

ADVANCE

RESEARCH GRANTS

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Evaluation guideline

About the program

The ADVANCE Research Grants set ground for development of scientific directions in STEM-related fields in Armenia. This pioneering platform started in February 2020 invites distinguished scientists from all around the world to lead new teams comprised of ambitious Armenian researchers. The experience and network these emerging Armenian researchers gain in the program boosts their professional growth, enables effective global collaboration, and significantly increases research output in target fields. The comprehensive financial and logistical support provided by FAST and its partners works toward putting Armenia on the map of cutting-edge scientific research worldwide.

The duration of the projects is from **2 to 4 years**.

The annual funding for each research team is up to **to 125k USD**.

Evaluation procedure

Every application goes through an eligibility check by the FAST team, and then is evaluated by an independent Committee composed of a committee lead, and peer reviewers specializing in a corresponding subject area. The Committee receives the application package from FAST, thoroughly gets familiarized with it, then conducts peer interview with the candidate and registers the scores in the evaluation form in accordance with the assessment rubric.

PLEASE SEE ASSESSMENT RUBRIC ON PAGE 4

The evaluation questions are grouped into two main categories: (1) Principal Investigator and (2) Research Proposal. A project must score at least 85% points to pass the evaluation and be considered for funding. The exact number of research projects approved for funding within each call will depend on the availability of resources. The evaluation is conducted individually and is facilitated by the Program Lead at FAST.

Conflict of Interest

Evaluation Committee members must evaluate the applications impartially and make recommendations based on the established objective criteria. If an interest appears to influence the ability of a Committee member to evaluate the application package objectively, it should be declared by them to the FAST staff and documented by the Foundation.

Questions

Principal Investigator

1. PI's academic capacity

To what extent does the PI have the required scientific expertise to successfully execute the project?

2. PI's leadership capacity

To what extent has the PI demonstrated sound leadership and individual supervision philosophy to successfully lead the team (especially remotely)?

3. PI's vision

Does the PI have a clear vision on how their project will contribute to the development of the subject area in Armenia? Does the PI evaluate the opportunity for Armenia to become globally competitive in this field?

4. PI's motivation and commitment

How likely is the PI to dedicate sufficient time and energy to build and lead a strong team of researchers in Armenia? Does the PI have a set of tools to implement the project successfully (for instance: structured remote work with the team, frequent visits to Armenia, involvement of their postdocs in their home country, building a pipeline for students to join the project on a rolling basis, etc.).

Research proposal

1. Field/Subject

How good are the prospects of developing Armenia's competitiveness in this subject area?

2. Problem Statement

Is the described problem universal? Is there a global knowledge gap targeted by the proposed project?

3. Research Objectives and Expected Results

Are the expected results clearly built on the research objectives? Is it clear how the research will generate solutions to the outlined problem(s)?

4. Methodology and Feasibility

How likely is it to successfully achieve the research objectives with the proposed methodology? Are the proposed methods most efficient, especially in the context of limited infrastructure in Armenia? If the infrastructure (or a part of it) is not available in Armenia, are the mitigation mechanisms well planned?

5. Impact

How would you evaluate the expected impact of the research project on a global scale?

6. Timeline

How feasible is it to achieve the research objectives within the proposed timeline?

Do you recommend this project under the leadership of the applied Principal Investigator to be funded?

Yes/No

Please elaborate on your answer (min.200 words)

[CLICK HERE TO START THE EVALUATION](#)

Assessment Rubric

| Criteria | 10 | 8-9 | 6-7 | 4-5 | 0-3 | Weightage |
|-------------------------------|--|--|--|---|--|------------|
| | Excellent | Good | Fair | Poor | Unacceptable | |
| Principal Investigator | | | | | | 50% |
| 1. PI's academic capacity | The candidate has outstanding academic background and a very strong publication record for successfully planning and leading the proposed project, ensuring the expected impact. | The candidate has solid academic experience and a good publication record for successfully planning and leading the proposed project ensuring the expected impact. | The candidate has adequate academic experience and a publication record for achieving most of the research outcomes and in general ensuring the overall impact of the project. | The candidate has a moderate academic experience, modest publication record. The capacity to plan and lead a successful research project raises a number of concerns. | The candidate lacks necessary academic capacity and publication record to successfully run a research project. | 10% |
| 2. PI's leadership capacity | The candidate has demonstrated excellent leadership skills and has vast experience of supervising diverse research teams including remotely. The supervision philosophy is | The candidate has demonstrated good leadership skills and has a good experience in supervising research teams. There is an individual supervision | The candidate has adequate leadership skills and moderate supervision experience. | The candidate has demonstrated limited leadership ability and modest supervision experience. | The leadership and supervision capacity demonstrated by the candidate are very limited and not sufficient for the successful | 10% |

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| | well-thought and elaborated in the application. | philosophy which is properly presented in the application. | | | implementation of the research project. | |
| 3. PI's vision | The PI has a very clear vision on the project's contribution to the development of the corresponding subject field in Armenia, and the prospects for Armenia to become globally competitive in the field. | The PI has a good vision on the research project's contribution to the development of the corresponding subject field in Armenia. The PI also has some ideas how Armenia can succeed globally in this field. | The vision of the PI is well articulated but it lacks details about the contribution to the development of the subject field in Armenia and Armenia's chances to succeed globally in this field. | The PI does not have a clear vision on how the research project will contribute to the development of the subject field in Armenia. | It is unclear how the PI's proposal will contribute to the development of the subject field in Armenia. | 15% |
| 4. PI's motivation and commitment | The PI's motivation to start a new long-term project in Armenia is clearly defined and elaborated. The PI demonstrated strong commitment to spend sufficient time/resources on building a new research team, ensuring their professional growth and leading the project towards impactful | The motivation and commitment demonstrated by the PI, are well defined, and are mostly sufficient for the successful implementation of the project. | The general motivation of the PI is in place, however there might not be enough commitment to spend sufficient time on the project, thus additional external resources might be needed for the successful implementation of the project. | The motivation and commitment demonstrated by the PI are poorly defined and require a lot of additional resources and revisions for the successful implementation of the project. | The motivation and commitment demonstrated by the PI, are not satisfactory for the successful implementation of the project. | 15% |

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| | outcomes. | | | | | |
| Criteria | 10 | 8-9 | 6-7 | 4-5 | 0-3 | Weightage |
| | Excellent | Good | Fair | Poor | Unacceptable | |
| Research Proposal | | | | | | 50% |
| 1. Field/Subject area | There is an exceptional opportunity for transforming Armenia into a globally competitive country in the field of a proposed project in case of a deliberate effort. | There are good prospects for transforming Armenia into a globally competitive country in the field of a proposed project in case of a deliberate effort. | There are some chances for Armenia to become globally competitive in the field of a proposed project, in case of attracting considerable resources. | The proposed field/subject area at this stage has very limited prospects for transforming Armenia into a globally competitive country and requires significant structural changes and external resources. | It is unlikely that Armenia can become a globally competitive country in the field/subject area of a proposed project. | 5% |
| 2. Problem statement | The problem statement is clearly defined, and a thorough analysis of the existing issues and the global knowledge gap is provided. | Good justification of the research problem is provided. The importance of the study is clear. | The research topic is well articulated, and a certain background information is provided, however additional details are missing. | The research problem is partly discussed but not in depth. | The proposal lacks a focused research question and a justification of the project importance | 10% |
| 3. Research objectives and expected outcomes | The expected outcomes are well aligned with the research objectives and are completely attainable. The contribution | The expected outcomes are attainable, they are accurately presented and aligned with the research objectives. | Some expected outcomes and research objectives lack clear alignment, and the proposal | The research objectives and expected outcomes are not well linked and major clarifications are required to understand | The research objectives and expected outcomes lack any connection and the proposal | 10% |

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| | that the research will make to the development of the field is clearly presented. | | needs clarification on the attainability of some of the outcomes. | how the outlined outcomes can be achieved. | does not outline how these defined outcomes can be achieved. | |
| 4. Methodology and Feasibility | The methodology fully corresponds to the research objectives and the chosen methods are completely feasible. | An adequate explanation of the proposed methods is presented. The major parts of the methodology are feasible. | The methodology description is a bit too general, and its feasibility needs better justification. | The feasibility of the methodology might raise some concerns. It needs clarifications. | The methodology and its feasibility are not properly presented and it is unclear how those methods will contribute to the achievement of the expected outcomes. | 10% |
| 5. Impact and innovativeness | There is clear evidence of the research novelty and the contribution the project aims to make to the corresponding field of knowledge is well defined. | The novelty of the research is properly presented. | The research project lacks major novelty, however identifies a gap in the field and suggests some new approaches. The impact of the project is presented but needs more elaboration. | The significance of the research project is not well defined. The research has limited scientific value. | The research project lacks any novelty. The impact of the research is unclear. | 10% |
| 6. Timeline | The project timeline is accurately presented, | The project timeline is reasonable to achieve most | The project timeline is feasible but needs some | The project timeline only partially corresponds to | The project timeline is not feasible and does | 5% |

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| | clearly linked to the research objectives. | of the expected research outcomes. | revisions. | the research outcomes and needs major revisions. | not correspond to the research outcomes. | |
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