Earth Clinic

Practical Solutions Grants
Call for Proposals

2015-2016

To:

Columbia University Faculty

Columbia University Research Scientists

Columbia University Research Scholars

Columbia University Postdoctoral Researchers and Scholars

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

Proposal Deadline
Friday, April 24, 2015   12 noon

Award Notification
Wednesday, July 1, 2015

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 (CU) community is the Principal Investigator (PI).

- The lead PI must be a full-time Columbia University officer of instruction or officer of research of higher rank than postdoctoral researcher or scholar. An EI or Columbia postdoctoral researcher may be the PI of a project as long as a full-time Columbia University officer of instruction or officer of research of higher rank listed as co-PI, signs an agreement to assume responsibility of the project in the case that the

postdoctoral researcher leaves CU before the project is complete. The dates of the appointment term must be included in the proposal. Postdoctoral researchers may be listed as co-PIs without a signed agreement.

- Individuals not listed in the categories above must fill out a PI waiver request prior to the start of the project. Proposals should indicate if a PI waiver will be needed should the project be awarded. The PI waiver template can be obtained from Tim Johnston.

- Adjunct appointments may only be listed as co-PIs in the proposal.

- 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.

- The project team will ideally comprise a mix of senior and junior scientists, including Earth Institute researchers, and undergraduate or graduate students. The team may include collaborators outside of 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.

Awards, Funding Guidelines, and Project Renewal

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.

The Steering Committee may stipulate changes to any proposal as a requirement for funding. It may also, at its discretion, award less money than was originally requested by a project team.

Terms of usage:
All funds must remain within Columbia University except for products and services explicitly outlined in the proposal budget (*i.e.* consultants). Typically, non-Columbia University co-PIs cannot be compensated with Earth Clinic funds for their effort. Any exceptions should be justified in the proposal.

Continued access to project funds is contingent upon the timely submission or progress and final reports.

Any unspent funds must be returned to the Earth Clinic fund at the close of a project unless written approval has been granted to extend the award past the project's end date. No-cost extensions must be requested one month prior to the project close date.

Proposals for renewed funding may be submitted for consideration provided the initial project goals have been completed and the funds 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. Based on the sources of funding, proposals addressing poverty alleviation for children are encouraged.

All proposals must meet the following requirements for consideration:
1. The project should reflect the mission of the Earth Institute and address pressing issues in the field of sustainable development.

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.

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?
- Does the project leave a clear legacy?

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.*
- Two-page CVs for each the PI and co-PIs
- References (up to one page, no smaller than a 10-point font).
- Appendices are not permitted
- All proposals, including itemized budgets, must be submitted as a PDF and written in 12-point font with one-inch margins.

Project Description

Abstract (200 words maximum)

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. PIs must demonstrate why the proposed research methods are the most appropriate relative to alternative approaches to test their hypotheses.

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 required that these all be identified before the start of the project. The section should also describe the project team's prior experience, if any, working in the proposed locations and with the clients and partners listed. 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.

Legacy
The section should clear identify the legacy and the deliverables the project will result in, 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 and if possible identify possible funding sources.

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 a written progress report to the Steering Committee nine 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 six-month extension may be requested.

Required Equipment and Approvals
It is required that letters of intent, endorsement and commitment from partners be acquired prior to the start of the project. The proposal should list the approvals necessary for project initiation (*e.g.* Institutional Review Board). Projects will not be funded until all necessary approvals have been obtained. This section should also describe the equipment to be used and should state and justify the need for any new equipment. Seed funding can be used to purchase software if needed but cannot be used to purchase new computers.

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. A list of existing collaborations within the EI and CU community related to this project should be provided here.

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 who are directly or indirectly involved with the development of the proposal. Although it may not be considered a conflict of interest, the project team should state whether it had any discussions with committee members in preparing the proposal. The present Steering Committee membership includes Peter Schlosser (chair), Steve Cohen, Walter Baethgen, Patricia Culligan, Darby Jack, Vijay Modi, and Alexander 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). Projects may extend beyond a single fiscal year.

Five percent (5%) of the total amount requested should be set aside for indirect costs. Fringe benefits on salaries should be 30.5% (subject to change) for Officers of Research, Instruction and Administration. This rate does not apply to students. Please use Columbia University's guidelines for calculating fringe rates: http://finance.columbia.edu/content/fringe-benefit-rates.

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.

Deadlines

Proposal Submission
Proposals must be received electronically by 12 noon, on April 24, 2015, to Flora Moir, earthclinic@ei.columbia.edu. *Late submissions will not be considered.*

Award Notification
Award notifications will be made by July 1, 2015.

Midterm and Final Progress Reports
PIs will be expected to provide a written progress report nine 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.