

## Virtual Research Institute (VRI-2019/20) Submission Guidelines

The submission will consist of two stages:

1. **Pre-Proposal:** The proposal must follow the template provided.
  - a. The pre-proposal must provide an outline of the VRIs program, priority themes and projects as well as institutions, entities and industry partners involved, including provisional budgets and industry commitments, where possible. If invited to submit a full proposal, industry commitments will be mandatory at this time.
  - b. The pre-proposals will be reviewed for adherence to the VRIs Request for Pre-Proposal (RFPP) in terms of the concept with respect to research program, themes, management structure, collaborators, proposed budget and industry commitments. External reviewers with subject matter expertise will be consulted.
  - c. Recommendations will be made regarding the pre-proposals and feedback will be provided to inform those who have been selected to move to the next stage and submit a full proposal in response to the RFP
2. **Full Proposal:** Based on the outcome of evaluation of the submitted pre-proposals (RFPP), selected HEIs will be invited to submit a full proposal. The proposal must follow the template provided on the *online site/RFP*.

**The proposals must follow the template provided.** Proposals must be formatted in Times New Roman, Calibri or Arial, 11-point font and single-spaced with no less than 1-inch margins. Proposals that are not compliant with the RFP guidelines will be excluded.

One electronic copy of the pre-proposal must be submitted *via the online portal* by the Hub HEI- through [https://adek.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV\\_3t2cUWSYFrtaR6J](https://adek.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV_3t2cUWSYFrtaR6J) by **12:00 Noon**, 20 April, 2020

### **Process for Full Proposal Review**

Full proposals will undergo both an administrative and subject matter peer review process. It should be noted that:

- Once proposals are deemed in compliance, they will be reviewed for scientific quality by international scientists and for strategic impact by an ADEK-led committee of local experts
- Given the complexity of the VRIs structure and intent, a site visit by the scientific review panel may also be required

The full proposal will be reviewed according to the following criteria:

- Novelty and intellectual merit of the proposed VRI concept: The proposal should show a coherent structure with integrated cross-cutting components and not just a cluster of disaggregated projects
- Cohesiveness to vertical themes within the VRI platform
- Potential impact of the VRI and the described path to impact
- Relevance and integration of all components within the VRI
- Relevance of all components to Abu Dhabi's priority areas
- Complementarity with any existing Institutes/Centers in the Emirate undertaking research related to the same strategic sector
- Qualifications and track record of the proposed director, theme directors and collaborators
- Commitment of the Higher Education Institutions and availability of support and infrastructure
- Industrial collaboration, which is a mandatory requirement for eligibility, and commercialization potential
- Training and human capital development
- IP Capture and technology transfer/commercialization
- Plan for sustainability

### **Budgets overview for Pre-Proposal**

**At the pre-proposal stage, detailed justifications are not expected as it is presumed that estimates are being provided. However, please do provide sufficient detail to indicate that estimated costs are not unreasonable to conduct the research.**

An estimated overall budget and separate Spoke/Collaborator budgets must be submitted by the Hub institution. Sub-contracts to the collaborating entities must be managed by the lead HEI.

**Personnel:** An estimation of number and designation of staff, postdocs and students. Please also provide an estimation of the personnel cost, which is not to exceed 30% of the total requested budget over five years. It is worth mentioning that it is not permissible to have double payment of salary, student stipends, etc. Based on the theme and specificity of the projects undertaken by the VRI, exceptions to the cap level can be made, however, adequate justification must be provided. Failure to adhere to Release time and In-kind cost share commitments will result in further action.

**Equipment:** An estimation of equipment essential to the VRI with a unit cost of up to AED 3,000,000 can be requested, with a cap of AED 10,000,000 in total over 5 years (Equipment with a unit cost of less than AED 20,000 should be included under consumables).

**Consumables:** An estimation of potential costs, such as of using databases, chemicals, biological specimens etc. with a unit cost of less than AED 20,000 should be included under consumables. In research area such as, for example, biological sciences, where cost of consumables can be high, adequate justification must be provided.

**Travel and Subsistence:** An estimation of travel cost - Trips not to exceed AED 500,000 over the span of five years. Examples include conference attendance, travel to collaborator institutions, collaborator visits to Abu Dhabi and other directly relevant working visits.

**Technical-Level Outsourcing:** Where it is necessary to access specialized facilities outside of the affiliates for technical level supportive work (non-research oriented), the estimate of costs may be included in the application. If invited to submit a full proposal, a strong justification must be made for such expenditures at that time. This cost should not exceed 7.5% of the total requested budget for five years.

**Miscellaneous (other direct costs):** An estimation of strictly miscellaneous costs, such as publication costs and any other costs that do not classify as equipment or consumables. Miscellaneous should not exceed AED 150,000 over five years.

**Institutional / Industry Cost Share:** Anticipated source and nature of the cost share funding from the institution and supporting industry must be outlined. At least 10% of the **total annual required budget** of the VRI must come from participating HEIs & industry (i.e., Annual Required Budget is the summation of Annual Requested Budget from ADEK and the cost share budget, which should at least account for 10% of the total Annual Requested Budget).