

Call for Proposals

Research Awards Competition December 2010 MERC is pleased to announce the 10th round of research awards and invites proposals from qualified researchers. Deadline for receiving proposals in their final format is 15 October 2010. While open to all research ideas and topics, the program encourages proposals that apply rigorous social science methodologies and theories particularly in the following areas: * Public life in the Arab World: including the public sphere and the development of public life in societies under study and the enhancement of opportunities of public participation for different social groups with emphasis on women, youth, and marginalized groups. * Development: Research on various aspects of sustainable development, both local and national. * Knowledge and Educational Capacities: Research on educational capacities and socialization, including educational reform, educational policy, use of IT, academic curricula, and the role of various actors in the educational field. * Social and Political Transformations: including research on the family, the elderly, childhood, gender socialisation, social reproduction, social mobility, political and civil society. * Regional and International Relations: This includes research on economy and diplomatic relations, post-conflict situations, the psychological and political impact of conflicts and the rehabilitation of victims of conflict.

Scientific Committee MERC is guided by a multi-disciplinary scientific selection committee composed of five scholars from the region with established research and publication records as well as experience in regional research and teaching. All selections for research awards are made by the Scientific Committee, which also makes recommendations concerning the topical orientation and activities of the program. Members of the Scientific Committee serve on a rotating basis and previous committee members play a vital role in extending the MERC network and facilitating communication and feedback.

Eligibility -Residents of Arab countries and Turkey are eligible to apply for the awards and to participate in the activities of the program. Residents are persons of any nationality whose current and planned future place of professional practice is in the region. Temporary residence outside the region for purposes of advanced study does not preclude eligibility. Research proposals may include non-residents as co-investigators. Previous MERC awardees are not eligible to apply again. -Research Awards are intended for scholars with previous successful research experience in any social science field. Ph.D. holders in the early stages of their professional careers are especially encouraged to apply. For exceptionally strong cases, research awards may also be made for Ph.D. dissertation research in the region by students from the region. In the case of projects involving team research, the principal investigator must have a Ph.D. degree.

Final Proposal Proposals can be submitted in Arabic, French, or English. Only fully developed proposals are forwarded to the Selection Committee. Final proposals should include all information and details necessary for the Scientific Committee to understand the research ideas and plans. Every proposal should be self contained and not dependent on supporting documents unless they are enclosed (e.g., papers or articles of the principal investigator). A final proposal should not exceed 20 typed double-spaced pages in length. Additional pages are needed for an abstract, time-line, budget, and curriculum vitae of all proposed project members. No special forms are used to submit proposals. The following checklist is suggested in order to help the applicant prepare a complete proposal. Proposals must be submitted in Times New Roman, 12-point font.

I. The body of the proposal should discuss fully the following issues:

- The main objectives of the proposed research.
- The theoretical framework of the proposed research, with sufficient reference to the state of the art, and the possible contributions of the proposed research to the discipline.
- A literature review, including an evaluation of previous research on the subject and current gaps. The review of the literature should demonstrate the applicant's knowledge of international as well as regional research on the subject. It is particularly important to identify the contribution of the proposed research to the current state of scholarship on the region. Quotations and bibliographic references should be fully documented.
- The methodology that will be used to investigate the objectives of the research, including methods for data collection and analysis. For field data collection, the researcher's prospects for obtaining necessary permits should be addressed. For secondary analysis, sources of information or data and their accessibility to the investigators should also be identified in the proposal.

II. In addition to the above, the proposal must address the following issues:

- Significance of the expected results and its public policy implications.
- Plans for the write-up and dissemination of research results.
- Provisions made for the protection of human subjects and the protection of confidentiality as well as an assessment of the impact of probable findings. These should be discussed in conformity with the ethical guidelines of each discipline.
- Utilization of existing research facilities at the researcher's institution or other institutions.

III. The proposal must contain the following appendices:

- Appendix 1: An abstract for the proposal (not more than 250 words)
- Appendix 2: Time-Line: A time-line for the research project, outlining the unfolding of the proposed research in reasonable detail. The research duration usually ranges between 12 to 18 months.
- Appendix 3: Budget Request: The budget should be reflective of the extent of fieldwork and number of researchers. (click here to see a sample of budget) Investigators and personnel should be listed by position or task, giving for each person the time commitment (percentage of time allocated to the project) and time-rates of compensation (how financial compensation is calculated for tasks performed). Budget items may include purchase of specifically identified research equipment, travel and transportation costs, stipends, technical assistance, stationery and other supplies. Awards of up to US \$ 15,000 will be granted to successful applications. The budget should clearly indicate whether other sources of funding are already available or have been applied for and which items would be fully or partially covered by other sources.
- A curriculum vitae with a list of publications for every investigator is required.
- For a proposal from a graduate student for support of Ph.D. dissertation research in the region, at least one letter of evaluation and support of the student and the project by a dissertation supervisor is required. The supervisor should clearly explain the candidate's academic status (e.g. if candidate has completed course work, is ready to begin field work etc..) as well as strengths and weaknesses.

Deadlines -Final and complete research proposals are due on 15 October 2010. -A response from the MERC Secretariat can be expected four weeks after the meeting of the

Selection Committee in July. -Proposals and letters of recommendation for Ph.D. candidates are to be sent electronically to the following email address: contact@mercprogram.org In view of the large number of proposals received by MERC, only candidates whose proposals are ready for examination by the Selection Committee will be contacted by the Secretariat. MERC PROGRAM CENTRE D'ETUDES ET DE RECHERCHES ECONOMIQUES ET SOCIALES 23 Rue d'Espagne Tunis- Tunisie Phone+216 71 322 667 Fax : +216 71 326 770 E-mail: contact@mercprogram.org