

2019 GCSO Grant Program - Frequently Asked Questions

What is the ultimate goal of GCSO and its funding pool?

GCSO is distinguished from other networks by its focus on implementation and scaling of solutions to sustainability challenges. The GCSO funding pool has been established to support and launch projects designed to achieve and scale a sustainability outcome(s).

What kind of activities will GCSO fund?

GCSO invites proposals that intend to *scale viable solutions*. *A viable solution is eligible for consideration if it has been fully developed and is ready to be tested or implemented in one or more locations.* See current GCSO projects for examples of solutions being implemented/scaled in multiple locations. (See “Projects” tab of the [GCSO website](#).)

How is GCSO defining a “sustainability outcome”?

A sustainability outcome is evident when a sustainability problem is significantly reduced, solved or avoided. Stimulants to creating a sustainability outcome can take many forms including sustainable products/services, sustainable infrastructures or technologies, sustainable behavior change schemes and policies, sustainability-oriented trainings, and teaching students how to develop sustainability solutions. Sustainability outcomes impact environmental, economic and societal challenges.

What is the grant period?

GCSO-funded projects must be completed within 12-months from the project start date. Funded projects begin September 1, 2019. Funds distribution is estimated to take place in June-July 2019.

Who can apply? What is the application procedure?

This call for proposals is only open to faculty, researchers and staff from GCSO member institutions, and involves a two-step process: (Stage 1) Letter of Intent, and (Stage 2) Full Proposal *upon invitation*. GCSO recommends that the Lead Applicant of an LOI submission contact their designated institutional [GCSO member representative](#) early on, to advise them of submission plans. GCSO member representatives will review LOI submissions in which the Lead Applicant is from their institution. Up to three submissions from each GCSO institution will be invited to submit a full proposal.

What are GCSO’s member institutions?

GCSO member institutions include: Arizona State University (United States), City University of Hong Kong (Hong Kong), Dublin City University (Ireland), Kamehameha Schools (United States), Karlsruhe Institute of Technology (Germany), King’s College London (United Kingdom), King Mongkut’s Institute of Technology Ladkrabang (Thailand), Leuphana University of Lüneburg (Germany), Portland State University (United States), Tecnológico de Monterrey (Mexico), University of Guam (Guam), and Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México (Mexico).

For more information: <https://sustainabilityoutcomes.org/member-universities/>

Can non-GCSO institutions participate in the project?

Non-GCSO member institutions are ineligible to receive funding directly from GCSO; however, they may be included in a project as an implementation or scaling partner. Inclusion of a non-GCSO member must be fully justified in the project narrative.

How do I apply?

Applicants must submit a Letter of Intent (LOI) via InfoReady at <https://asu.infoready4.com/>. Alternate methods of submission will not be considered.

Can a member institution submit more than one LOI application?

Yes. There is no limit to the number of submissions from each member university.

How much funding is available?

100% of membership dues have been compiled to create GCSO's funding pool. Funding available for the 2019 period is approximately \$500,000 USD.

How much funding can I request?

Applicants should use the total amount of the funding pool, the total number of GCSO member institutions and the number of their collaborators on the proposal as guides in making your request.

What costs are *not* eligible for funding?

GCSO respectfully requests that standard university indirect costs or research overhead not be charged to GCSO funding allocations. GCSO is a program of a not-for-profit organization and the funding pool comes primarily from universities themselves. ASU has waived such charges.

What is the purpose of the LOI?

The funding pool is intended to support multi-institutional projects that lead to a sustainability outcome(s) that can be applied in various locations ("scaled"). The LOI should outline the sustainability challenge to be addressed, viable solution to be implemented, anticipated impact and sustainability outcome(s), and alignment with the GCSO mission. The Letter of Intent is limited to 500 words. Shortlisted LOIs—a maximum of three from each GCSO member institution—will be invited to submit a full proposal.

Do I need to identify GCSO collaborators in the LOI?

Individual names of Project co-leads (Co-Applicants) are preferred, but not required at this stage. If Co-applicants are unknown, the application requires that you include: (1) Potential/desired GCSO member institution collaborator/s, and (2) Plans to identify and confirm Co-applicant/s.

Are there suggested guidelines for describing the objective(s) and anticipated sustainability outcome(s) of the proposed project?

GCSO recommends the use of SMART objectives (guidelines below) to describe the project's purpose and intended results using brief, clear and specific statements that can be measured and assessed. Furthermore, projects should link objective(s) to the anticipated sustainability impact(s)/outcome(s). Eligible projects answer: "*What will be made more sustainable as a result of this project?*"

1. Specific: concrete, detailed, defined with clear indications of who is involved, what they are expected to do, and why
2. Measurable: clear and specific criteria to demonstrate change; define targets and benefits
3. Achievable: interventions/services can be delivered and objectives met within resource constraints (e.g., time, money, staff, skills, capacity)
4. Relevant: clear link between the objective and the larger goal of the project/program
5. Time-bound: specific time frame is set to achieve the objective(s)

View [examples](#) of GCSO-funded projects delivering impacts and outcomes.

What are the submission deadlines?

LOIs must be submitted online via InfoReady by 5:00pm MST (Arizona/US time zone) on **March 8, 2019**. Early submission is allowed and encouraged. Invited Full Proposals are due 5:00pm MST (Arizona/US time zone) on **April 30, 2019**.

How will the LOI be reviewed and evaluated?

Using pre-determined [evaluation criteria](#), the [representative for each GCSO member institution](#) will review, comment on and score only the LOIs in which the Lead Applicant is from their institution. Reviewers are asked to consider importance of the sustainability challenge to be addressed, viability of the solution to be implemented, anticipated impact and sustainability outcome(s), and alignment with the GCSO mission. Up to three submissions from each GCSO institution will be invited to submit a full proposal. Email notifications will be sent by **March 29, 2019**.

What are the anticipated questions for the Full Proposal (Stage 2)?

If selected to submit a Full Proposal, the following is required: description of the sustainability challenge the project will address, the proposed solution, and the anticipated outcome(s); identification of Co-applicants at two or more collaborating member institutions; description of implementers and their role; inclusion of the project timeline and activities that will be completed in one year; explanation of the initial and potential scope of scale; description of project monitoring and evaluation methods; declaration of funding amount requested including a detailed budget; and identification of potential external funding sources to support project continuation.

How will the Full Proposal be reviewed and evaluated?

The principal evaluation criteria will be the project's ability of achieving the GCSO mission to solve or reduce a sustainability problem and to scale its solution; that is, to create an outcome(s) that clearly "makes something more sustainable" as a result of the project.

What are the essential elements of a winning proposal?

Full Proposals require collaboration among two or more GCSO member institutions. Since GCSO's mission is to support multi-institutional projects that are clearly designed to ultimately lead to a sustainability *outcome(s)* and that could be applied in various locations ("scaled"), Applicants are advised that submissions should explain how the proposed activity complies with these requirements.

Will all invited full proposals receive funding?

Unknown at this time. Allocation of funds will depend upon the number and quality of proposals submitted. However, only projects that comply with the GCSO mission will be considered.

Is this the only opportunity for direct funding from GCSO?

This funding request for proposals process is anticipated as the sole opportunity to apply for GCSO funding in 2019.

Will there be other opportunities to seek funding via GCSO?

Yes. Throughout the year, GCSO staff will identify and make members aware of external funding opportunities that clearly match members' interests and desired collaborations, consistent with GCSO's mission. GCSO encourages faculty at member universities and research institutes to complete the following intake survey: <http://bit.ly/GCSOintakesurvey>.

What are the costs for travel to present at the GCSO Annual Member Meeting?

If a project receives funding, a project representative may be required to travel to and present at the GCSO members meeting in 2021 (TBD date/location). Estimated travel costs should be built into the full proposal budget. Anticipate flight, hotel and on-the-ground expenses.

How do I know my application has been successfully submitted in the Infoready system?

Once an application has been submitted, an on-screen confirmation message will appear. Identified Co-applicants will also receive an email, confirming the submission of the application. GCSO will review applications for compliance and Applicant/Co-applicant/s will receive an email to confirm the application has been accepted for review. Acceptance emails will be sent on or shortly after the 8 March LOI deadline.

Can an LOI application be revised once it has been submitted in the Infoready system?

Yes. An application can be amended prior to acceptance emails being sent (see previous FAQ question and note this is the reason acceptance emails won't be sent until, on, or around the March 8 LOI deadline). To request an amendment, please email Karen.Kao@asu.edu. The application will be returned to you for revision. All deadlines still apply.

How is the 2019 Grant Program promoted across the GCSO network?

The call for proposals is distributed to official GCSO member representatives. It is their responsibility to “get the word out” throughout their respective universities. GCSO also promotes the opportunity to subscribers of its monthly newsletter. Subscribe to the newsletter here: <http://bit.ly/GCSOsubscribe>.

How can I engage with faculty/researchers/staff/students from other GCSO member institutions?

First step: Take the GCSO intake survey (<http://bit.ly/GCSOintakesurvey>). GCSO will periodically send you a list of survey respondents with similar or complimentary expertise. Each month, GCSO will email you a curated list of funding opportunities. Additionally, you will receive an invitation to engage in the GCSO Slack community where we offer #channels for members to discuss teaching and research solutions, funding opportunities and more. Start early! Impactful international collaborations are not developed overnight; a little effort can help you multiply project impacts.

Are support letters from project collaborators required?

This level of detail is not required during the LOI submission (Stage 1). If invited to submit a full proposal (Stage 2), support letters will be required from implementing *and* GCSO academic collaborators.

What activities require Institutional Review Board (or equivalent) review and approval?

It is the project team's responsibility to ensure the following: (1) Projects must be conducted in accordance with and adhere to each participating institution's ethics review procedures, protocols, and requirements; and (2) Projects must also be conducted in accordance with and adhere to the local, state, and federal rules and regulations of each country in which a project is located. Additionally, all such approvals shall remain valid at all times for the duration of the project. Failure to comply with this condition will result in suspension and/or termination of the grant.