

STDF Funded Labs Upgrading Grant (STDF-FLUG)- Call 1

Call for proposals
February 2022

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I. ABOUT STDF

The Science, Technology & Innovation Funding Authority (STDF) was established in 2008 as a main governmental funding authority in Egypt aiming to develop better strategies that delivers benefits to society and sustainable future for the Egyptians through funding high quality scientific research and technological innovation. STDF plays a vital role in the implementation of science, technology and innovation (STI) in accordance to the national agenda of Egypt vision 2030, that includes a broad-based innovation strategy to get Egypt in an advanced remarkable position globally.

II. GRANT GOAL

STDF Funded Labs Upgrading Grant (**STDF-FLUG**)- **Call 1**, targets the previously STDF funded *Center of Scientific Excellence (CSE) and/or Capacity Building (CB)* that are currently serving and successfully operated. This grant is to enhance the capabilities and strengthen the productivity of the CSE/CB through upgrading its research facilities including equipment, to make better use of its services towards researcher community and industrial needs.

This grant is directed towards relevant research themes addressed in the Ministry of Scientific Research Strategic Goals, 2030. Proposals must be provided within the framework of the strategic plan of the applicant's institution.

III. GRANT OBJECTIVES

The grant shall be directed towards achieving the following objectives:

- Upgrade existing STDF funded **CSE** and/or **CB**, to enhance their laboratory capabilities and to achieve long-term sustainability for their core-activities.
- Support the upgrading and calibration of the current lab equipment with the availability of purchasing new equipment and software that is relevant to the lab activities.
- Ensure sharing research knowledge between academia, private industrial sectors, and governmental entities to maximize the use of research results.
- Develop laboratory human resources (including full-time post-graduate students and lab technicians) through advanced training programs that is required for lab operating activities and equipment maintenance, to enhance their skills for high quality research outcomes.
- Market **CSE** and/or **CB** laboratory services, activities and ensure the accessibility of Egyptian researchers to STDF upgraded labs activities.
- Upgraded labs should be connected to the laboratory information management system and integrated to the Labs Network established by STDF.

IV. ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA

- Previously funded **CSE** and **CB** projects that are currently serving and successfully operated in all Egyptian public and national research entities (universities and research institutions), that target priority research themes addressed by the Ministry of Scientific Research Strategic Goals, 2030.
- PI shall be an Egyptian researcher, holding a Ph.D., and fully affiliated to the hosting organization. CO-PI of the previously funded project or any of the team members are allowed to submit in the current grant, after taking the PI consent.
- Priority will be given to institutions showing high performance and strong commitments along with the successfully closed **CSE** or **CB** projects **before the date of submission**.
- Applicant must provide the current status of all present equipment and lab systems (functioning and non-functioning) and the current infrastructure which hosts the upgraded STDF-FLUG proposal, supported with photos and videos, if possible.
- The proposal must include a detailed description of the research centre **Short and Long-Term Sustainability plan**. The institution must show its policy regarding equipment maintenance, and support services to the industrial, governmental entities, and society.
- The proposal must include “**Business Model**” that will be used to fulfill the objective of this call.
- The proposal should clearly outline in details how the lab’s equipment upgrading will be calibrated and maintained to achieve the addressed objectives. Extra fund requests and/or extra equipment apart from those needed to cover the aim of upgrading labs to get the desired outcomes, will be subject to rejection of the whole proposal.
- All facility equipment has to be accessible to all researchers across Egypt to support scientific community based on clear regulations approved by STDF.
- The implementation period of the project **shall not exceed 18 months**, without any further extension.
- **An endorsement letter** from the host institution must be submitted, stamped and signed by the president of institution (legal representative). It should clearly state that the activity of the upgraded lab is part of the institution's strategic plan and will provide sustainable services for Egyptian post-graduate students and researchers.

- Hosting institution must ensure achieving sustainability and maintenance of the upgraded lab for at least **5** years after the end of the project.
- Any foreign experts would join the project after contracting based on the approval of STDF.
- Any profits generated by the upgraded lab activities will be distributed according to STDF regulations.
- Acknowledgement of STDF as a funding authority for the project must be included in all lab activities. STDF label must be placed in all equipment, documents, and certificates in the funded lab.
- Proposals **MUST** be in English Language; however Arabic summary is requested to be included.
- Applicants are advised not to submit plagiarized data in their grant proposals, as this is against STDF policy. Submitted proposals for this grant will be run through plagiarism checking systems.
- Any publications delivered as a result of STDF funded proposals, should acknowledge STDF funding in the publication.

V. BUDGETARY INFORMATION

STDF-FLUG offers a maximum of 15 million EGP budget. Co funding is highly recommended in this call for proposals.

- Budgets should be carefully developed according to the grant's financial rules and should be allocated to the major activities and not to be overestimated.
- Budgets should be well justified according to the activities required to carry out the proposed work (justification for the requested equipment should be clear and detailed).
- A proposal with an overestimated budget will be rejected by STDF.
- Indirect costs are not allowed in this call for proposal. The hosting institution shall cover the costs of the necessary lab infrastructure if needed.

Eligible costs for funding:

- New equipment.
- Equipment upgrading software and/or hardware.
- Capacity building and training of lab technicians (inhouse or abroad if needed).
- Establishing lab information management system that manage specimens, lab testing, and results.
- Incentives of team members including technicians.
- Consumable supplies and materials (if needed)
- Marketing of the lab services and dissemination of the research outputs.

VI. SUBMISSION DUE DATES

- Launch of Call for full proposals submission: 14th of February 2022
- Deadline for Submission of full proposals: 17th of March 2022 at **2:00 pm**

VII. PROPOSAL SUBMISSION AND EVALUATION

- Once all required documents have been completed, it must be submitted by the **PI** to the STDF website (www.stdf.eg), before the call deadlines. Proposals shall be submitted using the STDF-FLUG-Call 1 *application form*. Submitted proposals that will not follow the exact format required in the application form will not be considered.
- Applicants will receive a notification email by STDF and the status of their application will be updated on the website.
- The submitted proposals will be evaluated and carefully reviewed according to STDF regulations and policies.
- Based on the evaluation process; the PI will be notified with STDF final decision.
- During the evaluation process, **PI** will be invited for a meeting to discuss his proposal and present the status of the current **CSE/CB** activities they have.
- STDF will coordinate a site visit to the lab as a part of evaluation process.

VIII. FUNDING MECHANISM

- For accepted proposals, a contract is made and signed with the Principal Investigator (PI), and the legal representative of the endorsing University or Research Centre.

The project budget installments will be disbursed as follows:

- 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 required technical and financial reports, which will be submitted to STDF and will be detailed in the funding contract.
- The disbursement of the final installment of the project 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.

IX. REPORTING REQUIERMENTS

- All reports must be submitted using the standard STDF templates.
- All submitted reports will be evaluated by STDF, and feedback will be provided to the project's PI and the host institution.
- In case of a rejected progress report by evaluators; the PI may require to present additional follow-up reports.

Follow-up reports:

A-Technical Reports: Biannual progress reports should be submitted by the PI from the official start date of the project. Any modifications in the research team and/or original work plan must be pre-approved by STDF, and the progress reports should include an updated Gantt chart.

B- Final and Achievements reports: The final reports of the project should be submitted no later than **one month** after the official end date of the project. A short video and a presentation for the achieved objectives will be requested by the end of the project, showing the status of the STDF lab after upgrade.

C- Financial Reports: Biannual progress reports should be submitted by the PI including copies of all expenses. It should be signed and stamped by the official seal of the endorsing institution.

D- Site Visit Evaluation report: Regular site visits will be arranged by STDF experts for assessing the progress of the project and to ensure that the lab has fulfilled the entire technical (Good Laboratory Practice GLP) and managerial (Laboratory Information Management System LIMS) 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 lab services.

X. FURTHER INFORMATION AND CONTACT

If you have any queries, please contact Science, Technology, and Innovation Funding Authority (STDF)

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