

Request for Innovation Fund Grant Proposals *Supported by SENAI and the U.S. Department of State*

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Subject: Request for Proposals for the Brazil-U.S. Competition for Innovation and Technological Development

Dear Applicants,

Partners of the Americas (Partners), the U.S. Department of State (DOS), and NAFSA: Association of International Educators (NAFSA) announce a new Innovation Fund grant competition to create higher education institutional partnerships between Brazil and the United States.

The *100,000 Strong in the Americas* Innovation Fund is the public-private sector collaboration between the U.S. Department of State, U.S. Embassies, Partners of the Americas, NAFSA, corporations, and foundations working together to stimulate new higher education partnerships between the United States and the rest of the Western Hemisphere. The central mechanism to support this hemispheric-wide education initiative is the Innovation Fund, which builds bridges of connectivity, enhances institutional capacity, increases student exchanges, and strengthens regional education cooperation throughout the Americas.

Since its inception in January 2014, the Innovation Fund has awarded 178 grants to more than 350 teams of universities and colleges in 25 countries and 41 U.S. states. Higher education institutions in Mexico, Colombia, Brazil, Argentina, Peru, and Chile are currently the top six countries in the region to engage with the Innovation Fund in partnerships with U.S. universities and colleges.

Innovation Fund grant winning institutions provide students with access to short-term exchange and training opportunities in the United States, Latin America, and Caribbean. Students gain technical, linguistic, and cross-cultural skills, work in teams, conduct research, solve real-world problems, and become better prepared for today's workforce. Currently, over 1,800 higher education institutions have joined the Innovation Network, with 1,000 universities and colleges located in the United States.

For more information about current partner organizations that support the Innovation Fund and grant winning teams, please visit: www.100kstrongamericas.org.

The Brazil-U.S. Competition for Innovation & Technological Development is supported through generous contributions from the National Service of Industrial Training (SENAI) and the U.S. Department of State, and the U.S. Embassy in Brazil.

SENAI was founded in 1942 as a private non-profit institution. It provides technical education aimed at promoting industrial innovation. Its mission is centered on technology transfer, leveraging innovation for promoting industrial innovation. As the largest private technical training network in Latin America, SENAI seeks to add value to products and processes of private sector companies and industries. Currently, SENAI has 993 vocational training units, 26 innovation institutes, 58 technology institutes, and 189 technological services labs. In 2017, more SENAI had more than 2.3 million enrollments at national level, and SENAI Institutes were responsible for more than 1.3 million lab tests and services. For more information about SENAI, visit www.portaldaindustria.com.br/senai/en/.

This Innovation Fund competition is open to all higher education institutions (HEIs) in the **United States**, and all SENAI Innovation Institutes and educational institutions in **Brazil**.

NOTE: Grant proposals must include a partnership between at least one HEI in the United States (e.g., universities, colleges, community colleges, etc.) and one SENAI Innovation Institute; but may also present a tripartite alliance between a U.S. HEI, a SENAI Innovation Institute and a Brazilian educational institution (e.g., universities and other post-secondary institutions with credit-bearing programs).

Proposals should focus on creating new student exchange and training opportunities between the U.S. and Brazil in the following academic areas with an emphasis on their focus areas:

- Information Communications and Technology (ICT), focus on smart technology and the Internet of Things (IoT)
- Civil Engineering, focus on structures and/or mining
- Chemical Engineering, focus on advanced materials and/or metallurgy
- Electrical Engineering, focus on computers and electronics
- Mechanical Engineering, as it relates to smart products
- Biology, Chemistry, and Economics, as it relates to bio-economics

Special consideration will be given to proposals that include programming to:

- Incorporate entrepreneurship skills and training; and/or
- Promote women in science careers.

The intent of the Brazil-U.S. Competition for Innovation & Technological Development is to award up to **eight (8) Innovation Fund Grants** of up to \$25,000 to selected finalized proposals.

The Department of State, Partners of the Americas, NAFSA, and SENAI reserve the right to fund any or none of the Innovation Fund grant proposals submitted for consideration. Please refer to the following sections for a complete statement of goals and expected results.

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Section I: Funding Opportunity Description

A. Background on SENAI

The Brazilian National Service for Industrial Training (SENAI) was founded in 1942 as a private non-profit institution. It provides technical education aimed at promoting industrial innovation. Its mission is centered on technology transfer, leveraging innovation for promoting industrial innovation. As the largest private technical training network in Latin America, SENAI seeks to add value to products and processes of private sector companies and industries.

Currently, SENAI has 993 vocational training units, 26 innovation institutes, 58 technology institutes, and 189 technological services labs. In 2017, SENAI had more than 2.3 million enrollments at national level, and its Institutes were responsible for more than 1.3 million lab tests and services. SENAI Innovation Institutes are organized into research networks, through a complementary and multidisciplinary approach. They attract the top Ph.D. researchers and experts to develop innovative solutions. There are 39 Faculties and 1 University Center where more than 150 undergraduate and graduate courses are offered with Concept 4 and 5 of the National Institute of Educational Studies and Research/Ministry of Education and Culture. The modernization of curricula and teacher training are integrated in 37 technological undergraduate degrees, 16 engineering undergraduate degrees, 102 specializations, 3 masters and 2 PhDs.

SENAI understands that the so-called Industry 4.0 is a great opportunity for Brazilian industry to be more productive through digital technologies that will help companies learn and be more agile. SENAI emerges as a response to the demands of this new industry, offering solutions in education, technology and innovation.

B. Purpose of this Innovation Fund Grant Competition

The purpose of the Brazil-U.S. Competition for Innovation & Technological Development is to provide more opportunities for higher education institutions (HEIs) in the U.S., SENAI Innovation Institutes, and Educational Institutions in Brazil to work together to provide new student exchange and training programs between both countries.

This grant competition seeks proposals from teams of eligible institutions in Brazil and the U.S. that will increase student exchange and training in the following academic themes with an emphasis on their focus areas:

- Information Communications and Technology (ICT), focus on smart technology and the Internet of Things (IoT)
- Civil Engineering, focus on structures and/or mining
- Chemical Engineering, focus on advanced materials and/or metallurgy
- Electrical Engineering, focus on computers and electronics
- Mechanical Engineering, as it relates to smart products
- Biology, Chemistry, and Economics, as it relates to bio-economics

Special consideration will be given to proposals that include programming to:

- Incorporate entrepreneurship skills and training; and/or
- Promote women in science careers.

Proposed activities, including program design and planning, should take place beginning in July 2019 through July 2020; however, grant proposals may include information on activities that have occurred prior to this period that would provide the background and to demonstrate efforts in laying the groundwork for the proposed program, as well as activities beyond these dates in order to demonstrate continuation of the program beyond the grant period. Short-term and long-term programs are eligible. Students must receive some level of credit from their home institution.

Applicants should focus on presenting innovative ideas, practices, or models that will increase outbound opportunities for their students; expand the capacity for the partner institution(s) to host them or to reciprocate the exchange by sending students; expand their own capacity to host international students; or integrate increased flow in both directions. Applicants may propose to provide small scholarships to students in order to have an impact on their study abroad decisions as well as their ability to find a way to follow through on their study abroad plans. Another example is to incorporate variations on traditional study abroad models, such as student and faculty engagement through service-learning.

We encourage grant proposals that include best practices and address topics discussed from *100,000 Strong in the Americas* Innovation Fund workshops and the [Latin American Forum at NAFSA](#). Topics include accreditation and credit transfer, community engagement, entrepreneurship, diversity and inclusion, inter-departmental collaboration, language training, public-private sector engagement, safety and security, student recruitment, technical skills development/training, and technology development, among others.

Applicant institutions should highlight in their proposals how this initial, incentive grant from the Innovation Fund would set into motion additional future plans and resources from the partnering institutions to continue to expand student exchange programs between Brazil and the United States beyond the Innovation Fund grant period.

C. Expected Results

Institutions that are successful in implementing Innovation Fund grants will demonstrate increased capacity to develop and administer programs that receive and/or send students researchers between the United States and Brazil. These teams of HEIs will:

- Increase the number of student researchers studying between Brazil and the U.S.;
- Demonstrate increased awareness of barriers to student researcher exchange opportunities;
- Design/implement new exchange/training models to engage student researchers in Brazil and the United States; and
- Demonstrate continuation of effective partnerships with institutions in Brazil and the United States beyond the initial Innovation Fund grant period.

Section II: Eligibility Information

Legally registered higher education institutions located in the United States and Brazil, including as community colleges, technical/vocational schools, public and private universities, and other post-secondary institutions with credit-bearing programs, and SENAI Innovation Institutes are eligible to apply for the Brazil-U.S. Competition for Innovation & Technological Development.

This competition seeks to receive applications from a diversity of institutions, including large, small, rural, urban, four-year and shorter-term degree-issuing institutions. The intention of selecting from these categories is to ensure representation of the broadest diversity of institutional profiles, so that successful innovations have the greatest possibility of replication across institutions and ultimately reaching the overall goal of the *100,000 Strong in the Americas* Innovation Fund. Proposals may involve new institutional partnerships or build on existing partnerships, but in all cases, should demonstrate strong institutional support and should focus on creating sustainable exchange programs among the proposed partnering institutions.

As autonomous, foreign institutions dedicated to the promotion of mutual understanding between Brazil and the United States, bi-national centers (BNCs) are also eligible to compete for the Brazil-U.S. Competition for Innovation & Technological Development. **NOTE:** If a BNC is applying as the prime applicant, it must do so in partnership with at least one SENAI Innovation Institute, in addition to a U.S. HEI. Also, if a BNC is entering as the prime applicant and is unable to issue credit themselves, they must ensure that students who participate in the proposed exchange program will receive some level of academic credit from the identified Brazilian SENAI Innovation Center and/or U.S. HEI. Proposals whose primary focus is support for BNC language training programs as preparation for study abroad are not eligible.

Innovation Fund grant proposals for this Competition must include a partnership between at least one HEI in the U.S. and one SENAI Innovation Institute; but may also present a Brazilian educational institution (e.g., universities and other post-secondary institutions with credit-bearing programs) as a third partner institution.

In order to increase the diversity of participating institutions, the Review Committee reserves the right to give preference to institutions that have not previously received Innovation Fund grants. However, all HEIs (including previous grant winners) are encouraged to apply.

Section III: Award Information

A. Estimate of Funds Available

The intent of the Brazil-U.S. Competition for Innovation & Technological Development is to award up to eight (8) Innovation Fund grants of up to \$25,000 to selected proposals. Partners of the Americas, the Bureau of Western Hemisphere Affairs (WHA) at the U.S. Department of State, NAFSA, and SENAI reserve the right to fund any or none of the applications submitted.

B. Notification of Award Recipients

Winning institutions will be notified no later than April 30, 2019. The list of grant recipients will be published on www.100kstrongamericas.org.

C. Period of Performance

Following the notification, Partners will inform recipients of the next steps to formalize and receive the award. The period of performance will be from August 1, 2019 to July 31, 2020, with the possibility of negotiating the start date and/or end date following an analysis of the program at the time of the request.

D. Award Responsibilities

1. Grant Recipients

Grant recipients will be responsible for sharing up-to-date information on the Innovation Fund grant program activities through required reports provided by Partners that will focus on:

- Progress on program goals and objectives, including student and faculty travel;
- Successes, challenges, and lessons learned in program implementation and evaluation;
- Testimonials on how the grant benefits students and institutions; and
- Program expenditures and cost-sharing.

2. Innovation Fund Staff

The Innovation Fund staff at Partners will be involved in the following areas:

- Review of the recipient's progress reports;
- Approval of budget changes and additional expenditures;
- Approval of changes in program personnel;
- Approval of program extensions; and
- Request for additional information on program and student/faculty engagement.

Section IV: Application and Submission

A. Proposal Application Format

Applications must not exceed a total of 25 pages and must utilize 12-pt Times New Roman font, single-spaced, typed in standard 8 ½" x 11" paper with one-inch margins, and each page numbered consecutively. Keep in mind the page limitations for each section of the proposal application as listed below. Any additional pages that exceed the page limitations will not be reviewed by the Review Committee.

- Cover Page (1 page)
- Table of Contents (1 page)

- Technical Narrative (10 pages max)
- Budget (3 pages max)
- Annexes (10 pages max)

A detailed description of the application format and requirements can be found at www.100kstrongamericas.org/app-format/.

B. Online Submission Process

Proposals must be submitted online through the Application Form found on the *100,000 Strong in the Americas* website (www.100kstrongamericas.org/grants) by the deadline indicated on the cover page of this RFP. Applications that are received late or are incomplete will not be considered in the review process. No applications will be accepted via email unless otherwise instructed by Partners of the Americas. **Applications must be submitted in English.**

Note: Prospective applicant institutions seeking information or clarification about this competition should complete the online form at www.100kstrongamericas.org/questions.

It is recommended that interested applicants review the questions and answers submitted in past competitions at www.100kstrongamericas.org/100k-competition-faqs.

C. Proposal Evaluation

All applications received by the closing date will be reviewed for responsiveness and programmatic merit in accordance with the specifications outlined in these guidelines and the [application format web page](#). Proposals will be evaluated by a panel of experts organized by the Innovation Fund. All information provided in the applications remains confidential and will only be used for no other purposes than to complete the evaluation. Reviewers are required to be bound by agreements of confidentiality and conflicts of interest prior to participating in the review panel.

Section V: Anticipated Timeline

ACTIVITY	TIME PERIOD
Launch of Grant Competition	October 9, 2018
Application Period	October 9, 2018 – February 15, 2019
Close of Grant Competition	February 15, 2019
Proposal Evaluation Process	February 18 – April 15, 2019
Notification of Status of Proposal	By April 30, 2019
Award of Grant Funds to Winners	June - August 2019
Period of Performance for Grantees	August 1, 2019 – July 31, 2020

Section VI: Agency Contacts

Questions concerning this RFP must be sent via www.100kstrongamericas.org/questions prior to the deadline mentioned on the cover page of this document. **No phone calls.**



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100,000 Strong in the Americas is supported by the U.S. Department of State in partnership with Partners of the Americas and NAFSA: Association of International Educators.