



التكنولوجيا والتنمية العلوم صندوق
Science & Technology Development Fund



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Ministry of Scientific Research

STDF Grants for ACCREDITED CENTERS OF SCIENTIFIC EXCELLENCE (STDF-ACSE)

Science and Technology Development Fund

www.stdf.eg

Call for Proposals

January, 2019



التكنولوجيا والتنمية العلوم صندوق

Science & Technology Development Fund



وزارة البحث العلمي

Ministry of Scientific Research

I. Scope

STDF's mandated objectives are to improve Egypt's research and development (R&D) environment, to fund S&T activities and to develop the innovation capacity in Egypt. STDF implements its objectives within the context of the National S&T Development Strategy, which is in line with the national “Sustainable Development Strategy: Egypt’s Vision 2030”.

STDF invests significant funds to improve the research and development capacity in universities and research institutions. The SCSE program reflects STDF’s intention to build upon what has been achieved and improve the focus to better utilize and develop the available national research capacities in areas identified to be of national priority (as stated in the National S&T Development Strategy and Egypt vision 2030).

The scope of this call “ACCREDITED CENTERS OF SCIENTIFIC EXCELLENCE (ACSE)” is the improvement of the research-supporting environment by improving the research infrastructure. This call targets to provide scientific research equipment for the establishment of Accredited Centers of Scientific Excellence in Egyptian institutions, taking into consideration the geographical and socioeconomic aspects. This grant is directed towards institutions and not individual researchers with the intention of upgrading research facilities and supporting the establishment of Mega-scale Research Facilities. The applications shall be submitted by the research institutions. The grant is provided within the framework of the research strategy of the applicant institution. **Each university or research institution can receive funding for a maximum of one Center of Excellence**, irrespective of the number of faculties or research entities of the institution. Each University or Research Institution shall submit **only 3 pre-proposals**; any extra submission will be excluded from the evaluation process referring to the date and time of submission.

The STDF aims at acting as a catalyst to the to the national Science, Technology and Innovation (STI) institutional and human assets to positively contribute to the increase of the national GDP. STDF’s administration, thus, urges all universities



التكنولوجيا والتنمية العلوم صندوق

Science & Technology Development Fund



وزارة البحث العلمي

Ministry of Scientific Research

and research institutions aiming at playing a role in the fulfillment of national societal needs to submit proposals submissions in STDF related calls.

II. Grant Objectives

The SCSE grant is a targeted capacity building grant for high caliber **accredited centers of excellence**, fostering state-of-the-art research work serving the community, government and/or industry and addressing the national strategic priority themes via the following:

- Establishing accredited Centers of Scientific Excellence based on existing capabilities and competences, and serves the national priority areas of Egypt (as listed in **Section III**).
- Promoting top-level research work serving the community, industrial and governmental needs and fulfill customer requests, specify the customer targeting the scope of accreditation addressed in the proposal and rate the values of the service proposed.
- Improving the research quality of Egyptian institutions in national priority areas, thus making Egyptian researchers and institutions more internationally competitive in these areas.
- Supporting the acquisition of major state-of-the-art equipment, thereby improving scientists' access to modern research equipment **without duplication of services** already provisioned by previous investments.
- Promoting substantive and meaningful partnerships between academia and private sector institutions. Such partnerships have the potential to build capacity and **develop industrial sectors** with the help of academia in leading research and development efforts.
- **Enabling academic-industrial and society collaborations** to implement promising research outputs and services to solve actual problems through creating well equipped credible research environments.
- **Acquisition of optional and auxiliary parts** related to acquired equipment hence enhancing the capabilities of existing facilities.



التكنولوجيا والتنمية العلوم صندوق

Science & Technology Development Fund



وزارة البحث العلمي

Ministry of Scientific Research

III. SCSE Priority Areas:

The long-term plan of the STDF includes the establishment of Centers of Scientific Excellence in the different research areas identified to be of national priority. In this call, funding will only be provided for Centers of Scientific Excellence specialized in the **Ministry of Scientific Research**

Strategic Goals:



Multidisciplinary proposals will be highly supported.

IV. Budget and Eligible Expenses

The STDF offers a maximum of 20 Million budget to Accredited Center of Scientific Excellence. Full justification of the budget requested should be provided. Grant applications must include a detailed estimated budget in which all expenditures are given in Egyptian Pounds. Budgets should be carefully developed and should not be overestimated. STDF reserves the right to reject a proposal with a budget



التكنولوجيا والتنمية العلوم صندوق

Science & Technology Development Fund



وزارة البحث العلمي

Ministry of Scientific Research

that is considered as overestimated by STDF's reviewers. **The suitability of the requested budget will be judged based on the importance of the proposed center of excellence, the clarity of the institution's vision, the link between the proposed scope of accreditation , and the requested equipment, expenditure and supplies. The importance of the test methods addressed in the scope of accreditation in phase II and for the extension of the scope in phase III, the scope of accreditation fulfillment of the customer needs and for the society, as well as the importance and the impact of service proposed., the appropriateness of the requested budget items, as well as fulfilling the different project evaluation criteria (as listed in section V).** The eligible expenditures of the grant must be directly linked to performing the capacity building activities of the Center of Excellence. **Accordingly, the project's budget can only be directed towards the following items:**

- Cost of equipment, as well as optional and auxiliary parts (including the cost of shipping and handling, as well as applicable taxes and customs).
Equipment requested shall be essential for the test methods addressed in the scope of accreditation without duplication.
- Incentives for the research team, including technicians and manual laborers (not exceed 400,000 EGP per proposal).
- Consumable supplies and materials: including stationery, research supplies (chemicals, kits, glassware, etc.).
- Accreditation requirements costs, including but not limited to; purchasing of standard test methods, annual training of staff, requirements to fulfill the accommodation and environmental conditions, participation in proficiency tests, equipment annual calibration, maintenance and intermediate check, and all requirements addressed by accreditation body.
- Publishing and report preparation costs.
- Dissemination and marketing of the lab services and research outputs through conferences, workshops, etc. (local).



التكنولوجيا والتنمية العلوم صندوق

Science & Technology Development Fund



وزارة البحث العلمي

Ministry of Scientific Research

- Cost of equipment maintenance (for the duration of the project): Equipment shall be maintained by the original equipment manufacturers or their authorized agents/dealers. The cost of equipment maintenance after the end of the project should be covered by the research institution from the share of the revenues of the Center of Scientific Excellence allocated for maintained, or from any other source.
- **Indirect costs** (Maximum of 5% of the modified total direct cost, 1% of total budget not more than 150,000 EGP , considering the lower): to be used by the research institution for covering the costs of accountants, administrative staff, as well as the necessary infrastructure (furniture, air conditioning and ventilation systems, etc.), but it does not include building(s).
- Costs of sustainability: After the end of the project all the costs needed for sustainability of the SCSE and continuation of its accreditation shall be totally covered by the research institution from the revenues of the Center of Scientific Excellence, or from any other source.

V. Eligibility Criteria

The following eligibility criteria apply to this grant:

- Any public Egyptian research entity (university, research institution/center...etc.), having well-documented scientific research and development activities, with tangible research outcomes (patents – internationally published papers – prototypes – products) in one of the outlined priority areas, is eligible for funding in accordance with the governing rules and regulations of governmental funding.
- Each institution is allowed to **submit three pre-proposals** only, any extra pre-proposals submission will be excluded from the evaluation process, referring to the time and date of submission of the STDF site. Priority will be given to institutions having excellent research teams in national priority



التكنولوجيا والتنمية العلوم صندوق

Science & Technology Development Fund



وزارة البحث العلمي

Ministry of Scientific Research

areas and/or related areas of expertise. Each institution will be **granted for maximum one proposal.**

- The applying institution has to appoint an Egyptian individual who has a Ph.D. or M.D. degree, and is affiliated to the institution, to act as the project's Principal Investigator (PI). The PI must have high h-index, citation and publications in Scopus. If the proposal is approved for funding, the appointed individual will be the Director/Manager of the accredited Center of Scientific Excellence. The institution should also appoint a co-PI, who will replace the PI in case he/she becomes, for any reason, unable to carry on his role as the Director/Manager. **Quality manager** and the **technical manager** shall be **nominated for each unit** within the ACSE and their CVs shall indicate their relevant expertise in the proposed topic for the ACSE.
- The individual appointed by the applying institution, All the key persons shall be totally committed to fulfill all the accreditation requirements (technical and managerial) and to support sustainable management of the proposed Accredited Center of Scientific Excellence.
- For individuals who are the PIs of an STDF Capacity Building or Center of Excellence project, this program requires that they must have finished their projects successfully..
- Including young researchers (under the age of 40) and/or graduate (Ph.D. or M.Sc.) students in the research team is encouraged.
- The proposal must include a description of the **research institution's long-term research plan**, which has clearly defined objectives and desired outcomes.
- Detailed **need assessment** shall be clearly identified to determine the addressed needs with full **gap analysis** between the current position and the desired one. Appropriate identification of the needs is requested, and shall be based on the discrepancy between the current condition and desired one.



التكنولوجيا والتنمية العلوم صندوق

Science & Technology Development Fund



وزارة البحث العلمي

Ministry of Scientific Research

- The proposal should also clearly state how the **equipment requested will help in achieving the addressed scope of accreditation** as given in the proposal. Extra fund request and/or extra equipment apart from those needed to cover the scope of accreditation to get the desired outcomes, will subject rejection of the whole proposal
- The proposal must include the institution's offered **business model** to run the Center of Excellence; The institution must show its policy regarding sustainability, equipment maintenance, fulfilling accreditation requirements and certification sustainability and support service to the industrial, governmental entities and costumers.
- An **endorsement letter** from the applying research institution; stamped and signed by the head of institution, stating that establishing the Center of Scientific Excellence is in line with the institution's strategic plan, must be submitted with the proposal.
- The implementation period of the project should be -up to 3 years.
 - Phase I: 1 year addressing purchasing of equipment, infrastructure and training on equipment and test methods addressed in the scope.
 - Phase II: 1 year fulfill the initial scope of accreditation (5-10 test methods) managerial and technical requirements.
 - Phase III: 1 year addressing the extension of the scope (5-10 test methods) and the technical requirements.

VI. Grant Phases

The proposal is to be submitted in three phases. Phase-I pre-proposal should outline the technical plan for all three phases and focus on the budget of phase I only. Upon successful completion of each phase, the PI is required to continue to the following one. Successful project closure requires obtaining accreditation from the accreditation body (EGAC).



التكنولوجيا والتنمية العلوم صندوق

Science & Technology Development Fund



وزارة البحث العلمي

Ministry of Scientific Research

Phase-I: Establishment of the Center of Excellence with complete identification of the test methods proposed for accreditation. Phase I may extend for 1 year.

Phase-II: Accreditation of a specific scope for the center of excellence to implement all the requirements of accreditation (managerial and technical requirements). Phase-II may extend for 1 year.

Phase-III: extension of the scope of accreditation for the center of excellence to cover all the test methods addressed in the original proposal. Phase III may extend for 1 year.

VII. Timeline

- Launch of Call for Pre-proposals: 15st of January, 2019
- Deadline for Submission of pre-proposals: 17th of February, 2019 at 12:00 am
- Announcement of selected pre-proposals: 31st of March, 2019
- Deadline for Submission of full proposals: 12nd of May, 2019 at 12:00 am
- Funding Decisions will be announced 14th of July, 2019.
- Contracting will be by the end of July, 2019.

VIII. Proposal Submission and Evaluation Process

All applications must be uploaded to the STDF website (www.stdf.org.eg), to which registration is required. The submission will be a two-stage process, as follows:

The first stage: A pre-proposal is submitted (Please download the pre-proposal template by clicking the following link: [Pre-Proposal Template](#))

The Second Stage: The applicant principal investigators, whose pre-proposals were selected in the first stage, will be invited to present their full proposals (full proposal application form will be announced on site after selection).

The proposals will be evaluated by independent experts, and STDF will ensure that the process is transparent, impartial and applicant-supportive.

Proposals submitted to this grant will be subjected to three levels of evaluation:



التكنولوجيا والتنمية العلوم صندوق

Science & Technology Development Fund



وزارة البحث العلمي

Ministry of Scientific Research

- I. **Panel of Experts' Evaluation** of the submitted proposals, in light of the selection criteria listed hereafter.
- II. **Interview** and oral presentation.
- III. **Site visit** and meeting with officials of the host institution to assess the facility preparedness for hosting the Center of Scientific Excellence.

Each panel shall include the following members;

- Three external reviewers relevant to the field of specialty with high h-index and citation.
- Lead Assessor and/or technical assessor in the field of accreditation; accredited from Egyptian accreditation council (EGAC).
- STDF Technical committee member(s) relevant to the field of specialty.
- STDF Selection committee member(s) relevant to the field of specialty.

The **project evaluation criteria** will be as follows:

- The maximum budget must not exceed 20Millions /project.
- A track record of success in the field (for the institution, the PI and the project team).
- Proven experience in the field of the proposed Center of Excellence.
- A clear scope of accreditation (phase II) and the extension of the scope (phase III) and the standard methods addressed with their reference.
- The **need assessment** related to the test methods addressed in the scope proposed for accreditation and for the extension of the scope and the existing relevant research facilities (instruments).
- The host institution's ability and commitment to maintain the Center of Excellence in accordance with international standards, as well as the institution's equipment's services -sharing policy and its ability to enforce it.
- Customers for the services provided by the Center of excellence should be identified



التكنولوجيا والتنمية العلوم صندوق

Science & Technology Development Fund



وزارة البحث العلمي

Ministry of Scientific Research

- A research plan with clear objectives, milestones and expected measurable outcomes.
- Business Model and management plan that ensures sustainability and achievement of accreditation requirement.
- The institution's ability to effectively contribute to the national sustainable development, and/or the socioeconomic development of the region where the Center of Excellence will be established. Cooperation with industry and cooperation with other research institutes is highly encouraged. The proposed Center of Excellence shall address customer requirements and shall add value and credibility in the field of scientific research.

IX. Payment of Funds

When a project is approved by STDF, a contract will be signed by STDF, the Principal Investigator (PI), and the legal representative of the endorsing University or Research Institution/Center. The project budget will be disbursed as follows:

- In installments: The first installment will be disbursed at the beginning of the project. The following installments will be paid after the receipt and approval of the technical and financial progress reports, which will be submitted to STDF in accordance with a report delivery schedule that will be detailed in the funding contract.
- The disbursement of the final installment of the project (10% of the budget) is conditional upon the delivery of the outputs mentioned in the proposal in the scheduled time, and is subject to the internal rules and regulations of STDF.
- Fund disperse must be based on technical reports and purchasing documents with full justification, as follows;
 - Contraction installment 25%, followed by first PR.
 - First installment 35±5 %, followed by second PR.
 - Second installment 30±5 %, followed by third PR.
 - Contracting, first and second installments shall not exceed 90% of the fund.
 - Final installment 10%.



التكنولوجيا والتنمية العلوم صندوق

Science & Technology Development Fund



وزارة البحث العلمي

Ministry of Scientific Research

X. Project Monitoring and Follow-up

Technical progress reports:

Biannual progress reports should be submitted by the PI along the life-cycle of the project, starting after 6 months of project start date. In general, all technical reports should be written using the standard STDF templates.

In cases where modifications in the research team and/or original work plan are necessary, such modifications must be pre-approved by STDF, and the progress reports should include a modified (updated) Gantt chart that takes the approved modifications into consideration.

Final Report and Achievements report:

Within one month following the official end date of the project, the “Final Report” together with an “Achievements Report” video showing the lab activities and addressing the customer targeted must be submitted, using the standard STDF templates for “final reports” and for the “Achievements Report”. Also, short video and a presentation for the achieved objectives will be requested by the end of the project.

Site Visit:By the end of the project and upon submitting and evaluating the “Final Report” together with the “Achievements report”, a visit by STDF representatives including accreditation team to the research institution is expected, with the aim of assessing the final status of the new Accredited Center of Scientific Excellence, and to ensure that the lab has fulfilled the entire technical and managerial requirement according to the approved proposal. The auditing team must have access to all the lab technical and managerial documents and ensure the release of accreditation certificate form the accreditation body (EGAC) and the renewing of the accreditation certificate along years after the end of the project.

The lab shall ensure profits form the lab activities shall be shared with the funding agency (STDF) and acknowledge STDF as funding agency for the project in all lab activities.

STDF logo shall be added to all accredited certifications released from the lab.



التكنولوجيا والتنمية العلوم صندوق

Science & Technology Development Fund



وزارة البحث العلمي

Ministry of Scientific Research

Evaluation of technical reports:

All submitted reports are evaluated by STDF, and feedback will be sent to the project's PI and host institute.

In the event of receiving a progress report that is rejected by evaluators, the PI may be required to present additional follow-up reports (totally independent from the regular progress reports mentioned above). In the event that the evaluators of progress reports give a justified recommendation to terminate the project (for reasons including scientific misconduct by the PI, lack of seriousness, etc.), STDF reserves the right to terminate the project, in which case STDF will recover all funds and expenses paid prior to the project termination date.

Financial Reports:

According to the financial regulations of the government of Egypt, a financial report for the project must be submitted every three months. Copies of all expenditure vouchers must be attached. The reports, as well as all the attached expenditure vouchers, must be signed and stamped by the official seal of the endorsing institution.

XI. General Terms and Conditions

The following terms and conditions apply to the grant:

- All proposals will be evaluated on a competitive basis.
- The application must include a letter from the implementing institution's legal representative stating the project title, the name, position and affiliation of the PI in charge of the proposal, that the project idea was not funded or submitted to another agency (national or international), or otherwise declare, and that the institution approves the project. This letter must be signed and stamped by the institution.
- All proposals must be drafted using the exact formatting requirements for the current call given in the attached pre-proposal /Application Form. Failure to adhere to the exact format required will automatically deem the proposal ineligible.



التكنولوجيا والتنمية العلوم صندوق

Science & Technology Development Fund



وزارة البحث العلمي

Ministry of Scientific Research

- All proposals must be uploaded to the STDF website (www.stdf.org.eg); proposals submitted by e-mail or sent as hard copies will not be considered.
- All proposals must be in English.
- The project team must not include any foreign researchers. However, foreign consultants may be allowed, given that the relevant security approval has been obtained.
- Services provided by the Equipment purchased using STDF funds must be made available to all Egyptian researchers.
- A separate bank account for the project should be opened and managed by the host institution.

XII. Ethical Rules:

Applicants to STDF are expected to maintain a high level of scientific honesty and integrity in all aspects of their work. Applicants are expected to refrain from plagiarism, i.e. "the act of taking credit, or attempting to take credit, for the work of another" (quoted from the publication Ethics Policies for Medical Journals, at www.wame.org). Applicants are also expected to avoid self-plagiarism or multiple submission of the same content in more than one document. Multiple reporting of the same data or results in various projects is also considered self-plagiarism and is strongly discouraged. Fabrication of data or results, or suppression of unexpected results is not accepted by STDF. STDF expects all research activities involving human subjects to strictly follow the bio-ethical guidelines.

Breaching the rules of research integrity will result in halting all research funding activities to the involved parties after thorough investigation and judgment by a specialized STDF committee.

Multiple Submissions of a Project Proposal:

At the time of submitting a project proposal to STDF, the PI is required to provide a statement (stamped and signed by his/her institution) declaring that the submitted proposal has not been simultaneously submitted to STDF (neither under the same funding program, nor under any other STDF funding program) or



التكنولوجيا والتنمية العلوم صندوق

Science & Technology Development Fund



وزارة البحث العلمي

Ministry of Scientific Research

to any other funding agency, and that the project proposal will not be re-submitted to STDF for funding (under the same, or any other STDF funding program), or to any other funding agency, until STDF has reached a decision to reject the original project proposal, and has notified the PI of its decision. The above restrictions apply to identical project proposals, as well as project proposals which have similar objectives, methodology, ...etc. as the current project proposal, and which may differ only in title and/or other minor details. The decision whether any two (or more) submitted project proposals are similar (and therefore constitute a breach of this condition) is solely the right of STDF.

In cases where STDF reviewers decide that, in its present form, the proposal cannot be recommended for funding, or that certain modifications are needed in order for the project to be considered for funding, the PI is allowed to re-submit the revised version of the project proposal only once (after making the suggested modifications, if any) in the subsequent cycle of the same funding program, or of any other STDF funding program. At the time of submitting the revised proposal, the PI is required to declare that an older version of the project proposal has been previously submitted to STDF, and that the revised proposal is the only version of the proposal that is re-submitted for funding by STDF. Also, the revised proposal should include substantial modifications that scientifically distinguish it from the original proposal.

Failure to comply with the aforementioned conditions may result in a decision by STDF to ban any cooperation with the PI and/or the PI's institution.

Applicants are also expected to adhere to the highest standards of integrity within the domains of bioethical, bio-safety and animal protection considerations. The following regulations are to be adopted, whenever needed, based on the field or topic of the proposed research:

Bioethical considerations:



التكنولوجيا والتنمية العلوم صندوق

Science & Technology Development Fund



وزارة البحث العلمي

Ministry of Scientific Research

- Projects dealing with human subjects are required to satisfy the STDF requirements of bioethical aspects, and to comply with any other relevant laws. Such projects may include, but are not limited to, experiments on human subjects, testing of new therapeutic, preventive or diagnostic agents, handling human personal information, etc.
- In such cases, it is mandatory that the PI presents an ethical clearance form approved from the ethical committee or institutional review board (IRB), before finalization of the project contracting process. In the case of absence of an IRB in the PI's institution, obtaining an ethical clearance from a national, regional or collaborating body will be subject to consideration and assessment by the STDF.

Bio-safety considerations:

Projects with bio-safety aspects, such as those dealing with genetically modified organisms (GMOs), should strictly adhere to the national bio-safety policies, which may require obtaining special permits and clearances from the relevant authorities.

Animal protection considerations:

STDF strongly rejects the unnecessary exposure of animals to pain, distress or fatality during scientific experimentation. It is the responsibility of the PI and his/her institute that these principles are adhered to. In the case of unacceptable acts of cruelty against animals, the STDF has the right to immediately terminate/suspend the project activities, and to hold the PI accountable for such acts.

Obtaining permits from relevant authorities:

STDF has the experience that the processing of research proposals involving activities which require special permits from the relevant governmental (or otherwise) authorities may be delayed. In order to speed up the process of handling the applications, the applicant institutions are encouraged to obtain



التكنولوجيا والتنمية العلوم صندوق

Science & Technology Development Fund



وزارة البحث العلمي

Ministry of Scientific Research

such permits before submitting their applications, and to include them in the project proposal. The following are examples of activities requiring approval from the authorities:

- Conducting surveys,
- Collecting data, or conducting any other research activities near the country's international borders, in the sea or on land,
- Sending genetic and biological samples and/or resources outside the country,
- Ethical issues related to research on living matter (bio-safety, conservation of bio-diversity, research ethics, ... etc.),
- Involvement of or collaboration with foreign researchers in conducting the research activities,
- Dealing with historical objects, or
- Development of patents that may violate the intellectual property rights of other (existing) patent holders.

XIII. Negotiation and Contract Signing

Negotiation and signing of the project's funding agreement will take place shortly after the announcement of the evaluation results. Since the processing and evaluation of the submitted proposals entail significant expenditure of financial and human resources, it is highly discouraged for applicant institution to decline from continuation of the project after proposal submission. Requests asking for project discontinuation by the institution after proposal submission, following contract signing, or during the project life-time will be thoroughly investigated by STDF. STDF has the right to financial compensation and/or to impose a ban period on the university or research institution from participating in STDF-related activities.

XIV. Intellectual Property Rights (IPR)

The applicant and the endorsing institution(s) shall conform to the STDF-IPR regulations, detailed as a separate document on the STDF website (www.stdf.eg).



التكنولوجيا والتنمية العلوم صندوق

Science & Technology Development Fund



وزارة البحث العلمي

Ministry of Scientific Research

XV. Contact

If you have any queries, please contact (mahrwan.marwan@stdf.eg) at Science Technology and Development Fund (STDF).