**e-Asia Joint Research Programme (e-Asia JRP)**

**08th Joint Call for Proposals on Agriculture - 2019**

**Guidelines**

**The e-ASIA Joint Research Program (e-ASIA JRP)** aims to develop a vibrant and collaborative research community in Science and Technology, to promote innovation in the East Asian region, and to contribute to the region’s economic development. It pursues synergistic, supplemental and leveraged effects by multilateral cooperation. Several science and Technology funding organizations in the region have obtained the membership of this programme.

**National Science Foundation of Sri Lanka (NSF)** collaborates with e-Asia JRP as a Guest Partner. Thus, the researchers of Sir Lanka could actively participate in the collaborative multilateral joint research projects under e-Asia JRP.

## Theme and sub-themes/Topics of the Joint Call

The aim of this 08th joint call for proposals of e-Asia JRP on Agriculture is to pursue innovative technologies and sustainable solutions to common challenges across the region to meet food production requirements of Asia. **The** **theme** of this call is **“Conservation, Improvement and Utilization of Animal Genetic Resources in Asia”**.

Animal genetic resources for food and agriculture are the primary biological capital for **livestock** development and **aquaculture**, as well as essential to food security. Despite their huge potential contribution to economic growth and sustainable society, animal genetic resources for food and agriculture are not fully tapped in conservation, improvement or utilization. This issue has resulted in substantial erosion of genetic diversity in livestock. The problem, in general, has accelerated in recent years in many developing countries including Asian Region. As a consequence, it has adversely affected food production from animal-based sources. This problem poses risks and vulnerabilities against possible threats such as disease outbreaks and emergencies in farming environment caused by natural and human-made disasters, climate changes etc. Also, it is a big threat in food security to sustainable feeding to growing population in the region.

**Some possible (but not limited to)** **focus sub themes** under the above theme for collaborative research would be;

1) Elucidate the detailed genetic background of the resources by harmoniously using cutting-edge and conventional technologies (genetics, molecular biology, genomics, etc.);

2) Develop innovative methods for the conservation of the genetic resources by developing novel technologies (molecular and reproductive biotechnologies, etc.) and stakeholder participation;

3) Identify genetic traits conferring tolerance to biotic/abiotic stresses, and nutritional/functional values as food, for utilizing the genetic resources to breeding;

4) Create databases which store useful information on animal genetic bioresources (phenotypic, genotypic, agronomic, etc.) in a manner to be shared by researchers (as well as all the stakeholders) in the regions

**Relevant (but not limited to) areas of study in Livestock and Aquaculture fields:**

Animal Production, Animal Physiology/Chemistry, Animal Taxonomy, Animal Behaviour, Animal Nutrition, System Genome Science, Molecular Biology and Biotechnology, Cell Biology, Aquaculture, Evolutionary Biology, Veterinary Medicine, Experimental Zoology, Any other significant area.

**International Joint Research Team (Consortium)**

NSF and the following National Science and Technology funding organizations will be participating at the 08th Joint Call for Proposals on Agriculture in 2019:

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Country** | **Participating funding organizations** | **Funding Modality\*** |
| Indonesia | Ministry of Research, Technology and Higher Education (RISTEKDIKTI） | In-kind |
| Japan | Japan Science and Technology Agency (JST) | New |
| Lao PDR | Ministry of Science and Technology (MOST) | In-kind |
| Philippines | Department of Science and Technology (DOST-PCAARRD) | New, In-kind |
| Russia | Russian Foundation for Basic Research (RFBR) | New |
| Sri Lanka | National Science Foundation (NSF) | New |
| Thailand | Thailand Research Fund (TRF) | New |
| Vietnam | Ministry of Science and Technology (MOST) | New, In-kind |

\* New: Each Member Organization or Guest Partner will support a selected project by new funding

In-kind: Each Member Organization or Guest Partner of his/her country does not provide budget. A researcher participating in a selected project will use funds that are already available, but no additional fund will be provided by each Member Organization or Guest Partner from his/her country. Joint proposals cannot be accepted if all the applicants intend to participate through an “in-kind” basis.

A research team from Sri Lanka can join an International Joint Research Team (consortium) by joining with at least **three** **research teams** from at least three different countries listed above. Those foreign research teams have to apply funds from the respective funding organizations of their countries listed above. Sri Lankan research team has to apply to the NSF for funds for this collaborative research.

Each research team shall be led by a Principal Investigator (PI), and a consortium shall be led by a Lead Principal Investigator (Lead PI) specified among the PIs. (See the diagram below).



**The lead PI of the Consortium**

Lead PI is the overall manager of the project and should submit the multilateral collaborative research proposal (using the format at the e-Asia JRP website) by e mail to the e-Asia JRP secretariat on or before **14th May, 2019** on behalf of the consortium.

The Guidelines and the Application form for the Consortium are available at the website of the e-Asia JRP (<http://www.the-easia.org/jrp/index.html>).

The Lead PI will be;

* responsible for running and managing the project
* the contact point with the e-ASIA JRP Secretariat on behalf of the whole consortium
* responsible for the administrative management of the complete project
* responsible for leading the project activities at his/her own institution
* affiliated with an institution situated in one of the participating countries in this call (a must)

**The Sri Lankan Research Team**

The Principal Investigator (PI) of the Sri Lankan research team has to apply to the NSF for funding using the Application form in **Annex 1** of these guidelines**.**

* as a minimum qualification the PI should possess a Masters’ degree with minimum of one year full time research component. Having publications in referred journals/indexed journals will be an added advantage.
* Could have a maximum of two ongoing grants as a Principal Investigator at NSF including this grant.
* The task of identifying international collaborators and preparing a joint proposal is the responsibility of the Sri Lankan PI.
* All correspondences regarding the e-Asia JRP grant will be made by the NSF with the Sri Lankan PI.
* Responsible for running and managing the Sri Lankan component of the multilateral joint research project
* Responsible for submitting progress reports, financial reports and presenting the progress
* Responsible for submitting the final report and presenting the outputs of the project
* The Head of Institution of the Sri Lankan PI’s Institution and the Sri Lankan PI will be responsible for signing the Collaborative Research Agreement (CRA) with the Heads of other collaborating Institutions

**Local research team**:

* The PI should be a Scientist/researcher, university academic, post-doctoral researcher permanently attached to the government /semi-government sector of Sri Lanka. If the main research team is from the private sector, at least one of the Sri Lankan collaborators residing in Sri Lanka should be from a public sector research institute or a university of Sri Lanka.
* Researchers from industry are encouraged to participate in the joint collaboration as ‘collaborators’
* Early career researchers (who has completed his/her doctoral degree in the last 10 years) and pre-doctoral researchers in international collaborative research activities are encouraged to be included in the research team

There should be only **one Sri Lankan team** **in one** **International Joint Research Team (Consortium).** There can be any number of International Joint Research Teams (Consortia) applying for this call.

**Duration**

* **Duration of the Call for Proposals:**

The 08th Joint Call for Proposals by e-Asia JRP on Agriculture will be open from 18th January to 14th May, 2019.

* **Duration of the selected Multilateral collaborative research projects:**

The **duration** of a selected research project will be **three years** (36 months), in total, from the start date. The start date will be in early 2020.

**Funding**

National Science Foundation (NSF) will fund the local research component of the Sri Lankan team, related to this International Joint Research project.

A maximum of LKR 10,000,000/- per project per year will be allocated for three years. NSF expects to fund maximum three (03) collaborative research projects under this call for proposals.

For Principal Investigators from Sri Lanka who have received previous grants from NSF or any other funding agency, the budget per year shall not exceed LKR 10 Million including allocations for Research Personnel. For PIs who have not received any other research funding before from NSF or any other funding agency, the budget for the first year shall not exceed LKR 05 Million including allocations for Research Personnel. All PIs should attach evidence of previous research grants received from NSF or any other funding agency along with their application.

**Main components of the proposal**

a) Research Background and Goal (including a description of the ongoing research activities, specific advantages for the Sri Lankan research team and the special strengths of each research group)

b) Approach (a clear description of the technical approach how the project will address the issues to be solved and how the collaboration will be carried out, with clear statements of the roles the Sri Lankan researchers will play respectively in the project)

c) Expected Outcome (scientifically as well as in terms of relevance for industry and society (esp. how to contribute to requirements from society and how to reach such requirements))

d) Synergy of the Joint Research Activity (including how the competence, technology and other resources in collaborating research teams complement each other and the expected added value from the proposed joint project)

e) Research Plan (Itemize the specific research activities that will be done by the Sri Lankan research team each year. The targets to be achieved and the role of the team should be included)

f) Description of how the project is expected to help strengthen multilateral research collaboration over the longer term

Above should be given due attention along with the other components of the application when filling the application form for the NSF by the Sri Lankan PI.

**Submission of Applications**

The application format in **Annex 1** is to be filled and submitted to the NSF by the PI of the Sri Lankan research team. (Simultaneously, the Lead PI fills and submits the e-Asia JRP proposal format regarding the whole consortium, to the e-Asia JRP Secretariat).

Following have to be received by the Director General/NSF on or before **14th May 2019**.

1. A complete original hard copy of the application (with all the attachments, signatures and official stamps)
2. Two complete sets of photocopies of the application (with all the attachments, signatures and official stamps)
3. An e-version of the complete original application (with all the attachments)

All applications should be addressed to; Director General, National Science Foundation, 47/5, Maitland Place, Colombo 07 (dg@nsf.gov.lk) and copied to Mr Shantha Siri. Head/International Liaison Division, National Science Foundation (shantha@nsf.gov.lk). (Please indicate as ‘e-Asia JRP’ at the top left hand corner of the envelope).

A complete submission should have all the above three components (i.e. Original compete application with attachments, 02 sets of photocopies with attachments and the e-version of the complete original application with attachments).

**Late or Incomplete applications and applications which have not been prepared according to the NSF specified format will be rejected.**

**Evaluation**

A proposal will be evaluated at each relevant Funding Organization of the project consortium, according to the evaluation criteria given below.

Based on the results of the evaluation conducted at each Funding Organization, a final decision will be made at the joint panel meeting among the participating Funding Organizations, followed by approval at the e-ASIA JRP Board Meeting.

**Evaluation Criteria:**

**e-Asia JRP Evaluation Criteria:**

**1) Regional Relevance of the Research**

The research activity should contribute to:

• The advancement of scientific discovery;

• The development of science and technology in the region;

• The resolution of significant relevant issues across the region

**2) Mutual Benefits of the Joint Research**

Value addition, synergy or complementarity brought in through multilateral collaboration which cannot be achieved through a bilateral collaboration.

**3) Effectiveness of Exchange**

The project should:

• Contain activities to nurture early career researchers through research activities;

• Contain activities to engage female researchers where strengthening capacity is needed;

• Enhance research capacity in the region

**NSF Evaluation Criteria:**

**4) Knowledge transfer between research groups abroad and the research group in Sri Lanka**

**5) Subject-related, institutional, interdisciplinary value addition by the multilateral research**

**6) Scientific quality of the project (clarity of project objectives and methodology)**

**7) Scientific status of the project: national relevance, topicality and degree of innovation of**

 **the project**

**8) Feasibility of the research project (in particular: preliminary work, financial and further**

 **planning)**

**9) Project-relevant competence of the research groups (articles published in indexed and Peer-reviewed Journals, patents acquired, national/international awards received and experience in the field)**

**10) Credibility of the institution where the research is carried out in other three countries**

**11) Complementarity of the research groups in the multilateral research project (with regard to methodology, content, instruments)**

**12) Scientific and potential industrial usability of the potential project results**

**13) Involvement of early career scientists (who have completed their doctoral degree in the last 10 years)**

**Project Implementation**

As soon as the decision on settlement is finalized, it will be communicated to the local PI by the NSF. Then the PI of the Sri Lankan team shall take the necessary action to sign the Collaborative Research Agreement (CRA) with the foreign parties and submit a copy of same to NSF. Thereafter, the NSF will issue the formal letter of award followed by the Agreement to be signed with the NSF.

**Collaborative Research Agreement (CRA)**

All the researchers/research institutions organizing a consortium have to conclude a Collaborative Research Agreement (CRA) to assure optimal understanding and coordination among the collaborating scientists working on each project **before project starts**.

CRA should, with due respect to the researchers’ institutions and the NSFs’ intellectual property and data handling policy, include the following;

* The Sri Lankan research team should make sure that any intellectual property generated through Sri Lanka component is protected and exploited for socioeconomic benefit of Sri Lanka. This should be clearly addressed in the Agreement
* Handling of confidential information
* Publication of research results
* Warranty and indemnification
* Access to and transfer of the bio-resources

After signing and completing the CRA, a copy of it has to be submitted to the NSF by the Sri Lankan PI.

**Reporting**

**Progress Review:**

* Once every 06 month, the Sri Lankan PI should submit a progress report, financial report and present the progress to the NSF.
* In the middle of research period (i.e., after one and a half year), the lead PI shall promptly develop and submit an integrated progress report of the consortium to the e-ASIA JRP Secretariat on the status of the joint research

**Final Report**

* A final report shall be developed and submitted by the Lead PI to the e-ASIA JRP Secretariat within two months after the completion of the joint research period.
* A final report according to the NSF format has to be submitted to the NSF within three months of completion of the project indicating the outputs and outcomes of the particular multilateral collaborative research project, signed by the Sri Lankan PI, lead PI and the other PIs of the consortium.
* Sri Lankan PIs who fail to submit reports within the specified time may be ineligible in receiving further grants from NSF.

**Others**

* The funding rules, specific guidelines and contact information of the other funding agencies participating at this multilateral call are included in the e-Asia JRP Guideline at: <http://www.the-easia.org/jrp/index.html>
* The International collaborators must be present for the duration of time the grantee is visiting the foreign institution and similarly the local applicant must be present for the duration of the time the International collaborator is visiting the local Institution.
* Accommodation for all foreign collaborators should be arranged through the counterpart (Sri Lankan) institution with which they will be collaborating.
* Similarly, accommodation for the Sri Lankan PI during the period of stay at one of the respective foreign countries should be arranged by the PIs of the foreign collaborating parties. Preference will be given to partnerships with partial support.
* Visa Arrangements are the responsibility of the Principal Investigator.
* Sri Lankan PI and the International Collaborators agree to comply with all lawful directions of local and foreign institutions.
* It is mandatory that recipients acknowledge support from the NSF in their reports, publications, and presentations as an indication of the use made by public funds towards scientific advancement and national capacity building.

* All Project team members from Sri Lanka should register at the STMIS database of the NSF and mention the membership number in the relevant place of the Application.
* Any further queries regarding this call could be made to:

Director General National Science Foundation Sri Lanka Phone: +94 112 209502

E mail: dg@nsf.gov.lk

and Copy to:

Mr Shantha Siri Head of the International Liaison Division National Science Foundation Phone: +94 11 2209507 Email: shantha@nsf.gov.lk