

Transdisciplinary Teams (T²) Program

PROGRAM DESCRIPTION

The **Transdisciplinary Teams (T²) Program** sponsored by the Office of the Vice President for Research, Economic Development & Knowledge Enterprise (VPREDKE) at The University of Texas at San Antonio (UTSA), will provide seed grants to support UTSA faculty members to engage in scholarly research activities that foster transdisciplinary collaborations.

The primary goal of these awards is to assemble teams of researchers from different disciplines that will establish a foundation to seek extramural funding, ultimately advancing UTSA's research strengths and growing new areas of opportunity.

Funding will be made available for research targeting “smart and connected cities,” with a specific focus on proposals that intersect technology and policy focused on one or more of the following:

1. Adequate Water Supply
2. Assured Electricity Supply
3. Sanitation, including Solid Waste Management
4. Efficient Urban Mobility and Public Transport
5. Affordable housing
6. Robust IT connectivity and digitalization
7. Good governance, especially e-Governance and citizen participation
8. Sustainable environment
9. Safety and security of citizens, particularly women, children and the elderly
10. Population health and community wellness

Transdisciplinary Research is defined as research efforts conducted by investigators from different disciplines working jointly to create new conceptual, theoretical, methodological, and translational innovations that integrate and move beyond discipline-specific approaches to address a common problem. Transdisciplinary teams allow members to bring their individual expertise to bear, however, members are expected to work together from the beginning to develop approaches to a problem rather than first developing approaches within their disciplines and then bringing those individual ideas together to formulate a final solution.

Preference will be given to proposals that:

- Build or strengthen transdisciplinary research collaborations across three or more disciplines
- Have significant scientific merit, including significance, innovation, originality of approach, technical merit and consistency with institutional initiatives and goals
- Have a high potential for extramural funding

Research that is already supported by other sources will not be approved for funding. Gap funding to bridge support between external grants or contracts will not be considered. *The applicant team must clearly and convincingly demonstrate that the proposed project or program is transdisciplinary in nature and is likely to generate extramural funding.*

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Seed funding under this program is to be used to compete for extramural funds to support the project or program in the long term. Successful applicants must produce a new proposal for extramural funding as a final reporting requirement within one year of completion of the seed grant.

ELIGIBILITY

PIs must be full-time, tenure track or tenured faculty at UTSA in residence at the time of application.

An applicant may not be a PI or Co-PI/Co-Investigator on more than one proposal to this program during an application period. It is the PI's responsibility to ensure Co-PIs/CO-Is are not in conflict.

Proposal must demonstrate collaboration among at least three interacting PIs from different disciplines at UTSA. Projects may include scientific industry partners; however, only UTSA activities will be funded through this program.

Faculty who were awarded T² funding in FY20 (September 1, 2019 - August 31, 2020) are ineligible for consideration for one year following the period of their award. If a PI has outstanding reports due under any institutional seed grant program, they will be ineligible to receive any future seed grant awards until they have met their previous obligations.

Proposals that have already been submitted to an extramural agency or those already reviewed and found non-competitive by an extramural agency will not be reviewed. One exception to this restriction is proposals previously submitted to an extramural agency that were declined on the basis of insufficient preliminary data or evidence of prior collaboration amongst team members.

The Seed Grant Review Committee will consider such proposals only if the team submits an executive summary statement or official letter from the sponsor specifically stating the deficiency or absence of information/evidence, along with the original application.

FUNDING LIMITS

Total maximum amount to be requested is \$50,000. It is anticipated that four to six grants will be funded this cycle, subject to available resources.

GRANT PERIOD – May 1, 2020 to April 30, 2021

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PROPOSAL SUBMISSION

There is one T² submission cycle for FY20 with a deadline **of close of business** (5:00 P.M. CST) on March 3, 2020. **Proposals must be routed and prepared in Cayuse to be considered for funding.**

Contact your respective Research Service Center (RSC) for assistance with routing and preparing the application in Cayuse.

Research Service Center Contact Information:

<http://research.utsa.edu/contact-research/service-center-directory/>

All grant expenditures must conform to state and university regulations and approvals. Projects are subject to IRB, IACUC, export control, conflict of interest, and campus safety regulations and approvals. The researcher is expected to have thoroughly investigated all [regulatory issues](#) of the intended research and to have discussed relevant components in the proposal.

If human subjects, animals, or biohazardous materials will be utilized in the research, protocols to the Institutional Review Board (IRB), Institutional Animal Care and Use Committee (IACUC), or Institutional Biosafety Committee (IBC) must be approved prior to funds being released.

- To complete IRB protocols - <http://research.utsa.edu/research-funding/human-subjects/>
- To complete IACUC protocols - http://research.utsa.edu/research-funding/institutional-animal-care-and-use-program_new/
- To complete IBC protocols - <http://research.utsa.edu/research-funding/institutional-biosafety-committee-ibcnew/>

All required proposal elements shall be contained in a single, text-searchable Adobe Acrobat pdf file. **The proposal must include the following**, in the order shown below:

1. Proposal Cover Page (Use Attachment A)
2. Project Description: 5 page maximum
3. Key References: 1 page maximum
4. Plan for Extramural Support: 2 page maximum
5. Budget Template- (Use [Internal Seed Grant Budget Template](#) under Pre-Award Forms)
6. Budget Justification: 2 page maximum
7. Biographical Sketch: 2 page maximum for each PI/Co-PI
8. Letter(s) of Support from Department Chair(s) or Dean(s)
9. Grant Agreement for each PI/co-investigator (see Attachment B)

If any items requested above are not included at the time of submission, the proposal will be deemed non-compliant and will not be reviewed.

1. PROPOSAL COVER PAGE – (USE ATTACHMENT A)

The Proposal Cover Page must include a clear executive summary that summarizes the essential content of the proposed research effort, including objectives, benefits, and significance.

2. **PROJECT DESCRIPTION** – (5 PAGE MAXIMUM)

The project description must include, in this order:

- General background; how it relates to UTSA strategic initiatives and institutional priorities.
- Scientific merit and significance of the research: Address how this project is transdisciplinary in nature and the potential impact it will have on UTSA, if successful.
- Impact of this research on society and areas where this research can or will be applied;
- Specific goals, objectives and anticipated results;
- Description of methods including anticipated barriers or technical difficulties, and
- Resources needed for this project (equipment, materials, etc.) and their availability.

The project description must be concise, limited to five (5) typed, single-spaced pages with 12-point Times New Roman font and one-inch margins. Appendices may be included, however, reviewers are not obligated to read this supplemental material. If two or more appendices are included in a proposal, they should be designated Appendix A, Appendix B, etc. A violation of this format will disqualify the proposal from review.

NOTE: It is important that applicants consult the [Office of Commercialization and Innovation](#) before disclosing details of any research that may be patentable. Any confidential information in this proposal must be clearly identified by marking "Confidential" at the top and bottom of each page where the confidential information appears.

3. **KEY REFERENCES** – (1 PAGE MAXIMUM)

4. **PLAN FOR EXTRAMURAL SUPPORT** – (2 PAGE MAXIMUM)

Provide a specific plan for pursuit of extramural funding for this project. Submission of at least one extramural proposal will be required as part of the project award and must be completed within one year of the completion of the seed grant.

Provide the following details in your plan for extramural support:

- *Sponsor/Program:* Indicate from which extramural funding program(s) you will be seeking support. List specific program(s) and why you anticipate that the research supported by this seed grant will leverage external support. Which grant submission deadline will be targeted?
- *Objectives:* What will the extramural proposal seek to accomplish and how is it specifically supported by this seed funding? What is the societal impact of the proposed work?
- *Team:* Who will be involved at UTSA, and partners from other institutions or organizations? Briefly describe their skills related to the project. More people can be involved in your extramural funding proposal team than are included on the seed grant.
- *Pre-review:* Who will read and comment on your external proposal before it is submitted? Having a colleague review your grant application prior to submission significantly increases the likelihood of being funded.

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If this project has previously been submitted for extramural support and rejected based on a lack of preliminary data, a copy of the executive summary or official letter from the sponsor specifically stating the deficiency or absence of preliminary data, along with the original application should be included as appendices in your application.

5. BUDGET TEMPLATE

T² Awards will be up to \$50,000 for a grant performance period of May 1, 2020 to April 30, 2021. Roll over of funds to the next fiscal year and project extensions are not allowed. Funding that is not spent or encumbered by April 01, 2021 will automatically revert back to the VPREDKE, excluding salary and wages which can continue through April.

Budgets must be submitted solely on the UTSA approved budget template (Internal Seed Grant Budget Template) found at <http://research.utsa.edu/research-funding/forms-policies-guidelines/>. Contact your respective Research Service Center (RSC) for assistance with completing the budget template.

6. BUDGET JUSTIFICATION– (2 PAGE MAXIMUM)

Details for all proposed expenditures must be described in a budget justification. The justification must convey an integrated understanding of the types of resources (labor, materials, other) necessary to complete the proposed research project.

Budget Considerations

Allowable grant expenses:

- Salaries and/or wages for faculty, postdoctoral fellows, graduate and undergraduate students. Faculty salary limited to no more than 1 summer month salary and at a minimum of 1% effort. Fringe benefits are paid centrally- exclude fringe benefits on the budget template worksheet.
- Supplies (must be justified as needed for project success).
- Expenses for field work, data collection, archival research, training, educational purposes and/or presentations on research, creative or scholarly activities directly related to the proposed project.
- Consultant fees.
- Contracts and subawards for activities outside of UTSA (must be clearly and convincingly described as necessary for successful execution of the proposed project).
- Domestic travel to conferences or other conference support if directly related to the proposed work. (i.e. travel to present project results.)
- Domestic travel for data collection or other purposes when justified as essential to the project.
- Travel for relevant Program Officer to visit UTSA.

Unallowable expenses include:

- Office equipment, including computers or laptops.
- International travel.
- Student travel.

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- Stipends, scholarships and/or tuition.
- Indirect costs (F&A) costs.
- Payment of salaries to non-UTSA personnel.
- Food (refreshments, snacks, and beverages). Includes food for participants, business meals, grant supported conferences. Excludes travel meals.

The PI may transfer up to 25% of the award between spending categories (line items) without written permission from the VPREDKE Assistant Vice President for Finance & Operations, as long as the category is contained in the original budget approved by the Seed Grant Review Committee.

7. BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH

Complete a biographical sketch for each PI and Co-PI. Do not exceed two page per person. Each PI may use their preferred format ([NSF](#) or [NIH](#)). Content for each biographical sketch should include the following:

- A. Earned professional or educational degrees received, professional experience and appointments, and a list of research activities and publications.
- B. Date, sources and amount of all grants, awards, contracts or other research funds solicited and/or received in the past five (5) years.

8. LETTER OF SUPPORT

Each application must include a letter of support from each PI's department chair or dean addressed to the Vice President for Research, Economic Development, and Knowledge Enterprise with assurance that the PI will be present at the university for the duration of the grant period and, if appropriate, any support the department or college is willing to give to the team involved with this transdisciplinary research direction. If this research is part of a larger research vision at UTSA, the letter of support should describe how this proposal relates to that broader picture. This letter will be reviewed by the Seed Grant Review Committee.

PEER REVIEW

Applications will be reviewed by a Seed Grant Review Committee established annually by the Office of the Vice President for Research, Economic Development & Knowledge Enterprise (VPREDKE). This committee is appointed by the VPREDKE, in consultation with UTSA Deans. Additional faculty members may be added on an ad hoc basis by the VPREDKE if they are deemed valuable to the review process. Committee members will be from a variety of academic backgrounds.

As such, proposals should be clearly written in a way that the goals, rationale and methods of the proposed work can be understood by all reviewers. Avoid field specific terminology as much as possible.

Applicants will be informed of the Committee's recommendations on or about April 15, 2020. As noted above, funding will be available after May 1, 2020.

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Proposals will be evaluated on a 100-point scale. The PI is expected to include all required proposal components and to fully and clearly address each criteria.

Proposals will be evaluated using the following criteria:

<u>Criteria</u>	<u>Max Point Allocation</u>
Are the goals, objectives and anticipated results stated clearly and aligned with institutional initiatives or priorities? Are they reasonable, given the funds and time provided?	15
Are the significance and scientific merit of the research clearly documented?	15
Is the project clearly transdisciplinary in nature, aiming to create new conceptual, theoretical, methodological, and/or translational innovations that integrate and move beyond discipline-specific approaches to address a common problem? Is this a new project that does not overlap with other existing funded projects?	15
Are the methods outlined and do they reflect the goals and objectives stated in the proposal?	15
Have potential barriers or technical difficulties been identified?	10
Did proposal describe where this research can or will be applied?	10
Does the project team have the experience necessary to carry out the project?	10
Have extramural opportunities been identified?	5
If the proposed research is completed, does the proposal have a high chance of leveraging extramural support?	5
Total Points Possible	100

GRANT ADMINISTRATION

The PI is responsible for the administration of grant funds. In particular, he/she must be certain that over-expenditures do not occur, and that all funds are fully expended according to institutional fiscal year end deadlines. All work must be completed in the 12-month performance period.

INTERIM AND FINAL REPORTING REQUIREMENTS

A Project Update Meeting/Report will be requested by the VPREDKE in early November 2020. PI(s) awarded funding under this opportunity will be required to submit their final report to the VPREDKE Office using the UTSA Seed Grant Reporting Form to capture both quantitative and qualitative output. Awardees will be provided final reporting instructions prior to the end of their project. The PI is responsible for submitting a Final Grant Report no later than June 30, 2021.

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Extramural Grant Submission Required

Awardees must produce a new proposal for extramural funding as part of the final reporting requirement. In exceptional cases, where seed funding may prove the project to be ultimately non-competitive, a waiver of the extramural application requirement can be requested from the Office of the Vice President for Research, Economic Development & Knowledge Enterprise (VPREDKE). If neither an external application nor letter of explanation is submitted, no new research funds will be made available to the PI or Co-Investigators until the letter or application is submitted. The PI must submit a report to the VPREDKE describing the extramural grant submission details by June 30, 2021.

PROGRAM TIMELINE

December 9, 2019 – Grant Request for Proposals (RFP) announced
March 3, 2020 – Grant applications due in Cayuse (by 5:00 P.M. CST)
April 15, 2021 – Award winners announced
May 1, 2020 – Grant performance period begins (i.e., funds available)
November 2020 – Project Update Meeting Requested by VPREDKE
April 1, 2021 – All funds must be spent or encumbered
April 30, 2021 – Grant Performance Period Ends
June 30, 2021 – Extramural Grant Submission and Final Project Report Due
June 30, 2022 – Outcome of extramural grant submission due to VPREDKE

CONTACT INFORMATION

Ana Laredo
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Project Information

Project Name:	
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Name of Principal Investigator(PI):	
Phone Number:	
Email Address:	
PI College, Department, and Dept. ID:	

Name of Co-Investigator:	
Phone Number:	
Email Address:	
Co-Investigator College, Department and Dept. ID:	

Name of Co-Investigator:	
Phone Number:	
Email Address:	
Co-Investigator College, Department and Dept. ID:	

Name of Co-Investigator:	
Phone Number:	
Email Address:	
Co-Investigator College, Department and Dept. ID:	

Name of Co-Investigator:	
Phone Number:	
Email Address:	
Co-Investigator College, Department and Dept. ID:	

Does this project require human subjects and/or vertebrate animals? ☐ Yes ☐ No

Abstract (400 word or less)

If this research proposal is funded, I agree that my acceptance obligates me to:

1. Include the following acknowledgement on all publications resulting from this grant award.

“This project was funded (full or in-part) by the University of Texas at San Antonio, Office of the Vice President for Research, Economic Development & Knowledge Enterprise.”

2. If human subjects, animals or biohazardous materials will be utilized in the research, protocols to the Institutional Review Board (IRB), Institutional Animal Care and Use Committee (IACUC), or Institutional Biosafety Committee (IBC) must be approved prior to funds being released.

To complete IRB protocols: <http://research.utsa.edu/research-funding/human-subjects/>

To complete IACUC protocols: http://research.utsa.edu/research-funding/institutional-animal-care-and-use-program_new/

To complete IBC protocols: <http://research.utsa.edu/research-funding/institutional-biosafety-committee-ibcnew/>

3. Release all permanent equipment (cameras, laboratory equipment, etc.) to the university.
4. Secure prior written approval from the Office of the Vice President for Research, Economic Development & Knowledge Enterprise if the research to be conducted differs from that described in the proposal that was funded. Requests for such approval should be submitted to:

Jaclyn Shaw
Assistant Vice President for Strategic Initiatives & Research Partnerships
Office of Research Support
One UTSA Circle, San Antonio, TX 78249
Phone: (210) 458-6767
Email: Jaclyn.Shaw@utsa.edu

5. Submit at least one extramural proposal for funding to support the future progress of the project, within one year of the completion of the grant program.
6. Adhere to the assigned PROGRAM TIMELINE:
May 1, 2020 – Grant performance period begins (i.e., funds available)
November, 2020 – Project Update Meeting Requested by VPREDKE
April 1, 2021 – All funds must be spent or encumbered
April 30, 2021 – Grant Performance Period Ends
June 30, 2021 – Extramural Grant Submission and Final Project Report Due
June 30, 2022 – Outcome of extramural grant submission due to VPREDKE
7. Respond to all inquiries and communications from the Office of the Vice President for Research, Economic Development & Knowledge Enterprise related to this funded project.
8. Participate as a reviewer on Seed Grant Review Committee(s).

Principal Investigator

Signature: _____

Project Name: _____

Date: _____