenditures, and completion of precise and timely narrative and financial reports. Award recipients are required to acknowledge UT System and CONACYT support through ConTex in products resulting from the grant. Final reports and accounting of funds are to be submitted by all Principal Investigators within the established deadlines to ConTex as the Office of Record for the program.

Review Process and Criteria

Following submission, ConTex will conduct administrative and academic reviews and ranking of proposals. Each proposal will be reviewed, evaluated, and rated by a committee of faculty members and/or researchers from Mexican and U.S. institutions with related expertise. **Proposals should be written for a committee of broad expertise and interests.**

Proposals will be assessed according to the following main criteria for intellectual merit and impact:
- Quality of proposal
- Contribution to current body of knowledge
- Experience and expertise of each PI
- Coherence and clarity of work plan
- Reasonableness and efficiency of budget
- Likelihood of completing all research goals
- Impact of proposed research on economic development and welfare of Texas and Mexico
- Contribution to the development of the U.S.-Mexico network of scientists and scholars
- Ability to leverage current resources and infrastructure for increased impact and visibility
- Probability to attract future support from other funding agencies

Contacts

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