ISSR Sustainability Seed Grant Program, 2017-2018

The Institute for Social Science Research is pleased to announce a seed grant competition for interdisciplinary social science research in sustainability. This competition is designed to stimulate new scholarly collaborations for innovative research centered on sustainability themes in the social sciences. These seed grants are intended to support proposals that are not likely to be funded by traditional granting organizations because they are early in development and interdisciplinary in nature. It is anticipated that projects will clearly link to the future research, scholarly, or creative and artistic growth of the Institute for Social Science Research.

These interdisciplinary social science proposals should engage scholars from a wide variety of backgrounds and expertise, including, for example, the humanities, social sciences, natural and physical sciences, engineering, design, law, business, and education. Proposals must provide a two-year plan for how the research project will be continued, and further funded (including explicit referencing to external funding). We encourage collaborative proposals between faculty across colleges, for example between SBS and CNS.

Examples of topical areas related to sustainability social science include: human development and inequality, food and water, human health, governance, economic and social drivers of land use change, climate change vulnerability and adaptation, environmental and sustainability communication, and culture and history.

The program consists of 1-3, one-year grants (we expect proposals in the range of $5,000-$10,000 each, with a $10,000 maximum request).

The Principal Investigator (PI) of each proposal must be a tenured or tenure-track faculty member in the social sciences at the University of Massachusetts at Amherst. Project participants (collaborators) may include graduate students, instructors, research associates, faculty in other disciplines, and professional staff at non-profit organizations, indigenous groups, government agencies, educational institutions, or private industries. Budgets may support graduate student research assistance.

Proposed projects will be evaluated for their scholarly quality; likely contribution to understanding and solving sustainability problems; likelihood of establishing new, significant, and lasting partnerships within and outside UMass; and a life beyond the period of the seed funding. This seed grant program aims to facilitate the development of sustainable research programs that will be foundational for the growth of the ISSR Sustainability Working Group.

Timeline

- Thursday December 1 2016 | Request for proposals released
- Friday January 20 2017 | Seed grant informational meeting
- Friday March 3 2017 | Proposal submission deadline
- Early April 2017 | Awards announced
- Mid-May 2017 | Grants disbursed
Proposal format

Research proposals will be submitted via email with subject line: ISSR Sustainability and Social Science Research Proposal to elisa@issr.umass.edu. The complete proposal will consist of three parts: a cover sheet, a narrative with supporting information, and a budget. All parts of the proposal must be combined into one pdf file for submission:

A. The cover sheet will include the title of the proposed project and the names, affiliations, and contact information for all project participants. A project contact must be identified and will be one of the principal investigators. The project contact provides the communication link between the seed grant program and the entire project team on all matters. On the cover page, provide a 200-word abstract in non-technical language (strict 200 words maximum) of the proposed activity.

B. The proposal narrative with supporting information must be written with text in 12-point font, single-spaced, with at least one-inch margins. Begin each section listed below on a new page. The narrative with supporting information must include the following sections:

1. A proposal summary that explains the motivation for and risks associated with the project, what is novel about the proposed research, what research methods will be used, and how this project is directly relevant to sustainability social science. This section must articulate a clear set of objectives, a compelling vision of what the project might achieve, and what differentiates it from standard disciplinary research (2 pages maximum for narrative, plus up to 2 pages of references).

2. A follow-on funding plan that explains how the research launched by the seed grant award will be continued. Include information on potential source(s) of funding and the level and timing of follow-on funding necessary to continue the research initiated by the seed grant (1 page maximum).

3. A brief curriculum vitae for the project contact and each co-PI (two pages for each person’s CV).

4. A budget justification that provides sufficient information for reviewers to understand the funding request. Seed funding may be used for any legitimate research expense, but will not support tenure-track faculty salaries (summer or academic year). Graduate student and post-doc salaries can be included but should not account for a substantial portion of the budget.

5. Information on related current and pending support from other sources. Only provide this information if the support is relevant to the activity proposed for funding by the seed grant. Provide this information for the project contact and all co-PIs. Use any format that includes the following information: project/proposal title, funding source, award amount, award period, and relationship to seed project (e.g., co-financing of materials or personnel, overlapping objectives, use of data or equipment, similar partnerships, etc.).

C. The project budget must include each major category of expense and the amount required, with explanation and justification included in the “budget justification” section above. Note that seed funds carry no indirect cost.