To: Columbia University Faculty
Columbia University Research Scientists
Columbia University Research Scholars
Columbia University Postdoctoral Fellows

Award Amounts
$10,000 - $30,000 Typical Award Amount

Proposal Deadline
Monday, May 14, 2012 12 noon

Award Notification
Friday, June 29, 2012
THE EARTH INSTITUTE
COLUMBIA UNIVERSITY

Call for Proposals – Practical Solutions Grants

Proposals are solicited from the Columbia University faculty and research staff to advance the goals and objectives of the Earth Institute’s Earth Clinic. Practice is a core activity of any problem-solving academic entity, seeking to provide solutions to real world problems. It is informed by basic and applied research, thus bringing the most advanced knowledge base to the field, the ultimate test bed for theories and hypotheses developed in the research and teaching environment of academic institutions. At the same time, practice is a constant source of new scientific problems that require further basic and/or applied research. This fruitful synergy between research and practice forms the foundation for achieving change in the ways society responds to the challenge of sustainable development through academically informed problem solving.

As the Earth Institute’s main practice instrument, the Earth Clinic is designed to help communities in both developing and developed countries creatively respond to pressing economic and environmental problems and address other issues related to sustainable development. In essence, the spirit of the Earth Clinic, as expressed by one of its initial donors, is to engage in work that more immediately benefits people, as opposed to longer term research that has the eventual goal of benefiting society. Such science and practice-based work can address urgent issues of poverty reduction, public health improvement, energy, transportation, water management, agriculture, and infrastructure needs, as well as make improvements in management systems. The Clinic’s work differs from traditional consulting in that it seeks to bring a solid academic component to problem solving. An important element in this effort is close work with local partners on project design and implementation to ensure long-term effectiveness. Current projects include social cohesion in Liberia, developing climate-sensitive health care management tools, curbing childhood obesity in New York City, and reducing arsenic exposure in Bangladesh. The Earth Clinic’s website (http://www.earth.columbia.edu/articles/view/1790) provides information on the Earth Clinic and features current and past Earth Clinic awards and recipients.

For additional information, contact Flora Moir at fmoir@ei.columbia.edu or 212-854-7071, or George Sarrinikolaou at gsarrinikolaou@ei.columbia.edu or 212-854-3871.

Eligibility and Composition of Research Team

Earth Clinic funds are only available for projects in which a member of the Columbia University community is the Principal Investigator (PI).

- The lead PI must be a full-time research scientist, research scholar or professor at Columbia University. There can be up to four co-PIs per proposal. Co-PIs need not be members of the Columbia University community. There is no limit to the number of project team members.
• An EI Fellow or Columbia postdoctoral research fellow may be the PI of a project as long as a full-time Columbia University professor, research scientist or research scholar, listed as co-PI, signs an agreement to assume responsibility of the project once the fellow has completed his/her fellowship. The dates of the fellowship term must be included in the proposal. Fellows may be listed as co-PIs without a signed agreement.
• The project team will ideally comprise a mix of senior and junior scientists, including Earth Institute Fellows, and undergraduate or graduate students. The team may include collaborators outside the Columbia University community.

N.B. A project that receives funding from the Earth Clinic is an Earth Institute project and will remain so regardless of changes in project leadership. Project PIs will be asked to provide content for web pages that the Earth Institute will create for each project.

Awards and Renewals

The minimum award is $10,000 and the maximum is $30,000. Additional funds may be awarded under rare circumstances at the discretion of the Earth Clinic Steering Committee (Steering Committee henceforth). In addition to funding original proposals, the Steering Committee may consider proposals that emerge from previously-funded Earth Clinic projects.

Proposals for renewed funding may be submitted for consideration provided the initial project goals have been completed and the monies spent as planned. Any such renewed funding must be used to ensure the long-term benefit of the project.

Project Requirements

Projects funded by the Earth Clinic typically fall under the following categories: tool/product development, field studies, training and education, and secondary data analysis. Projects may focus on a single category or span several. Projects do not need to fall under the aforementioned categories and may represent other types of inquiry.

All proposals must meet the following requirements for consideration:

1. The project should reflect the mission of the Earth Institute.
2. The project should be viewed as a clinic, with communities and individuals as the clients. The proposal must identify the clients and discuss how the proposed work will help them address sustainable development issues.
3. The success of the project will be measured on the basis of three key questions:
   - Did the project lead to confirmation or rejection of the underlying theories and/or hypotheses being tested?
   - Have these theories been adopted as new standards?
   - Did the project produce new research questions?
4. The project should aim to create a legacy, such as institution building, receipt of external funds to further the research, published papers in peer-reviewed journals, etc. The
proposal should discuss how the experience gained from the project might be leveraged for external funding in the future.

**Criteria for Evaluation**

The Steering Committee will use the following criteria to evaluate proposals:

- Does the project address a critical aspect of the mission of the Earth Institute?
- Does the project address a practical need?
- Does the proposal identify a project site and client?
- Will the successful outcome of the project benefit the targeted population?
- Are the projected results relevant on a global scale?
- Will the project lead to new research questions?
- Does the project propose to provide opportunities for undergraduate students?

**Proposal Format**

The proposal should include the following documents:

- New Project Proposal Coversheet (attached)
- Project description
  - Up to five (5) pages covering the information outlined in the Project Description section below.
  - Only the first five pages of the proposal will be considered.
- Appendices are not permitted except one (1) page of references (no smaller than 10-point font).
- All proposals, including itemized budgets, must be submitted in Microsoft Word document form and written in 12-point font with one-inch margins.

**Project Description**

*Title and Scope of Project* (half page maximum)

This section should include the project title and a description of the goals and objectives of the project. The four “Project Requirements” above must be addressed in this section. This section should address the scale of the project and the possibility of increasing its scope in the future.

*Methodology*

This section should lay out the basic project plan. The plan should include the hypotheses being tested and the experimental design used to test them, including the data collection and analysis methods. If secondary data analysis is needed, identify the data sets to be used, their sources and how they will be obtained. It is strongly recommended that PIs provide letters of support, or other documentation, from data sources to confirm access to the data needed. If the project
proposes to develop a new tool or modify an existing one, articulate the rationale and clearly state the methods, with supporting references, for developing these tools.

**Fieldwork Site, Project Client and Project Partners**
This section should clearly identify the fieldwork site, the project client and/or partners involved. It is strongly recommended that these all be identified before the start of the project. Describe the project team’s prior experience, if any, working in the proposed locations and with the clients and partners. It is also recommended that PIs limit the initial number of field sites or proposed interventions with a view of scaling up in the future based on preliminary results.

**Project Timeline**
This section should describe the timing of the project plan and anticipated project milestones during the eighteen-month project period. PIs will be expected to provide oral progress reports to the Steering Committee at six and twelve months into the project. Updates should include progress toward milestones, challenges and needs for extension. The timeline should clearly identify the time necessary for logistical planning, including approval processes, before travel to field sites. One 6-month extension may be requested.

**Required Equipment and Approval**
This section should describe the equipment to be used, and indicate whether if new equipment is required for the project. Grant monies can be used to purchase software if needed but cannot be used to purchase new computers. This section should also list the approvals necessary for project initiation (e.g. Institutional Review Board).

**Names, Titles and Roles of Contributors**
This section should identify the project team and any collaborators, as well as provide a brief description of what specific activities each member of the team will conduct.

**Conflicts of Interest**
This section should list any member of the Earth Clinic Steering Committee that has a conflict of interest with the proposed project. Members of the Steering Committee are Peter Schlosser (chair), Steve Cohen, Patricia Culligan, Joseph Graziano, Vijay Modi, John Mutter, and Lex van Geen.¹

**Itemized Budget**
This section should contain an itemized budget projected for the seed funding. If this request is part of a larger project, please indicate how the remainder of the funds will be obtained or what portion can be accomplished with the requested seed funds. The budget should be presented by fiscal year (i.e. July 1-June 30). Five percent (5%) of the total amount requested should be set aside for indirect costs. Fringe benefits on salaries should be 33.7% (subject to change) for faculty and fellows. This rate does not apply to students. The grant money cannot be used to cover student tuition, but it can be used for interns, research assistants and work stipends. Grant money can be allotted, at the discretion of the project leader, to cover faculty time or to provide additional funds to complement existing salaries. The Earth Clinic Steering Committee recommends that grant money be applied to junior staff salaries instead of senior staff.

¹ Outside advice may be sought for proposals beyond the expertise of Steering Committee members.
**Deadlines**

*Proposal Submission*
Proposals must be received electronically by 12 noon, on May 14, 2012, to Flora Moir, earthclinic@ei.columbia.edu. *Late submissions will not be considered.*

*Award Notification*
Award notifications will be made by June 29, 2012.

*Midterm and Final Progress Reports*
PIs will be expected to provide oral progress reports at 6 and 12 months into the project to the Steering Committee. A final report is due at the end of the project. The final report form will be provided one month before of the deadline but can also be requested in advance from Flora Moir, fmoir@ei.columbia.edu.