Request-for-Proposals
2020 Penn State-PUCP-UNI Strategic Research Initiative

Overview
The Pontifical Catholic University of Peru (Pontificia Universidad Católica del Perú (PUCP)), the National University of Engineering (Universidad Nacional de Ingeniería (UNI)) and Penn State University seek to develop comprehensive, interdisciplinary, research programs of global importance. This visionary research is expected to position the tripartite university partnership as a global leader in the field.

The 2020 Strategic Research Initiative competition will provide 1-year seed monies for faculty groups to start a collaborative research effort that has the potential to accelerate into a longer-term (i.e., 5+ years) research program. The initiative has a research theme at the intersection of environmental protection and society. While the topic is of global significance, this research will have a Peruvian context. The program is offered in conjunction with the Penn State Institutes for Energy and the Environment (IEE), the Penn State Social Science Research Institute (SSRI) and the PUCP Institute for the Sciences of Nature, Territory and Renewable Energies (INTE).

Year 1 seed funding of US$50k will be awarded to one team in each of the following two research topics.

TOPIC 1: The Environment, Society and the Amazon
This research seeks to highlight the global importance of the Amazon River basin at a time when it is under siege. Climate change, poverty, State weakness, and many other issues, impose severe conditions on its future and residents.

The Amazon rainforest deforestation is at approximately 25%, greatly exacerbating environmental disasters such as floods, fires and droughts. These devastating factors combine to reduce the ability of the Amazon Basin to function effectively to support biodiversity, sequester carbon, or regulate other critical ecosystem services.

The Amazon basin is home to over four hundred indigenous tribes with approximately fifty in Peru alone. The Amazon population is highly impoverished; among the poorest of the poor. Regional problems are complex and multifaceted. The populace experiences the scourge of drugs and trafficking. The fragile environment is not respected by many mining and agro-industrial companies. Institutional weakness limits the State’s ability to protect the environment and its residents.

The proposed research on the Environment, Society and the Amazon requires a strong interdisciplinary approach. The expectation is to formulate science-based research that can ultimately impact society. The team is given the latitude to select impactful research within this broad topic in alignment with its assembled expertise.

TOPIC 2: The Environment, Society and Mining
This topic seeks to address an underlying problem for countries with significant mineral resources and their interaction with society. A perpetual demand for minerals exists in our globalized, industrial world, but—as many have argued—“it is the curse and tragedy of the peoples who possess them”. Regions surrounding mining centers are often areas of poverty and environmental destruction. There is constant tension between the economic incentives for mining to alleviate poverty and corruption/land grabs. Furthermore, many indirect ‘costs’ of mining impact the environment and human health. In 2015, the damage from mining caused 8,616 environmental liabilities in Peru alone. These damages led to major issues and conflicts between farmers,
communities and mining companies related to 1) water rights; 2) contamination, and; 3) waste treatment remediation efforts. The local conflicts led to broader social clashes between the State, rural communities, urban residents and the mining industry.

The proposed research on The Environment, Society and Mining strives to demonstrate that there can be environmentally responsible mining while promoting societal benefits and harmony. This interdisciplinary research seeks to 1) transform social, labor and political conflicts, and; 2) demonstrate technically and scientifically that mining can be done more ecologically while continuing to deliver economic benefit. The team is given the latitude to select impactful research within this broad topic in alignment within its assembled expertise.

**Strategic Research Initiative Fund Overview**

Proposals are solicited for year 1 funds of what is expected to be a sustainable multi-year research program. Successful teams are expected to organize a research structure capable of 1) having high academic and societal impact ceilings; 2) creating a research support plan to maintain the research for a minimum of 5 years, and 3) leverage the complementary strengths of the three universities.

1. **Awards**  
   a. Two (2) awards will be made – One each in  
      i. The Environment, Society and the Amazon, and;  
      ii. The Environment, Society and Mining.  
   b. US$ 50k per award.  
   c. One (1) year duration with no opportunity for renewal.

2. **Penn State Institutes for Energy and the Environment (IEE)** will contribute to the unit match if the proposed project:  
   a. address one or more of IEE’s strategic foci (iee.psu.edu),  
   b. is a strong and interdisciplinary team, and  
   c. has a clear potential for external funding.  

Penn State **Social Science Research Institute (SSRI)** will provide to the unit match if the proposed project:  
   a. has a significant social science dimension,  
   b. a strong and interdisciplinary team,  
   c. relevance for one or more of SSRI’s strategic foci (e.g., social disparities; ssri.ssridrupal.ssri.psu.edu/social-science-research-institute), and  
   d. has a clear potential for external funding.

**Matching fund contributions:**  
   a. Programs satisfying both institutes criteria: $5 k (IEE - $2.5k; SSRI - $2.5k).  
   b. Programs satisfying only IEE criteria: $5 k.  
   c. Programs satisfying only SSRI criteria: $2.5 k.

3. **Participation requirements**  
   a. A tripartite program with faculty from all three universities.  
   b. Penn State must have minimum involvement of two colleges or campuses.

4. **2-3 investigators from the winning teams at each university must commit to attending a Project Launch Workshop in Lima, Peru during June 2020.**  
   a. The Penn State transportation and lodging costs will be paid from the award.  
   b. Most of the onsite Lima costs will be paid by PUCP and UNI.

5. **Applications must include identification of potential funding sources for program years 2-5.** An expression from the agency or foundation from the United States indicating their potential interest in the proposed research and a letter of support of at least one company or foundation in Peru are encouraged.

6. **All awarded institutional funds will stay at each respective university. No cross border or inter-university money distribution will occur.**

7. **A 10% cost share of the total award is required from a Penn State unit.**
8. Award distribution for each project:

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<tr>
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<th>PUCP</th>
<th>UNI</th>
<th>Penn State Global Programs</th>
<th>Penn State Unit Match</th>
<th>TOTAL</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>(25%) Total</td>
<td>(25%) Total</td>
<td>(40%) Total</td>
<td>(10%) Total</td>
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<td>100%</td>
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<tr>
<td>US$ 12.5k</td>
<td>US$ 12.5k</td>
<td>US$ 20k</td>
<td>US$ 5k</td>
<td>US$ 50k</td>
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**Seed Fund Deliverables and Expectations**

Year 1 deliverables are: 1) a research structure between the partners leveraging the complementarity between the universities and; 2) steps taken to secure resources to continue the research after completion of the Seed Grant.

**Proposal Evaluation**

A panel of faculty and administrators from Penn State, PUCP and UNI will evaluate and select the projects to be funded.

1. The evaluation criteria and weighting:
   a. The potential to create a self-supporting, sustainable collaboration research program with a viable plan to continue for a minimum of 5 years (50%)
   b. Merit of the research project concept, quality and societal impact (30%)
   c. How the project fits in the targeted research topics (20%)

**Proposal Format**

2. The supporting documents should include:
   a. 1-page CV for each of the project faculty or researchers. (Combine into 1 PDF.)
   b. Letter(s) confirming Penn State unit cost sharing match.
   c. Budget sheet outlining expenses for the award.
   d. Complete list of team members from all universities

**Dates**

1. **February 14, 2020**: Applications due
2. **March 27, 2020**: Awards announced
3. **April 24, 2020**: Funds released
4. **Between June 15 – 26, 2020**: A 3-5 day Project Launch Workshop in Lima, Peru

**Application Submission**

The application should be submitted electronically at: [https://psu.infoready4.com/](https://psu.infoready4.com/)

It is recommended that researchers interested in this program should please contact the Penn State/PUCP/UNI coordinators in advance to preparing an application.

**Penn State:** Anne Stover: amc1@psu.edu
**PUCP:** Karina Castañeda: kcastaneda@pucp.pe
**UNI:** Sara Cabrera: vicerectorrin@uni.edu.pe

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i Sotomayor, Arístides 2016 “Remediación de pasivos ambientales mineros como estrategia para el cuidado del ambiente” en Consorcio de Universidades Metas del Perú al Bicentenario (Lima: Gráfica DELBI).

ii Castro, Augusto 2018 “El desafío de un pensar diferente: pensamiento, sociedad y Naturaleza” Ciudad Autónoma de Buenos Aires, CLACSO.