

ACSS Research Grants Program

Inequality, Mobility and Development in the Arab Region

Answers to Frequently Asked Questions

Eligibility

If I have not yet obtained my PhD at the time of application, can I still apply as an individual researcher?

Yes, but only if you expect to be awarded the PhD before January 2015. Applicants applying as individual researchers must have a PhD in hand by 1 January 2015.

If I do not have a PhD, can I still apply as part of a research team?

Yes. Applicants with a master's degree or who are in a PhD program are welcome to apply as part of research teams where the lead researcher is a more senior scholar who holds a PhD. If the co-researcher is in a PhD program the proposal should state clearly how the proposed research relates (or not) to the PhD program.

Will the ACSS RGP only fund projects that implement the research within the Arab region?

Yes and no. Proposals that focus predominantly on locations in the Arab region are encouraged. Proposals suggesting comparative research between the Arab region and elsewhere are welcome; however the majority of the ACSS funds should go towards covering the research costs in the Arab region.

Does the ACSS RGP have geographical restrictions within the Arab region?

No. The ACSS funds research in any part of the Arab region as well as in multiple sites within the region.

Your Call for Proposals specifically mentions the social sciences – will you consider proposals from researchers in the humanities?

Yes, the ACSS employs a broad definition of the social sciences that includes the core social sciences such as anthropology, demography, economics, political science, psychology sociology. Furthermore “allied disciplines” such as art, architecture, geography, history, law, literature, linguistics, philosophy and public health and interdisciplinary fields such as gender studies, cultural studies, media studies, development studies and urban studies are also eligible for funding.

What is the expected duration of research?

The ACSS RGP research grants provide support for a maximum of 15 months of research. The ACSS funded research must take place in the period between 15 March 2015 and 15 June 2016.

Am I eligible to apply for the ACSS RGP grant if I am from an Arab country but not “Arab” or do not hold the citizenship of an Arab country?

Yes. The ACSS RGP program welcomes proposals from researchers in the social sciences who are from an Arab country¹ or resident in an Arab country, even when they are citizenless or not regarded as “Arab” (by others or themselves). Applicants are eligible if they are nationals (not necessarily citizens) of an Arab country living in the Arab region (for example citizenless Palestinians, Kurds, or other individuals/groups denied citizenship for political or other reasons). In addition, researchers living outside the Arab region who can trace their origin to the region (even one or more generations removed) are also eligible.

Am I eligible to apply for the ACSS RGP grant if I am a citizen of an Arab country but am living abroad, outside of the Arab region?

Yes. The online application form will ask for details of your previous and current citizenship and residence.

Am I eligible to apply for the ACSS RGP grant if I am originally from an Arab country, or my parents/ancestors were from an Arab country but I no longer hold an Arab citizenship and am living outside of the Arab region?

Yes, but the application form will ask you to specify your relationship to the region. Only researchers with robust research experience and engagement in the region will be considered.

Am I eligible to apply for the ACSS RGP grant if I am not from an Arab country however I am a specialist interested and working on the Arab region?

No. Unfortunately the ACSS RGP grant is not open for this category of researchers.

Am I eligible to apply if the research is a “pilot” for a major research that will follow?

Yes. The ACSS RGP grant is open for research projects at any stage of their development including the “pilot” phase.

Will the ACSS RGP only fund projects based on empirical research?

Yes. The ACSS RGP is interested in research projects that are grounded in empirical research, and their analysis and write up, but not necessarily dependent on field work. Other data sources might include archival and textual analysis among others.

Will the ACSS RGP only fund research proposals adopting certain methods?

No. The ACSS grant is open to proposals suggesting research designs using a variety of qualitative and/or quantitative research methods.

¹ Algeria, Bahrain, Comoros, Djibouti, Egypt, Iraq, Jordan, Kuwait, Lebanon, Libya, Mauritania, Morocco, Oman, Palestine, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, Somalia, Sudan, Syria, Tunisia, United Arab Emirates and Yemen.

I am a current ACSS grantee; however, the end date of my grant coincides with the supposed starting date of the ACSS RGP. Am I eligible to apply?

Yes. In principle you cannot hold more than one ACSS grant concurrently. However, if your grant ends by the time the ACSS RGP commences, you are eligible to apply given that you will be able to fulfill the duties for both programs as per the specified timelines.

We are a team of two researchers, where the principal researcher fits within the eligibility criteria, yet the second researcher is of a non-Arab nationality/or origin. Are we eligible to apply under a joint research project?

Yes. If the principal/lead researcher fits within the eligibility criteria, you are eligible to apply as a team under a joint research project.

Application Process

How do I apply for the ACSS RGP grant?

Applicants must submit an online application. This will be available through the ACSS website (<http://www.theacss.org>) starting 4 August 2014.

It is not possible for me to submit an online application due to technical difficulties. Does this mean I cannot apply for the RGP research grant?

No. In extenuating circumstances the ACSS will accept a paper application. If you wish to discuss this option, you must contact ACSS staff (grants@theacss.org) well in advance of the 20 November 2014 deadline to obtain additional instructions on how to submit a non-electronic application.

I wish to apply for a collaborative research grant with multiple researchers. Do we each need to submit an on-line application form?

No, only one application form (and accompanying narrative) will be required per project. Members of research teams are expected to view the application form and to discuss the proposal fully with their colleagues before submitting. Teams should appoint one individual to oversee the submission process – this individual will receive all email correspondence about the grant, including notification that the application has been submitted and notification of the selection committee's decisions. However it is expected that all members of the team have participated in the proposal preparation. If a proposal is recommended for funding by the selection committee and the team composition changes, the whole proposal would likely become ineligible for funding.

When is the deadline for the 2015 ACSS RGP application?

You must complete and submit your online application before 11:00 pm (Al-Quds/Beirut Time) on 20 November 2014. In case you face any technical problem using the online application system, make sure to email all the requirements to grants@theacss.org by the deadline.

Do I need to complete the on-line application all at once?

No. You may return to the on-line application as many times as necessary between the 4 August 2014 and the application deadline. Be sure to save your work after you finish each section of the application – the online application will contain detailed instructions on how to do this. Once the application has been submitted, you will no longer be able to alter the information.

Can I ask for feedback on my application before submission?

Yes and no. The ACSS will provide applicants with general feedback on whether their proposed research subject falls under the Call's theme, fulfils eligibility requirements and specific issues regarding the application materials requested. However applicants will not be provided with feedback on the content and quality of their application and narrative proposal.

If my application is not successful, will I receive feedback as to why my proposal was not selected?

No. Unfortunately, we are unable to provide feedback on unsuccessful applications.

As stated in the call for proposals, the criteria for proposal evaluation are:

- 1- Contribution to Knowledge (Research Question/ Significance and Originality),
- 2- Theoretical and Conceptual Coherence and Literature Review,
- 3- Methodology,
- 4- Outputs (Dissemination/ Potential Impact) and
- 5- Feasibility (CVs/ Researchers' Qualifications/ Timeline).

Application Components

What details will be required for the application?

Applicants will be required to submit the following:

- **Online application form:** The online application form will ask applicants to specify contact and biographical details for all researchers seeking support through the ACSS Research Grants Program, as well as project details, including the following:
 - Project Details (title, 250 word abstract, duration and location(s) of research)
 - Project History (if relevant) including earlier phases of the project and future expectations as well as collaborators who may not be participating in this phase of the project
 - Proposed Outputs of the Project which may include publications (web and print); theses and dissertations, scholarly resources (eg websites, curriculum development, bibliographies), visual representations including exhibitions, film and other media.

- Personal and professional details on each researcher (including name, countries of citizenship, contact email, current position/institution, brief 100 word bio, education, language proficiency, employment history, relevant publications).
- The names and contact information for two academic references who can attest to the significance and feasibility of the proposed project

Applicants will also be asked to upload the following documents to the online application form.

1. **Narrative proposal** (maximum of 15-pages, double-spaced). Please see the ACSS website and Call for Proposals for more details.
2. **Appendix 1: Project time-line and outputs** (maximum of 2-pages, may be single-spaced). Please see the ACSS website and Call for Proposals for more details.
3. **Appendix 2: CV/s** for all researchers seeking support through ACSS RGP grants program
4. **Appendix 3: Project Budget** (completed on the form provided on the website)
5. **Appendix 4 (Only for Group Projects):** All team members are requested to sign this form (electronic signatures or scanned hard copy) to express their commitment to the project and their roles as identified in Appendix 1

Do I have to submit my budget in the form provided?

Project budgets may only be submitted using the **Project Budget Request Form** provided on the website. If you are not sure of any of the details of your expenses, e.g. when you expect to conduct a field trip or how much tickets cost, please provide as accurate an estimate as possible (e.g. September 2015 or September-October 2015). Incomplete forms will not be considered.

The form includes detailed instructions for its completion, but you may write to us if you have further questions about filling out the form.

Do I have to submit the Project Timeline Outputs in the Form Provided?

Yes. Please use the form provided for Appendix 1, following the guidelines stated on the form.

The Application Form only allows me to enter the information for five researchers. Is this the maximum size of a research team? What if I would like to have a larger team of researchers?

As a general guideline, we discourage group projects of more than five researchers. However, if you have compelling reasons to include more than five researchers, please explain this in a special note in your proposal and it will be considered by the Selection Committee.

Do I need to provide written references?

No. Applicants need to provide names and contact details for 2 academic referees, but do not need to provide written reference letters at the application stage.

How will I know that my application is complete?

After you have successfully submitted your application, you will receive a confirmation email from the ACSS.

Grants Details

When will award announcements be made?

All applicants will receive notification emails by 29 January 2015.

What happens after I am selected for a grant?

Successful applicants will receive provisional Award Letters confirming their selection and, if applicable, requests for clarification and elaboration from the Selection Committee.

They will then be expected to:

- 1) Submit a final revised proposal, timeline and budget addressing any issues raised by the Selection Committee, by 24 February 2015; and
- 2) Attend a workshop on March 11-12, 2015 where they will meet the Selection Committee members, present their projects for feedback and, receive orientation about ACSS ethics, reporting and budgeting guidelines and sign their grant contracts.

The workshop will take place on March 11-12, 2015 in Beirut, Lebanon and is part of a larger ACSS event, the second ACSS Conference held from March 13-15, 2015, where there will be an opportunity as well to meet grantees and coordinators from other ACSS programs, such as Producing the Public and New Paradigms Factory.

Do I have to attend the March 11-12, 2015 Workshop in Lebanon?

By submitting a grant application, applicants are expressing their commitment to attend the RGP workshop in the case that their proposal receives provisional acceptance. In case of team projects, only the lead researcher is required to attend the workshop although other team members are encouraged to do so.

All expenses of attending the workshop would be covered separately by the ACSS and will not come out of the grant budget.

When can I begin my ACSS- RGP research if I am selected for funding?

ACSS funded research may begin as early as 15 March 2015 (activities conducted prior to March 2015 will not be supported by ACSS).

When must I end all ACSS-RGP funded activities if I am selected for funding?

The RGP grant term will end on 15 June 2016 (project-related activities conducted after 15 June 2016 will not be supported by ACSS).

What is the ACSS- RGP grant amount?

The grant amount will vary depending on the research proposal. Teams might be granted up to a maximum of \$50,000 and individuals up to a maximum \$20,000. The Selection Committee will only approve budget requests that are commensurate with the planned activities and expected outputs of the project. The selection committee and ACSS staff will review each budget on a case by case basis and the total as well as the detailed awarded budget may not necessarily correspond to the requested one.

What does the RGP grant cover? Conversely, what doesn't the RGP grant cover?

Budgets may include: fieldwork expenses (including accommodation away from the home location), travel and transportation related to the research, living expenses, honoraria for short-term consultants providing specific technical advice, and meetings/workshops costs (especially in the case of collaborative, team research), as well as purchase of research equipment, software, books, stationery and other supplies. Please note that you must submit receipts of all expenses incurred as part of your financial reporting.

Budgets may not include: university/research center overhead, or travel expenses/registration fees for conferences and workshops. Under exceptional circumstances, the Selection Committee may approve the dedication of a portion of the grant to stipends or salary replacements. However, the stipend amount cannot exceed one third of the total requested grant amount.

I am applying for multiple grants. Should I be awarded the ACSS grant, can I also accept funding from other sources?

Yes, but researchers cannot accept funding from ACSS and another organization for the same expenses for the same research period. The ACSS will need a clear budget that is acceptable to ACSS and to other funding organizations.

Do ACSS grants go directly to the researchers or are they channeled through a university?

The ACSS will follow the researcher's wishes in this regard. However, project funds cannot go towards university overhead or to fund personnel not part of the project team.

If applying collaboratively, will each member of a research team receive budget funds directly, or must all research funds be funneled through the project's principal investigator?

All funds will be channeled through the collaborative team's principal investigator, who will be responsible for reporting on the grant and submitting the required receipts.

What will be required of grantees once they are awarded RGP funding?

Awarded individuals and teams of researchers are expected to:

- Submit a revised proposal, timeline and budget request, by 24 February 2015 that responds to requests for clarification or elaboration put forward by the Selection Committee in its preliminary acceptance decision.
- Attend the first RGP workshop on March 11-12, 2015 in Beirut, Lebanon (details above).
- Submit interim narrative and financial reports every four months (number of reports will depend on project duration). Financial reports should include the original receipts for all project expenses.
- Submit final narrative and financial report within 60-days of the end of the grant term
- Produce project related content for the ACSS website (such as project descriptions and profiles of researchers)
- Produce the outputs identified in the submitted proposal in accordance with the project timeline (Appendix 1).
- Attend two ACSS organized events/workshops: the March 11-12, 2015 workshop and one other event to be held in 2015 or 2016 that will be announced well in advance, where all grantees will present papers on their projects. (Costs of attendance at these events should not be budgeted for in the proposals. They will be covered directly by ACSS.)

What ACSS organized events are we expected to attend?

Grantees are required to attend the RGP workshop on 11-12 March, 2015 in Beirut, Lebanon, as well as one other event to be held in 2015 or 2016 that will be announced well in advance. In addition the ACSS may organize panels at conferences and workshops that aim at providing researchers with a platform to discuss or disseminate their project results. Participation in these would be strongly encouraged but not required.

Will the ACSS share the information submitted in the proposal with other bodies?

By submitting the application, you are granting the ACSS at its own discretion the right to share information with other institutions (including donor agencies) on your research title, objectives, location and the researchers' contact information. In case of compelling circumstances limited exceptions can be made on a case by case basis.