



PARTNERS of the AMERICAS
Connect • Serve • Change Lives



Request for Innovation Fund Proposals

Issuance Date: May 15, 2019
Question/Answer Period: May 15 – August 12, 2019. Submit: 100kstrongamericas.org/questions
Closing Date/Time: August 15, 2019

Dear Prospective Grant Applicants,

Partners of the Americas (Partners), the U.S. Department of State (DOS), NAFSA: Association of International Educators, in partnership with *Cementos Progreso*, announce a new 2019 Innovation Fund grant competition designed to increase partnerships between higher education institutions (HEIs) in the United States with HEIs in Guatemala, El Salvador, and Honduras.

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 support new higher education partnerships between the United States and the rest of the Western Hemisphere.

Since January 2014, the Innovation Fund has become the central trusted mechanism in this hemispheric-wide education initiative that inspires U.S. universities and colleges to partner with higher education institutions in Latin America and Caribbean to build bridges of connectivity, strengthen institutional capacity, increase student exchange/training programs, and stimulate regional education cooperation throughout the Americas.

As of March 2019, the Innovation Fund has awarded 198 grants to more than 362 teams of universities and colleges in 25 countries and 42 U.S. states. Higher education institutions in Mexico, Colombia, Brazil, Argentina, Peru, and Chile are currently the top countries in the region to engage with and benefit from Innovation Fund grants in partnerships with U.S. universities, colleges, and community 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. Partnerships resulting from Innovation Fund grants provide students and faculty with more access to opportunities to gain technical and linguistic skills, work together in teams, conduct research, solve real-world problems, and become better prepared for today's workforce. Currently, more than 1,870 higher education institutions have joined the Innovation Network, including 1,000 universities and colleges 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.



PARTNERS *of the* **AMERICAS**
Connect • Serve • Change Lives



The **2019 Innovation Fund Competition for U.S.-Guatemala, Honduras, and El Salvador Higher Education Partnerships** is supported through contributions from Cementos Progreso and the U.S. Department of State, and is designed to create partnerships between higher education institutions (HEIs) in the United States with HEIs in **Guatemala, El Salvador, Honduras** to propose student academic exchange and training programs in the thematic areas of **Environmental Studies and Sustainability**, with special emphasis on addressing solutions to environmental issues and challenges in the eligible countries. For a complete list of eligible academic areas, see “Section III: Description of Grant Opportunity”.

Innovation Fund grant proposals should highlight how HEI teams will work together to provide new short-term academic exchange and training programs to students who are traditionally underrepresented in international exchange programs, including first-generation, minorities, women in STEM fields, and students from low-income and/or rural institutions/communities.

Grant proposals should also describe about how HEI teams will involve/include potential partnerships with local organizations (e.g: NGOs, community groups, businesses, etc.) in the U.S. and/or in the eligible Central American communities where students and faculty would carry out proposed Innovation Fund program activities. The intent of 2019 Innovation Fund Competition for U.S.-Guatemala, Honduras, and El Salvador Higher Education Partnerships is to award eight (8) Innovation Fund Grants of up to \$25,000 to selected proposals, pending the final evaluation and selection process. The Department of State, Partners of the Americas, and Cementos Progreso reserve the right to fund any or none of the grant proposals submitted for consideration. Please refer to the following for a complete statement of goals and expected results.



PARTNERS of the AMERICAS
 Connect • Serve • Change Lives



Table of Contents

Section I: Strategic Partners..... 1

Section II: Institutional Eligibility Information 1

Section III: Description of Grant Opportunity..... 2

Section IV: Award Information 4

Section V: Application and Submission 5

Section VI: Anticipated Timeline 6

Section VII: Innovation Fund Contacts 6



PARTNERS *of the* **AMERICAS**
Connect • Serve • Change Lives





PARTNERS *of the* AMERICAS
Connect • Serve • Change Lives



Section I: Strategic Partners

Cementos Progreso is a Guatemalan company that has been in operations for 120 years. Throughout its history it has striven to be an excellent corporate citizen aiming at capturing economic, social and environmental values to achieve sustainability, through the implementation of a set of strong values and principles. Cementos Progreso is characterized by its modern industrial process, its high environmental standards and the respect towards the communities in which it operates. It has been recognized as one of the best places to work in Guatemala and Central America by the Best Place to Work Institute, as one of the 128 most ethical companies in the world by the Ethisphere Institute and as a company of excellence on workplace health and safety by the British Safety Council. Cementos Progreso has contributed to the social and economic development of Guatemala through its corporate social responsibility commitment, its philanthropic work and the production of quality and innovative products and building solutions. The Company considers the human element key for achieving sustainable development. Therefore it is only fitting that Cementos Progreso would contribute to the 100,000 Strong in the Americas Innovation Fund, and by doing so, support the creation of more capacity that would allow Guatemala, Honduras and El Salvador to thrive and be more prosperous societies. Additional information on Cementos Progreso is available at www.cempro.com.

Section II: Institutional Eligibility Information

Higher education institutions (HEIs) located in the United States, Guatemala, Honduras, and El Salvador are eligible to apply for this new Innovation Fund Competition. This grant competition seeks to receive proposals from a diversity of HEIs, such as four-year and shorter-term degree-issuing higher education institutions, universities (public and private), colleges, community colleges, technical schools, and other post-secondary institutions with credit-bearing programs. The intention is to select diverse HEI teams and to secure representation from a broad diversity of institutional profiles and ensure the greatest possibility of replication across HEIs for sustainability of proposed Innovation Fund programming in the United States and in Central America.

Innovation Fund grant proposals must include a partnership between at least one higher education institution (HEI) in the U.S. and one higher education institution (HEI) in Guatemala, Honduras, or El Salvador. Proposals may involve new partnerships or build on existing ones; but in all cases, should demonstrate strong institutional support and focus on creating sustainable academic exchange programs among proposed partnering institutions.

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



PARTNERS *of the* AMERICAS
Connect • Serve • Change Lives



Section III: Description of Grant Opportunity

A. Purpose of this Innovation Fund Grant Competition

The 2019 Innovation Fund Competition for U.S.-Guatemala, Honduras, and El Salvador Higher Education Partnerships is sponsored by Cementos Progreso and the U.S. Department of State and is designed to stimulate and support up to eight (8) new partnerships of higher education institutions (HEIs) – universities, colleges, community colleges, technical training institutions – between the United States and Guatemala, El Salvador, and Honduras.

Teams of HEIs must show in their grant proposals how they would create and implement academic exchange programs that would provide critical access to new training opportunities for more students from the United States, Guatemala, El Salvador and Honduras to work in teams, solve real-world problems, and create sustainable networks of engaged students and faculty. Proposed program activities should show how students will have more opportunities to work in teams at their home and host institutions, gain technical, linguistic, and cross-cultural skills, and become better prepared for today’s workforce.

HEI teams must also show how their proposed programs will expand opportunities to **students whom are traditionally underrepresented in exchange programs**. This includes first-generation students, ethnic/cultural minorities, women in STEM fields, students from low-income or rural institutions communities, and students from other underrepresented populations at the partnering institutions.

Grant proposals should also describe how HEI teams will involve/include potential partnerships with local organizations (e.g: NGOs, community groups, businesses, etc.) in the U.S. and/or in the eligible Central American communities where students and faculty would carry out proposed Innovation Fund program activities.

Proposed activities, including program design and planning, should take place in the period beginning on January 1, 2020 and ending on December 31, 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.

B. Eligible Academic Fields of Study

Grant proposals should focus on themes of **Environmental Studies and Sustainability** with special emphasis on addressing solutions to environmental issues and challenges in the United States, Guatemala, El Salvador, and Honduras. Eligible academic areas include, but are not limited to:

- Water, Sanitation, and Hygiene (WASH)
 - Water Treatment

- Water Management
- Water Pollution Prevention
- Natural Resource Management
 - Deforestation and Forestry Management
 - Agriculture and the Environment
- Climate Change Adaptation and Resilience
- STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering and Math)
 - Engineering for Environmental Sustainability
 - Alternative and Renewable Energy
 - Waste Management: Reuse & Recycling
- Entrepreneurship
 - Ecotourism
 - Social Entrepreneurship
- Political Science
 - Environmental Law
 - Public Policy
 - Rule of Law/Governance
 - Civil Society/Community Engagement

C. Student Action Projects

Proposals should state how students will gain *practical* knowledge and apply what they learn through the development of “*Action Projects*” – which would demonstrate concrete results/outcomes of the students’ participation in the proposed program. These joint *Action Projects* should outline how students will work together to propose results-oriented solutions to an issue (or issues) related to the selected academic fields in the Innovation Fund grant proposal.

It is encouraged, but not required, that student teams at the home and host institutions be multidisciplinary in nature; this can ensure multiple skill sets and perspectives for the proposed exchange and training programs and for the students’ *Action Projects*.

Examples of *Action Projects* are noted below, and not limited to these types of outcomes:

- Final project to highlight students’ skills/training gained during grant program activities
- Pilot project resulting in new innovations and/or potential sustainable actions
- Joint research or other types of collaboration
- Presentations at conferences at HEIs or other venues
- Presentations of students’ work at home and/or host institution

In addition to interacting with the host HEI, students should be exposed to local stakeholders and have opportunities to work with different sectors to seek solutions related to the selected academic fields and to inform their proposed *Action Project* plans. Students must receive some level of credit from their home institution in for their participation in the proposed Innovation Fund grant activities.



PARTNERS of the AMERICAS
Connect • Serve • Change Lives



Proposals should also highlight how this Innovation Fund grant would set into motion additional future programming and funding at the partnering HEIs to expand student exchange and training programs between Guatemala, Honduras, El Salvador and the United States beyond the Innovation Fund grant period.

In all cases, the proposed Innovation Fund grant activities, products, and *Action Projects* should focus on advancing solutions that are **replicable**, **scalable** and **sustainable**.

D. Expected Results

Higher education institutions that are successful in implementing Innovation Fund grants will:

- Create/strengthen partnerships between HEIs in the U.S. and Guatemala, Honduras and El Salvador, which would not have taken place without the Innovation Fund grant;
- Promote and implement new student exchange and/or training opportunities for students in the U.S. and Guatemala, Honduras and El Salvador;
- Promote project-based learning for students to work in teams toward the “*Action Projects*”;
- Increase student and faculty mobility between the U.S. Guatemala, Honduras, El Salvador; and
- Engage and collaborate with the Innovation Fund and other stakeholders to share lessons learned from the proposed grant program.

Section IV: Award Information

A. Estimate of Funds Available

The intent of this 2019 Innovation Fund Competition is to award up to eight (8) Innovation Fund grants of \$25,000 to selected proposals, pending final evaluation. Partners of the Americas, the U.S. Department of State, and Cementos Progreso reserve right to fund any or none of the proposals submitted.

B. Notification of Award Recipients

Partners of the Americas will notify all institutions of the status of their proposals by October, 31 2019. The list of Innovation Fund grant recipients for this grant competition will be published on www.100kstrongamericas.org.

C. Period of Performance

Following the grant notification, Partners will work with Innovation Fund grant recipients on next steps and processes for receiving their award.

The period of performance will be from January 1, 2020 - December 31, 2020, with the possibility of an extension following an analysis of the program at the time of the request.



PARTNERS of the AMERICAS
Connect • Serve • Change Lives



D. Award Responsibilities

1. Innovation Fund Staff

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

- Technical support of grant activities and oversight of award contract terms;
- Review of the recipient's progress reports;
- Approval of changes in budget, program activities, personnel, and extension in period of performance;
- Request for additional information on program and student/faculty engagement;
- Facilitation of communications between awardees and U.S. Embassies; and
- Outreach regarding sharing of lessons learned from program implementation and participation at visibility events and conferences.

2. Award Recipients

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

- Progress on project goals and objectives, including the development of the program, student and faculty travel, and student *Action Project* activities and outcomes;
- Successes, challenges, and lessons learned in program implementation and evaluation;
- Testimonials on how the grant benefits/impacts students, institutions, and local communities; and
- Program expenditures and cost-sharing.

Section V: 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, including the evaluation criteria, can be found at www.100kstrongamericas.org/app-format/.



PARTNERS of the AMERICAS
Connect • Serve • Change Lives



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 may only 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. For a comprehensive list of questions received from applicants of previous grant competitions, please visit www.100kstrongamericas.org/100k-competition-faqs.

Section VI: Anticipated Timeline

Note: The following dates are subject to change.

ACTIVITY	TIME PERIOD
Launch of Grant Competition	May 15, 2019
Close of Grant Competition	August 15, 2019
Proposal Evaluation Process	August 15 – October 15, 2019
Notification of Status of Proposal	By October 15, 2019
Award of Grant Funds to Winners	November – December 2019
Period of Performance for Grantees	January 1, 2020 – December 31, 2020

Section VII: Innovation Fund Contacts

Questions concerning this RFP must be sent to www.100kstrongamericas.org/questions. **No phone calls, please.**



PARTNERS of the AMERICAS



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.