

CCSF Request for Proposals (RFP) January 2010 Release

The Cornell Center for a Sustainable Future (CCSF) invites proposals for its Academic Venture Fund (AVF) program. This fund has been created to stimulate new, original, cross-disciplinary research at Cornell in sustainability science. The aim of the Academic Venture Fund is to connect Cornell scholars across disciplines and with external partners in research that shows promise for securing external funding and that has a tangible impact in advancing sustainability locally, regionally, nationally and internationally. CCSF welcomes proposals that would not normally be funded by traditional granting organizations because they are interdisciplinary, still at an early stage of development, high risk, or some combination of these factors.

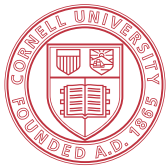
During this funding cycle CCSF will give preference to proposals focused on basic and applied research. Proposals will be evaluated for scholarly quality, their likely contribution to understanding and solving problems associated with sustainability, their likelihood of establishing new, significant, and lasting partnerships within Cornell and with outside organizations, and their likely durability beyond the period of CCSF seed funding. Proposals will be evaluated by CCSF's Faculty Advisory Committee, assisted by expert peer reviewers as needed.

CCSF anticipates that successful proposals will include two or more co-principal investigators from different departments and disciplines. Further, CCSF expects that the portfolio of successful proposals will represent a balance across CCSF's three themes of Energy, Environment, and Economic Development. The AVF award may be necessary for investigators to generate preliminary results; to develop a common language, methodological or theoretical framework; or to establish a proof-of-concept in order to move forward with high-impact, high-quality research or scholarship after the AVF funding expires. Short-term proposals are encouraged and may be for study groups, workshops, or shared GRA/post-doc funding necessary to get a group of scholars well organized to pursue high-return opportunities.

Prospective applicants are strongly encouraged to discuss their ideas with CCSF leadership well in advance of submitting an AVF proposal (contact details available at <http://www.sustainablefuture.cornell.edu/people/>). This discussion is intended to help strengthen proposals by identifying potential partnerships and further refining innovative ideas.

Letter of Intent due February 24, 2010

Applicants are also strongly encouraged to submit a letter of intent (LOI) on or before **February 24, 2010**. The LOI should include a one paragraph description of the proposed research along with the names, departments and NetIDs of the potential Principal Investigator and any potential co-PIs. This description, along with applicant contact information, will be posted on the CCSF website in a directory accessible only to those with Cornell NetIDs. LOIs are published in this way to encourage additional partnerships, in particular among researchers at Cornell who might not already be working together. Go to <http://www.sustainablefuture.cornell.edu/AVF/> to submit your letter of intent.



Funding

Funding is available for periods of 6 to 24 months with grant awards of approximately \$35,000 for 6 month activities, \$100,000 for 12 month projects, and \$280,000 for a 24 month initiative. We expect that no more than one 24 month initiative will be funded. If sufficiently compelling proposals are received, we expect to distribute a total of \$500,000. Any funds that remain uncommitted after the competition will be held for the next call for proposals or used in other ways to further the aims of the Center. In some cases, shorter-term AVF awards may be renewed by application to a subsequent AVF competition. Cumulatively, however, CCSF will not support AVF projects for longer than 24 months.

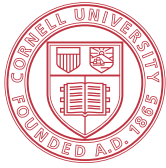
Eligibility

Those eligible to serve as principal investigator (PI) on an AVF proposal include tenure-track faculty, Principal Research Scientists, Senior Scientists and others – see www.research.cornell.edu/VPR/Policies/PI-policy.html for a complete enumeration. Other Cornell employees or students may participate but may not serve as PI.

Proposal Guidelines

In March 2010, you may go to <http://www.sustainablefuture.cornell.edu/AVF/> to submit your proposal, following the instructions. The complete proposal will consist of a cover sheet, narrative, budget and budget justification, and relevant current and pending form.

- A. Fill in the **Cover Sheet Form** available on the site.
- B. **Proposal Narrative.** The narrative should be a single pdf file, with text in 12 point font, single-spaced, with at least 1 inch margins. Proposers may start each section on a new page. The narrative should include the following sections:
 1. A proposal **summary** that explains ➤the motivation for and risks associated with the project, ➤what is novel about the proposed research, ➤what research methods will be used, and ➤how this project might have impact that advances sustainability. This section must articulate a ➤clear set of objectives and a ➤compelling vision of what the project might achieve and what differentiates it from standard disciplinary research. (3 pages maximum for narrative plus 1 page references)
 2. A plan for **new internal and external partnerships**. Where appropriate, describe how new, substantive alliances will be established with external partners who can apply or otherwise further the research discoveries of the project, so as to achieve impact. Identify the prospective external partners and their level of committed engagement as precisely as possible. (1 page max)
 3. A **follow-on funding plan**: how will the research launched by the AVF be continued? What sources of funds are or might be available, and at what level and timing, to continue the research launched by the AVF grant? (½ page max)
 4. **Milestones**: a specific timeline of well-defined activities and measurable outcomes from the project. (½ page max)
 5. **Metrics of success**: specific, measurable indicators that are appropriate to the problem to be addressed and that can be used to evaluate the performance of the project in terms of advancing sustainability locally, regionally, or internationally. (½ page max)



6. A brief **curriculum vita** for the Principal Investigator and each co-PI. (3 page maximum per PI, co-PI)
 7. For all PIs and co-PIs, include information on **AVF-related relevant Current and Pending Support**. Include the following information in your choice of format: Project/Proposal Title, Funding Source, Award Amount, Award Period, Relationship to AVF Project (e.g., co-financing of materials/personnel, overlapping objectives, use of data or equipment, similar partnerships, etc.). Only include projects related to the AVF proposal.
- C. **Project budget and justification:** AVF funding may be used for any legitimate research expense. Note that CCSF typically will not support faculty salaries (summer or academic year). Fill in the budget template provided. (No page limit on budget justification)

Deadline & Submission Information:

Proposals must be received no later than **4:00 PM Eastern Time on April 5, 2010**.

Email ccsf@cornell.edu if you have questions

Responsibilities: Proposers awarded AVF funds will be requested to:

- 1) **Meet** quarterly with the appropriate CCSF Associate Director or Director to discuss progress of their effort in research, development of intra-Cornell and external partnerships, intended application(s), desired impacts, follow-on funding development, and milestones met or missed.
- 2) **Report** progress at a semi-annual CCSF AVF event, in either a poster or panel discussion session, to be coordinated by CCSF.
- 3) **Submit** a final and – in the case of projects of more than one year’s duration, also an annual – written report that describes progress made as outlined in 1) above and also describes in detail the level of progress for each specific metric of success presented in the original proposal.
- 4) **Prepare** an end-of-project press release on results. CCSF staff assistance will be available to help if needed.

A Question and Answer Session for proposers may be scheduled for February and March if there is sufficient interest. Please contact Paula Euvrard <pge3@cornell.edu> to register for a Q&A session. Once you have registered, you will be notified of the location for the event.

Thank you for your interest in the Cornell Center for a Sustainable Future and its Academic Venture Fund program. Please email ccsf@cornell.edu for a prompt response to your questions.