

Academic Collaboration with Arab Universities Programme

Funded by the Emirates Foundation

Internal Call for Proposals for Funding | 2021/ 22

The LSE Middle East Centre invites applications for academic collaborative research projects in social, political, and economic sciences between researchers at LSE and at Arab universities. These projects may involve collaborative research and/or capacity building.

Programme Aims

1. To strengthen long-term academic collaboration and knowledge transfer between LSE and Arab universities;
2. To promote high calibre research between LSE and Arab universities;
3. To support academic excellence at Arab universities.

Eligibility Criteria

- Projects must involve topics covered by social, political or economic science disciplines and must also contribute to Middle East studies.
- Proposals involving multi-disciplinary teams are welcome.

Eligibility of Principal Investigators, Co-Principal Investigators and Other Participants

- Projects must involve a Principal Investigator (PI) from the London School of Economics and a Co-Principal Investigator (Co-PI) from at least one Arab university.
- An Arab university is defined as a university which is based in a member state of the Arab League. Universities that are subsidiaries, branches or departments of non-Arab League member state universities may be involved as sub-partners but are ineligible as hosts for Co-PIs.
- LSE PIs must be members of academic staff, research fellows, research officers, resident visiting professors or resident visiting fellows who hold a PhD and/or equivalent practitioner experience.
- Applications that include early career researchers either as PIs or as part of the research team are strongly encouraged.
- The PI is responsible for the research and the management of the project, including project reporting requirements.
- Co-PIs must be members of academic staff employed at their host university for the duration of the project. They must hold a PhD and/or equivalent practitioner experience.
- PIs and Co-PIs who have previously been awarded funding through the programme cannot reapply in the same academic year in which the previous project ended.
- Other universities and organisations as well as individuals employed by other universities and organisations may be involved as sub-partners engaged under the direction of the PI and Co-PI. Projects may involve more than one university.
- Applications to this programme are limited to one application per person per year.
- Preference will be given to new applicants over previous grant holders from the MEC.
- Applicants who have previously held a grant from the MEC should note that the success of their former project will be taken into consideration by the selection committee.
- If an applicant applies for the LSE Kuwait Academic Collaborations and the LSE Academic Collaboration with Arab Universities Programme in the same year, it is

unlikely that both grants will be awarded. Should this arise, the Middle East Centre will discuss the options with the applicant.

- At least two grants will be awarded for projects which involve collaboration with universities in the United Arab Emirates. UAE universities that are subsidiaries, branches or departments of non-UAE universities may be involved as sub-partners but are ineligible as hosts for Co-PIs.
- Submissions involving collaboration with UAE universities are encouraged which focus on supporting community resilience via one or more of the following themes and include their application to the UAE: (1) crisis management and mitigation (2) food crises (3) employment and labour markets (4) behavioural change (5) wellbeing in retirement. Applicants should reach out to the Middle East Centre for further information on these themes.

Duration and Value of Awards

- Projects should run for a minimum of 12 months and maximum of 24 months. Any extensions to the project beyond 24 months will be considered on a case by case basis and may not be granted.
- Individual projects may request a total budget of up to £85,000, though the full amount requested will not always be granted.
- There is no minimum budget for projects.
- The budget should be divided into (at least) two key segments: (1) LSE costs and (2) Arab university costs.
- An overhead of 10% of LSE costs must be included in LSE's share of project budgets.
- Partner institutions may claim an overhead of up to 10% of their share of the budget.
- Ineligible project expenses include rent, permanent resources and equipment.
- Salary costs:
 - Salary costs are eligible for PIs, Co-PIs and for consultants and research assistants.
 - A proportion of all LSE salary costs requested will go towards employer on-costs (Employer National Insurance and superannuation).
 - Where salary costs are requested, applicants should provide a detailed breakdown of costs, including an estimate of the percentage of time each salaried individual will commit to the project.

Selection Process and Project Administration

Applications will be considered by a committee according to the following four criteria:

1. Originality, significance and rigour of the research or capacity building activity

Guidance:

- Does the project make an **original contribution to Middle East Studies**?
- Are the project aims **specific** and **clear**?
- Is the methodology **rigorous** and **appropriate**?
- Does the project **fill a gap** in existing knowledge, or does it **build on** existing knowledge to make an original point?
- Are assumptions well-grounded in **existing literature** and **clearly qualified**?
- What contribution will the project make to the **research environment at the Middle East Centre**?

2. The contribution made towards academic excellence at Arab universities and towards strengthening cooperation between LSE and Arab universities

Guidance:

- Does the project attempt to build a **two-way partnership**? A balanced relationship between LSE and the partner institution(s) is crucial.
- Has adequate consideration been given to the **impact** of the project? 'Impact' activities include (but are not restricted to) knowledge exchange between LSE and the partner institution(s), training and outreach, dissemination of research findings, and policy work.
- In what ways will the project contribute to the **development of skills and knowledge** at both universities?

3. Evidence that the individuals and institutions involved have the capacity to execute the proposal and deliver on stated outcomes

Guidance:

- Have potential **ethical issues and responsibilities** been adequately addressed?
- Have the roles and responsibilities of each team member been **clearly defined**?
- While responsibilities between PI and Co-PI(s) should be balanced, the **LSE PI is expected to lead the project**, including writing and submitting the proposal.

4. Value for money

Guidance:

- Is an effort being made to maximise the **impact** of the research?
- Are salary costs **adequately justified**?

Submissions will be scored out of a total of 80 points. The first criterion is worth 35 points. The second, third and fourth are worth 15 each.

Successful projects will be awarded funds subject to the School's [Research Ethics Policy](#).

The LSE Middle East Centre will host and administer all awards, with oversight provided by LSE Research and Innovation. Funding will be managed by the Centre with the exception of transfers to Arab partners as agreed. LSE PIs and researchers will be affiliated to the Middle East Centre for the duration of the award. Any researchers appointed to work on collaborative projects will be hired through the Centre.

How to Apply

Stage One – Expression of interest

Applicants should submit an expression of interest in Microsoft Word including an outline of the proposed research (of no more than 600 words) and details of project team.

This allows the Centre to ensure proposals fit with the programme criteria and goals before full applications are made.

Institutional approval from partner institutions can take time to secure, so applicants are encouraged to show evidence of institutional approval at this stage.

Deadline: 8 January 2021, 17:00 GMT

Stage Two – First draft of application

If the application fits with the programme criteria and aims, a full first draft of the application should be submitted, including:

1. **Full Application** of no more than 4,000 words (excluding bibliography) using the template provided on the MEC website, under 'How to Apply'. Proposals should address the evaluation criteria laid out in the 'Selection Process and Project Administration' section above.
2. **Annex 1: Budget.** Please complete the Excel budget template provided on the MEC website, under 'How to Apply'. In order to maximise the accuracy of financial figures, particularly where LSE staff salaries are concerned, applicants should liaise with Research and Innovation and the Middle East Centre.
3. **Annex 2: Letter of Institutional Support.** Proposals must include a letter confirming that the Arab university partner institution supports the application. This should be signed by a person with authority to confirm institutional approval.
4. **Annex 3: PI and Co-PI CVs.** PI and Co-PI CVs should be attached to the application in PDF format. CVs should be no more than 2 pages long.

The Centre is happy to offer advice and assistance to applicants during the preparation of full applications.

Deadline: 7 February 2021, 17:00 GMT

Stage Three – Final submission of application

Following the submission of the full first draft, the Centre will check applications to ensure they meet the eligibility criteria and will provide feedback. Applicants are expected to liaise with both the MEC and Research and Innovation to finalise budgets. A final application should then be submitted.

Deadline: 21 February 2021, 17:00 GMT

The awards will be announced in March 2021 with funding available from August 2021.

Please note all applications should be accompanied by the required documents listed in Stage Two. Incomplete applications will not be considered.

For submissions and all enquiries, please contact [Sandra Sfeir](mailto:s.sfeir@lse.ac.uk), Projects Manager, at s.sfeir@lse.ac.uk and +44 (0)20 7955 6198.