

Fifth Request for Proposals –2011

Supporting Latin American and Caribbean Applied Collaborative ICT Research LACCIR Funding Initiative for ICT Research

110518RFP0005

Request For Proposal Number	0005
Issuing Date	May 30 th 2011
Opening Reception Date	May 30 th 2011
Submission Deadline	September 5 th , 2011. Noon 12:00 PM GMT-3:00
Notification of awards	December 12 th 2011.
Inquiries to	hub@laccir.org
Additional Information	www.laccir.org

Call for information and communication technologies Research Project Proposals in the following application areas: **Healthcare; Education; Energy; Earth, Environment & Climate Change; Government; and Micro-Economies.**

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Summary

This request for proposals will support world-class research to expand the capabilities of information and communications technologies in Latin America and the Caribbean in the following areas: **Healthcare; Education; Energy; Earth, Environment & Climate Change; Government; and Micro-Economies.**

To promote international collaboration, the proposal should be submitted by a team from **at least two Latin American/Caribbean universities in two different countries**, and there **must be** a LACCIR SPOKE university in the team. The following are LACCIR SPOKE universities:

- Pontificia Universidad Católica de Chile
- Universidad de Chile
- Universidad de la República, Uruguay
- Instituto Tecnológico y de Estudios Superiores de Monterrey, México
- Instituto Politécnico Nacional, Mexico
- Universidad de Buenos Aires, Argentina
- Universidad de Costa Rica
- Universidad de Los Andes, Colombia
- Escuela Superior Politécnica del Litoral, Ecuador
- University of the West Indies, Trinidad and Tobago

In this 2011 RFP, LACCIR anticipates granting **up to ten awards of up to \$50,000 USD each**. This includes two grants sponsored by **Mexico-CONACYT** to projects led by researchers affiliated to Mexican universities registered in **CONACYT's "Padrón Nacional de Posgrados de Calidad"**.

Projects should be formulated for one year (12 months) of duration and submitted in electronic form through the LACCIR web site: www.laccir.org.

Proposals will be reviewed and evaluated by LACCIR's Technical Committee. Based on these evaluations, LACCIR's Joint Steering Committee (JSC) will select the winning proposals. LACCIR cannot provide feedback to those proposals not selected for funding.

Recipients of the grant awards would need to agree to the terms of a **COLLABORATING RESEARCH INSTITUTION AGREEMENT**, described in the LACCIR Web Site.

Please, send any questions to hub@laccir.org; write "RFP Inquiry" in the subject line.

LACCIR 2011 Request for Research Proposals

A) Presentation

The **Latin American and Caribbean Collaborative ICT Research Federation (LACCIR)** was created in 2007 to provide Latin American and Caribbean (LAC) universities with a sustainable virtual collaborative environment to promote cross-country research and education solutions. The primary goal of LACCIR **is to encourage collaborative research in information and communication technologies (ICT) as an enabler of economic and social development in the region.**

In particular, this request for proposals (RFP) will support world-class research to expand the capabilities of ICT in Latin America and the Caribbean. Such research initiatives must be in the field of Computer Science and Engineering, with applications to the following areas:

- 1. Healthcare**
- 2. Education**
- 3. Energy**
- 4. Earth, Environment & Climate Change**
- 5. Government**
- 6. Micro-Economies**

The following topics for possible proposals are only provided as examples:

- Development of integrated systems and mobile applications related to health-care delivery and management. Elderly care and well-being.
- Computational tools and techniques in the modeling/prediction/monitoring of environmental change (e.g. climatic, hydrological, oceanographic, ecological).
- Innovative systems for primary, secondary, higher, and continued education.
- Scholarly Communications.
- Solutions for energy conservation, production, and usage.
- Exploration of algorithms/computational models/ICT solutions in healthcare and well-being (preventive and curative).
- ICT in social development and poverty reduction, improving the performance of compensation insurance market, ICT tools to facilitate e-government for the disadvantaged communities.
- Economic growth, micro-economies sustainability and development. E-readiness assessment of non-profit ICT SMEs in a developing country. sustainable development in third world micro-economies.

Multidisciplinary approaches are enthusiastically welcomed.

To promote international collaboration, the proposal should be submitted by a team from **at least two Latin American/Caribbean universities from two different countries**, and there **must be** a LACCIR SPOKE university in the team. The following are LACCIR SPOKE universities:

- Pontificia Universidad Católica (PUC) de Chile
- Universidad de Chile (UCHILE)
- Universidad de la República (UDELAR), Uruguay
- Instituto Tecnológico y de Estudios Superiores de Monterrey (ITESM), México
- Instituto Politécnico Nacional (IPN), México
- Universidad de Buenos Aires (UBA), Argentina
- Universidad de Costa Rica (UCR)
- Universidad de Los Andes (UNIANDES), Colombia
- Escuela Superior Politécnica del Litoral (ESPOL), Ecuador
- University of the West Indies (UWI), Trinidad and Tobago, Caribbean

B) Funding

In this 2011 RFP, LACCIR anticipates granting **up to ten awards** of up to \$50,000 USD each. Funding for this RFP is provided by the following LACCIR stakeholder and partner institutions¹:

Microsoft Research and Inter American Development Bank: *\$400.000 USD*.

Mexico-CONACYT: *\$100.000 USD*.

Funding provided by Mexico-CONACYT will be awarded to (up to two) projects which are led by researchers affiliated to Mexican universities registered in **CONACYT's "Padrón Nacional de Posgrados de Calidad"**². At least one non-Mexican university from the LAC region must participate in the proposal as well.

C) Projects' Duration

The research activities included in the proposals should be formulated to last one year (12 months) and be able to show results within that period. Proposed projects could be part of a larger project.

D) Awards, Requirements and Agreement for Winner Proposals

As mentioned in the previous section, LACCIR will grant up to \$50,000 USD to each winner project. Based on the selection criteria and funding decisions of the LACCIR's Joint Steering Committee, LACCIR reserves the right to concede lower funding than the requested in the proposal. All grants are made in US Dollars as unrestricted gifts to the leading institution of the awarded project.

In addition to the funding described in the previous section, Microsoft Research will provide for free development and commercial (MSDNAA) software to the awarded projects for the time of execution of the projects. Researchers are free to use or not use these tools.

¹ Money not awarded in this 2011-RFP due to selection criteria, will be reserved for the 2012-RFP.

² One of the CONACYT awarded projects has to include IPN as the leading SPOKE university.

Recipients of the grants would need to agree to the terms of a COLLABORATING RESEARCH INSTITUTION AGREEMENT (CRIA), which covers such issues as the handling of the funding, progress reports, conduct of the project, and intellectual property. Pontificia Universidad Católica de Chile will sign this agreement as the granting institution, in representation of LACCIR. More information about the CRIA document can be found in the LACCIR Web Site.

Recipients are required to provide LACCIR with suitable progress reports and accountability twice a year, indicating the level of achievement of the project goals and budget execution. Project goals should also include publishing in conferences and recognized scientific journals.

Upon completion, each awarded project will be thoroughly assessed by the LACCIR JSC. The criteria for completion assessment include the attainment of the specified project goals. Each project should have as one of its products the submission of a suitable scientific paper to an ISI-listed journal.

E) Eligibility

Proposals must meet the following criteria to be eligible to enter the selection process:

1. The project must focus on high-quality research in **information and communication technologies**.
2. The research proposal should be submitted by a team from **at least two Latin American or Caribbean universities from two different countries**, to promote **international collaboration**. There **must be a LACCIR SPOKE university leading the project**³. Out-of-the-LAC-region institutions may participate, but the project must include at least two regional institutions.
3. Each participating institution team must include a Principal Investigator (PI) with solid research experience. Young researchers are expected to participate in the teams and thus acquire valuable expertise.
4. Awarded money is expected to be used for students' stipends, equipment, lab personnel, travel for meetings and conferences, etc. It should **not be used to improve the salaries of the researchers in the team or to pay institutions' administrative overheads**. The JSC will definitely cut back these last types of expenditures.
5. The proposed research project and its participating institutions should have the potential to attract additional **matching funds**. A memorandum of understanding or a support letter may be attached to the proposal.
6. Researchers participating in the LACCIR Technical Committee may submit proposals; in such cases, they will be excluded from the proposals' evaluation process. Also, Technical Committee members will not evaluate proposals from their own institutions or countries.
7. Proposals should evidence a commitment to make all results, including all intellectual property in those results, broadly available by either: (i) dedicating such results to the public domain; or (ii) making the results available under a non-restrictive license that allows modification and redistribution without any significant restrictions or conditions, such as the BSD license available at <http://opensource.org/licenses/bsd-license.php>. Proposals should also evidence willingness to contribute any resulting material to the LACCIR Repository at www.laccir.org.

³ The SPOKE University that leads the Project is responsible for signing the CRIA agreement, submitting the progress reports to LACCIR and to fulfill the committed objectives at completion of the project.

8. A researcher can be awarded at most one project in which he/she is a Principal Investigator (PI)⁴. Also, a person cannot be a PI in two or more LACCIR-funded projects at the same time (e.g., the PI of a project scheduled to finish on April 2012 cannot propose a project that will start on March 2012).
9. Projects that include at least one Mexican Research University recognized by CONACYT are eligible for LACCIR funding provided by CONACYT.

F) Submission Process

Proposals will be received only in electronic form through the LACCIR Web site: www.laccir.org. LACCIR cannot assume responsibility for the confidentiality of the information in the proposals. Therefore, proposals should not contain information that is confidential, restricted, or sensitive. LACCIR reserves the right to make public those proposals that receive awards, except portions containing budgetary or personally identifiable information.

The submission process includes three steps:

1. **Upload a brief summary and contact information on the submission Web Site:** www.laccir.org. Provide full contact information for principal investigators, amount requested and a brief abstract in English. The abstract should provide a succinct definition of the project: goals, overview, expected outcomes, and basic project data, such as ICT application area and countries of impact.
2. **Attach the complete proposal**, written in English, seven (7) pages maximum, 10-point font or larger, double-spaced, in either Microsoft Word or PDF format. Longer proposals will be excluded from the evaluation process. This length limit does not consider the list of publications of the researchers. The Principal Investigator must fill a form with his/her list of relevant publications. The form can be downloaded from LACCIR web site. Inclusion of relevant publications by other team members is optional.
3. **Attach researchers' background**, containing a list of ISI publications according to the template available on the LACCIR website.

G) Proposal's Organization

Proposals should address the following items, under separate numbered headings:

1. **Problem Statement.** What is the problem area addressed by the proposal and why is it important? What is the potential contribution to the field of the project? Cite relevant work in the field.
2. **Expected Outcomes and Dissemination.** What tangible assets, if any, will be created or produced as a result of the proposed project? How will the results be evaluated (if appropriate), and how will they be disseminated to others? Under what general license terms will the results be made available?

⁴ A project proposal must include one PI per each participating institution/university.

3. **Description of Activities and Schedule.** Describe the activities to be performed, their time schedule, the expected results, the organization and execution of the project. State the duration of the project. When is the project to be completed? What milestones will be used to measure progress and when will they be completed? If the project is part of a larger ongoing research program, estimate the time for completion of this project only. Identify the executing institution and its structure and capacity to contract and assume obligations.
4. **Use of Funds.** Prepare a detailed spreadsheet table of estimated costs (US\$) for the project's operation, separating each item in the following four categories: LACCIR funding, participating institutions funding, other funds, and totals. Specify fees for graduate students, indicating estimated hours/week of dedication for each student. Specify travel expenses, as well as other required operational expenses. Detail the cost of participation in conferences to disseminate the project results. Include all equipment, materials, or external services required to implement the project. Include the hours/week (and corresponding institutional in-kind costs) to be devoted by each participating researcher. A totals bottom line is required, separated in the four categories. LACCIR does not accept any administrative overhead costs.
5. **Additional Funding Sources.** Identify any additional sources of funding that support this research, along with any proposed departure from the intellectual property terms of the Agreement that would be necessary to allow such co-funding. (If not applicable at the moment of submission, report any new additional source of funding to LACCIR's Joint Steering Committee during the execution of the project.) Authors of winning proposals will be required to submit an original letter on department letterhead certifying the commitment of any additional or matching support described in the proposal.
6. **Qualifications of Principal Investigators (PI) and Participating Institutions.** LACCIR considers three categories of project researchers as follows: one PI per participating institution including a SPOKE PI, and other team researchers. The Spoke PI is responsible for the oversight of the project, fulfillment of objectives and reporting to LACCIR. Include a brief description of any relevant prior research, teaching, publication, or other professional experience of each participating researcher. Describe briefly researchers and institutions background and the role it will play in the project. A detailed vita of each PI is not required; however, a list of the PI's ISI publications must be provided as a separate document according to the **template** available on the LACCIR website.
7. **Sustainability.** Describe the project's sustainability, and the possibilities for replication of the results in the same or in other countries. If possible, state concrete means for verification of the suggested impact and benefits.
8. **Dissemination and Potential for Academic Publication.** Research results should be widely disseminated to relevant scientific communities using established academic channels, such as international conferences and refereed journals. Presence in the Web is also desirable. Other possibilities include regional workshops and graduate seminars.

9. **Technologies Used in the Project.** List the technologies that will be used in the project; i.e., programming languages, operating systems, networking technologies, application software, equipment, etc. Microsoft Research (MSR) has a large repository of code and software tools that can be used for free, on a voluntary basis, by the selected projects. Information on these repositories and tools is available at <http://research.microsoft.com/apps/dp/dl/downloads.aspx> and at <http://research.microsoft.com/en-us/collaboration/tools/default.aspx>. MSR will be able to provide special support to those principal investigators of winning proposals that use Microsoft technologies with free access to software, tools, and technical workshops. **The choice of technologies must be justified in technical terms.**

H) Selection Process and Criteria

All proposals in compliance with the eligibility criteria will be reviewed and evaluated by LACCIR's Technical Committee. Based on these evaluations, LACCIR's Joint Steering Committee will select the winning proposals. LACCIR reserves the right to fund awarded proposals at an amount less or greater than the amount requested, up to \$50,000 USD. **LACCIR cannot provide individual feedback on those proposals that are not funded.**

Proposals will be evaluated based upon the following criteria:

1. **Quality** of the proposed academic research project, as it relates to the described research goals of this RFP; scientific/technical soundness, work plan, schedule and sustainability. The evaluation of this item will receive a 60% weight on the final evaluation.
2. **Qualifications of the research team (especially Principal Investigators)**, including history of publications, work in relevant areas, successful completion of previous funded projects, research and teaching awards. This item weights 30% on the final evaluation.
3. **General statement of the project**, including the adequacy of resources timeline; value, which encompasses the efficient use of requested resources and funding, potential for wide dissemination and use of intellectual property created (specific plans for publications, conference presentations, and distance learning, as well as plans to distribute content in multiple formats or languages). This item weights 10% on the final evaluation.
4. Through this RFP program, LACCIR encourages **partnerships between university research teams from different countries in Latin America & the Caribbean**. Thus, joint proposals by more than two universities and countries are strongly encouraged and will receive prime consideration. In the proposal document, please state the name of each partner institution and the work they will contribute to the project.

I) Schedule and Deadlines

Announcement:	May 18 th 2011.
First date for submission of proposals	May 30 th 2011.
Last date for submission of proposals:	September 5 th , 2011. Noon 12:00 GMT- 3:00.
Notification of Awards:	December 12 th , 2011.
First Report from Selected Projects:	August 30 th , 2012.
Final Report from Selected Projects:	March 15 th , 2013.

Please, send any questions to hub@laccir.org; write “RFP Inquiry” in the subject line.

Acknowledgements. LACCIR would like to thank its supporters and collaborators: Microsoft Research, The Inter-American Development Bank, the Organization of American States and the Mexican National Council of Science and Technology CONACYT.

Terms of Agreement

For research projects accepted by the joint steering committee of LACCIR, the recipient university will be presented with a standard Grant Award Agreement, the COLLABORATING RESEARCH INSTITUTION AGREEMENT. The following is a brief synopsis of the key provisions of the agreement.

OPERATIONAL MATTERS

- You are an independent agent; you are not an employee of the LACCIR Federation. You are responsible for staffing the project as you deem appropriate to achieve your goals. You are responsible for payment of all salaries and benefits to your staff.
- Funds will be held in an account and may only be used for the research project.
- Any equipment or materials you wish to acquire to assist you in your research will be subject to standard local laws and concession of use requirements.
- You are required to provide the LACCIR Federation with half-yearly progress reports. These reports will be shared with the joint steering committee.
- You will acknowledge LACCIR Federation, Microsoft, IDB and OAS' support in any approved publication or press release regarding your research project.

INTELLECTUAL PROPERTY RIGHTS

- You are the owner of any intellectual property you create as a result of the research project.
- You are responsible for safeguarding that intellectual property.
- If you and Microsoft engage in any joint research activities, both will jointly own any inventions. Terms of that Joint Intellectual Property will be mutually agreed upon between your University and Microsoft through a separate agreement.
- In consideration of the funding being provided, you will grant to Microsoft a non-exclusive, royalty free license to any intellectual property arising from the funded research project. (You always *retain ownership* to code or other intellectual property that you create as part of the funded research project. Non-exclusive means that you can grant as many licenses for your code to as many other individuals or companies as you wish. You do, however, agree to provide to Microsoft a non-exclusive, royalty free license to that code or other creation – meaning Microsoft can use it, test it, and create a derivative work or other extension to it. Royalty free means your license to Microsoft is without charge. Should Microsoft wish to pursue an *exclusive* license, a specific contract would be negotiated to obtain exclusivity.)
- If the research project results in patentable inventions, you must notify Microsoft who then can decide if it wants to engage with you for an exclusive license. Terms of that exclusive license (fees, etc.) will be mutually agreed upon. You will retain the right to use the technology for research and teaching purposes.
- The award might be cancelled by LACCIR in the event of justifiable cause, on the basis of the evaluation by the LACCIR Joint Steering Committee. Cancellation does not preclude other measures that might be deemed necessary.

INTELLECTUAL PROPERTY LIMITATIONS

- If you wish to use any pre-existing materials in the research project, you must obtain adequate rights from the owner so that you can grant the licenses to Microsoft as stated above. We recognize and support there may be a need or preference for you to use pre-existing code or tools in the research project. This is fine so long as those pre-existing materials are identified by you and using them does not interfere with the non-exclusive

license grant you are required to give to Microsoft. (For example, if you wished to incorporate in your project, code that you had worked on as part of another funded project. If the company, organization, or individual that provided the funds for the other project demanded that they have an *exclusive* license to anything you created, then you would *not* be able to grant the non-exclusive license to Microsoft – the project would be encumbered by that prior obligation.)

- You may not subject the research project to the terms of an “Excluded License”. This does not mean that you cannot use “open source” technology in your research project but that you may not use it in a fashion that might subject the project to the terms of an Excluded License (which might eliminate the ability to patent the technology or negotiate an exclusive license).

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