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APPLICATION PROCESS

Q1. How can applications be made to the Research Funding Programme?

Applications can be submitted by the researcher(s) directly on the Azim Premji University Research Portal. The only requirements of the first round are the basic details of the researcher, a 1200-word concept note and the CV of the Principal Investigator (PI). No application fee or any further documentation is required.

Since this is a direct call from the University, we encourage researchers to apply directly. **The University does not engage any consultants/intermediaries/intermediary agencies to act as liaison agents with applicants interested in applying for the University's Research Funding Programme.**

Applicants are requested to apply directly on the Azim Premji University Research Portal **and not through any intermediaries acting on their behalf. Please note that applications received from any such consultants/intermediaries/intermediary agencies will not be considered.**

ELIGIBILITY

Q2. What is the Research Funding Programme? Who can apply?

Azim Premji University is seeking research proposals under our sixth annual Research Funding Programme. We invite applications from independent researchers or researchers affiliated with institutions such as centres of vital research within academic institutions, non-profit organizations, for-profit organisations, as well as the Government, in principle. We encourage scholars and researchers in the fields of education, development practice, public policy, economics, political science, sociology, anthropology, history, creative arts, media and the sciences to apply.

Applications are invited from individuals or an associating group of researchers. This call for proposals is for researchers external to Azim Premji Foundation. Employees of Azim Premji Foundation are not eligible to apply.

Q3. I am looking for opportunities to work in research. Can I engage with the programme in any way?

This is a call for proposals from researchers external to the University, who will be managing their research operations on their own. In this context, we will not have any work opportunities, internships, or short term/long term engagements with the University directly.

Q4. Who is an institutional researcher?

An institutional researcher is allied to an institution and (upon final selection for the Programme) signs an agreement (i) between them, their institution and the University, or (ii) between their institution and the University for their research project. They are the Principal Investigator (or PI) of the project.

In this case, each of the institutional researchers receiving their final awards will be required to provide documents of their allied institution and will receive funds for research in the account of the institution. They can have one or more co-Principal Investigators (co-PIs).

[Note: Only the institution to which the PI is allied will receive funds even if the awardees bring in a co-Principal Investigator (co-PI) from another institution.]

Q5. Who is an independent researcher? Can independent researchers apply for research funding under this programme?

An independent researcher is not allied to an institution. They can apply for funding under the programme. Upon final selection, they are required to sign an agreement directly with the University for their research project. They are the Principal Investigator (or PI) of the project.

In this case, each of the final awardees will be required to provide personal documents (such as a copy of their PAN card, address proof, bank account details, etc.) and will receive funds for research in their personal bank account. They can have one or more co-Principal Investigators (co-PIs).

Q6. Can the research project be carried out as a team? Are there any criteria as to the number/ eligibility of investigators?

Applications are invited from individuals or an associating group of researchers. We do not have particular criteria as regards the number of investigators and their eligibility. In case of a team submitting a proposal, in the application form, we have asked for only the details of the lead researcher / Principal Investigator (PI) and two co-Principal Investigators (co-PIs). If there are more than two co-PIs on the project, their CVs and other pertinent details will be captured at a later stage.

FOCUS OF RESEARCH

Q7. What types of research proposals are funded under the Research Funding Programme?

The Research Funding Programme is organised as part of the University's efforts to strengthen and elevate the state of understanding of societal processes and outcomes. It is designed to strengthen and supplement our existing efforts in domains that are of particular interest to the Azim Premji Foundation.

These domains are specified in the Call for Proposals of each round of the Programme. While we are open to any broad considerations within these domains, the proposed research must be empirically grounded and capable of informing practice and policy in order to receive funding.

Q8. Which domains and sub-themes can a research proposal pertain to under the Research Funding Programme 2021?

Under the Azim Premji University Research Funding Programme 2021, we invite high-quality research proposals that examine significant questions of public concern in the following domains:

1. Climate change action
2. Local democracy
3. Labour, livelihoods, and employment

Please go through the domains and their sub-themes by clicking the link [here](#).

Q9. Can a proposal be outside the sub-themes/domains listed in the Research Funding Programme 2021 — Call for Proposals?

Your proposed research study should address a particular sub-theme identified under the domain to which you are applying.

Proposals/Concept Notes submitted for studies that fall outside the scope of the specific sub-themes or domains of research as outlined in the Call for Proposals will not be considered.

Q10. Can I apply with a research project within only one domain or include more than one domain in an application?

The University accepts research proposals pertaining to each domain through separate application forms. You may make multiple applications for different domains by filling separate application forms for each particular domain.

Q11. Should my proposal be restricted to only one sub-theme or can it address more than one sub-theme?

A single proposal can address more than one sub-theme within a domain.

Q12. I have a lot of research ideas that pertain to a single domain. Can I submit multiple proposals?

Yes, researchers can submit multiple proposals addressing specific sub-themes separately within a domain.

TIMELINES

Q13. When will the application link be live?

The application link has been live on the research portal from **9 a.m. on August 3, 2021**.

Q14. When is the deadline for submission of applications?

The deadline for submission of applications is **11 p.m. on September 30, 2021**; the research portal will automatically close beyond this time. Interested applicants are advised to complete their submission well within the deadline as to avoid facing any technical issues due to last-minute website traffic.

Q15. What should be the duration of a project proposed under the Research Funding Programme 2021?

The permissible duration of a project under the Research Funding Programme is linked with the domain under which the application is made. These are the limits set for each domain under the 2021 Programme:

Sr. No.	Domain Area	Duration
1.	Climate Change Action	1–2 years
2.	Local Democracy	1 year
3.	Labour, Livelihoods, and Employment	1–3 years

Q16. Which important dates should interested applicants keep in mind?

Important dates for Research Funding Programme 2021	
Aug 03, 2021	Programme open for submission of applications with concept notes.
Sep 30, 2021	Deadline for submission of applications with concept notes.
Nov 07, 2021	Announcement of the initial selection of applications and shortlist.
Nov 30, 2021	Deadline for submission of complete proposals.
Feb 15, 2022	Announcement of final awards.
Apr 01, 2022	Commencement of the research projects.

FUNDING BUDGET

Q17. What is the available research funding budget for a project under this Programme?

The research funding budget is linked with the domains under which the application is made. We offer research funding for projects starting from a minimum budget of INR 5 lakhs to a maximum of INR 20 lakhs, depending on the domain of the application. These are the ranges set for each domain under the 2021 Programme:

Sr. No.	Domain Area	Duration
1.	Climate Change Action	INR 5–20 lakhs
2.	Local Democracy	INR 5–10 lakhs
3.	Labour, Livelihoods, and Employment	INR 5–20 lakhs

Q18. What are the broad heads under which this budget is required to be broken up?

The following item heads are available for the budget break-up on the application form:

Salaries of Lead Researchers	Salaries of Expert Associates	Salaries of Research Associates / Research Assistants	Salaries of Field Investigators
Daily Allowances for Fieldwork	Outstation Travel	Local Conveyance	Food and Accommodation
Library Research	Books and Printed Reference Material	Transcription/ Translation	Printing
Data Entry and Data Cleaning	Materials*	Honorarium	Overhead
Venue hire and arrangements (for workshops, focus group discussions, dissemination etc.)	Reading material - Handouts/Reports/ Posters (for disseminating Research Findings)	Other (Miscellaneous)	Food, Travel and Accommodation for Workshops/Seminars/ Conferences, etc.

* Costs of equipment and software purchase will not be considered.

CONTENTS OF APPLICATION

Q19. What does the Research Funding Programme application comprise?

1. An online application form, which includes

- Contact details of the Principal Investigator (PI).
- Contact details of the co-PI (if any) and a second co-PI (if any).
- Category of Researcher (PI) — whether independent or affiliated to an institution (details required).
- Details of the study — title, short description, relevance to the sub-theme, research objectives/questions, location of the study, proposed duration and budget break-up.

2. A concept note (to be uploaded in PDF)

- The concept note should indicate why the study is needed, highlight its general significance, clearly identify the research objectives/questions, and outline the methodology to be employed.
- Additionally, the concept note should indicate the general significance of the proposed research to the domain, how you will address the concerns laid out in the sub-themes, and how you are competent and qualified to research the proposed area.
- The document must be less than 50 MB in size.
- The University will not consider concept notes submitted for studies outside the scope of the specific sub-themes within each domain.
- Concept notes crossing the word limit of 1200 words will be disqualified.

3. CVs of collaborating investigators (to be uploaded in PDF)

- This should comprise a single PDF document with the CVs of the PI and two co-PIs (if applicable).
- Each document must be less than 50 MB in size.
- If there are more than two co-PIs on the project, their CVs and other pertinent details will be captured after selection.

Q20. Is there a format for the concept note that I should follow?

While there is no prescribed format for the concept note, please indicate the following in not more than 1200 words:

- Why is this study important? Highlight the significance.
- Identify clearly your research objectives and questions.
- Outline the methodology you will use.
- Indicate why the research has general significance to the domain and the ways in which you will address the concerns laid out in the sub-themes.
- Demonstrate how you (and/or the institution to which you are allied) are best placed to undertake research in the proposed area.

Concept notes crossing the word limit of 1200 words will be disqualified.

Q21. What documents do I need to upload with my application form? Is there a particular format for these documents?

The following documents are required to be uploaded with the online application form on the research portal:

1. **A concept note**, in a PDF file of less than 50 MB. The note must stay within the word limit of 1200 words, or the application will be disqualified.
2. **The CVs of collaborating investigators** (the PI and two co-PIs, if applicable), in PDF files of less than 50 MB. If there are more than two co-PIs on the project, their CVs and other pertinent details will be captured after selection.

Q22. Do I need to include any details of the co-investigator(s) in the application?

If the proposed study is to have one or two co-investigators (co-PIs) in addition to the Principal Investigator (PI), their details and CVs need to be included in the application form. If there are more than two co-PIs on the project, their CVs and other pertinent details will be captured after selection.

If the co-investigators (co-PIs) are mentioned on the form, the CVs of the PI and co-investigators should be uploaded on the “Documents Upload” section of the application form as PDF files of less than 50 MB.

Q23. Can I make changes to my application once I submit it?

Applications, once submitted, cannot be edited.

Q24. Can I apply with more than one proposal?

Yes, Researchers can submit multiple proposals addressing specific sub-themes separately within a domain. Applications can be made for more than one domain by filling in another application form under that particular domain.

THE ONLINE APPLICATION PROCESS

Q25. How do I begin making my application on the online portal of the Azim Premji University Research Funding Programme 2021?

First, please visit the [Research Funding Programme 2021](#) page on the University's website.

Second, choose the domain under which you would like to apply from the following:

1. Climate change action
2. Local democracy
3. Labour, livelihoods and employment

Third, click on the "Apply Here" button at the bottom of the appropriate domain description. This will take you to the landing page of the domain-specific application form, wherein you can start your application process.

E.g., to make a proposal application within the local democracy domain, please find the "Local Democracy" section on the [Research Funding Programme 2021](#) page. Then, click on the "Apply Here" button under it. Please note that if you click the "Apply Here" on any other section and fill in your application from there, it is liable to be rejected as it would not be in the relevant domain.

Q26. Where will clicking on "Apply Here" under a domain section take me? Where do I go from there?

The "Apply Here" buttons under the domain sections on the [Research Funding Programme 2021](#) page will take you to the landing pages of the domain-specific application form. This page contains a breakdown of the information you should have on hand while filling in the form and important dates related to the Research Funding Programme 2021. Please go through this information before beginning the application process.

Then, please scroll down to the bottom of the page and click on the "Next" button. Here, you will be directed to enter a valid email address. Once you enter your email ID a 4-digit verification code will be sent to you on this address. Using this code will validate your email ID on the application form.

Q27. What is a verification code?

A verification code is a 4-digit code sent to the email ID submitted by the applicant on the domain-specific application form. Entering this verification code into the form validates your email ID. This code is valid for 24 hours and can be used to access the application multiple times within this period. To continue filling in the application form post 24 hours, you will need to validate your email ID again through the same process using a new verification code.

Q28. What should I keep in mind while filling the online application form?

The online application form runs across two pages: the "Principal Investigator Details" page and the "Project Information and Document Upload" page.

The "Principal Investigator Details" page requires that you choose between the institutional and independent research categories, and provide the position/designation, institute, highest qualification, and contact details of the Principal Investigator (PI). It also requires you to fill in the pertinent details of any collaborating investigators (co-PIs) that you may have.

[Note: If you are an independent researcher, please fill in the fields of position/designation and institution as "NA".]

The “Project Information and Document Upload” requires you to succinctly describe the study, pick the relevant sub-theme, and describe how it fits into the sub-themes delineated in the Call for Proposals. It requires you to specify the research objectives / questions, location of the study, duration of the proposed study as well as a budget estimate with an item-wise breakup. It additionally contains the “Documents Upload” section, where you must upload your concept note as well as the CVs of the PI and the co-PIs.

Q29. What should I keep in mind while filling in the “Principal Investigator Details” page?

Please fill in an email ID for the PI that you access regularly. Access to the application form saved in draft via the verification code, and all communication related to research funding will be addressed to the PI there. On this page, all mandatory fields are marked with an asterisk, you must fill these.

Q30. Is it necessary that I enter the details of the co-PIs? What details should I provide?

If you have one or two co-PIs working on the project, please enter their details. If you have more than two co-PIs on the project, please enter the details of two co-PIs. The CVs and other pertinent details of the rest will be captured after selection.

You need to provide the position, institute, highest qualification, and contact details of the collaborating investigators (one or two co-PIs, if applicable) on the “Principal Investigator Details” page. Additionally, you need to upload their CVs on the next page of the form under the “Documents Upload” section (in separate PDF files of less than 50 MB each).

Q31. What details do I need to provide in the “Project Information” section?

The following details are to be provided in the “Project Information” section:

- Title of the study;
- Short description of the study (in 200 words);
- Sub-theme(s) selected from the Call for Proposals;
- How this study addresses the sub-theme(s) selected under the domain (200 words);
- Research objectives/questions (in 200 words);
- Location of study (in 50 words);
- Proposal duration (in months); and
- Budget.

This section will show the minimum and maximum proposal durations and budgets permitted for every domain as defined in the Call for Proposals. You will be able to enter figures within these defined limits. Please do not leave any of the fields blank, as all of them are mandatory for the completion of this form.

Q32. What should I keep in mind while filling the budget breakup?

After you click the “Add New” button in the “Budget” section, you will see a drop-down menu under the “Budget expenditure head” column. It contains the types of line items under which you can organise your budget. The total should fall within the minimum and maximum budget range stated in the “Project Information” field above. This total budget should include overheads as per the following:

- For independent researchers, the maximum allowable overhead is ₹7,500 for 6 months.
- For institutional researchers, the maximum allowable overhead is 10% of your budget value.

Please note that the status of the “Project Information” section will stay “incomplete” until overhead costs are added as a line item under the budget expenditure head.

If the total of the line items on the Budget table is not within the range of minimum and maximum budget as stated above, the budget will remain incomplete.

Q33. Why am I seeing a “Your project information status is incomplete” message in the “Project Information” section?

This means either the proposal duration is not filled in, or the budget total you have entered in the Budget table is not within the minimum and maximum budget mentioned above. If the totals in the Budget table fall out of the maximum and minimum budget range stated above, you will need to check and adjust the amounts added for any line items such that it falls within the range.

Q34. What documents do I need to upload in the “Documents Upload” section?

These are the documents that need to be uploaded:

1. Concept note with a word limit of 1200 words in PDF format and less than 50 MB in size.
2. CVs of collaborating investigators (PI and two co-PIs, if applicable as per details provided on the application form), in PDF format and less than 50 MB in size. If there are more than two co-PIs on the project, their CVs and other pertinent details will be captured after selection.

Please only proceed to the next section after the “Document upload status” changes to “Completed”.

Q35. Once I get to the “Project Information and Document Upload” page, how do I check what I have filled in on the previous “Principal Investigator Details” page?

Please check the “Click here to go back” box on the top left-hand corner of the page, under the “Project Information and Document Upload” title. This will take you to the “Principal Investigator (PI) Details” page (i.e., the 1st page).

Q36. What should the type or size of the files to be uploaded be?

All documents must be uploaded in PDF of file size less than 50 MB each.

Q37. Why am I seeing a “Your documents upload status is incomplete” message in the “Documents Upload” section?

It means that the documents required for the application have not been uploaded successfully. Please check and upload the documents against each of the document names. When the uploads are successful, each document name will have a cross next to it. Please remove any additional empty boxes.

Q38. How do I access the instructions for filling the form again?

If you are on the 1st page, you can scroll down and click on the blue “Previous” button at the bottom. If you are on the 2nd page, click on “Click here to go back” at the top left-hand corner (below the “Project Information and Document Upload”) to go back to the 1st page and click the “Previous” button.

Q39. How can I save my application as a draft?

On the 1st page, you need to click on the blue “Save as Draft” button placed at the bottom of the page. On the 2nd page, you need to select the “Save as Draft” option in response to “How do you want to proceed with your application?” and then click on the blue “Submit” button under it.

Q40. If I save my application as a draft, how can I re-access it?

Once you save the application as a draft, you will get an email on your registered email ID intimating you of your incomplete application. This mail will contain a hyperlink that will take you back to the domain-specific landing

page of the portal. Scroll down and click on “Next” to be taken to the page from where you can “log in” using your registered email ID and the verification code. You will then be back on the application form page, which you can continue to fill from where you left off.

The application can be saved as a draft and accessed in this manner at any stage. The verification code, once generated, will be valid for 24 hours, if you are accessing your draft within 24 hours, please ensure that you keep the verification code handy.

Q41. What should I do after filling in the project information and uploading the necessary documents?

If you have successfully completed the “Project Information” and the “Documents Upload” sections, you will get a declaration box that states, “I hereby declare that the information given in this application is true and correct.”

If you do not get the declaration box, please go back and check the completion status on both the above fields. Please note that the application cannot be submitted without the selection of the declaration box.

Q42. What happens after I submit my application?

A pop-up acknowledging the submission of your application will be displayed on the screen, along with a unique application number (such as, “APU/2021/12345”). Please make a note of this application number for future reference. This will be followed by an email to your registered email ID thanking you for applying.

The announcement of the initial selection will be made over email to your registered email ID in early November 2021.

CONTACT DETAILS

Q43. Where can I find the latest information with respect to this Research Funding Programme?

Updates with respect to the Research Funding Programme 2021 will be available on the Azim Premji University website [here](#).

Q44. Whom do I contact for further assistance?

Please reach out to us at helpdesk.research@apu.edu.in for any further assistance.

Helpdesk Working Hours: 9:30 a.m. – 5:30 p.m., from Monday to Friday.

Queries sent to the helpdesk email ID during working hours will have a 24-hour turnaround time for responses. Queries made outside of working hours and on national/public holidays will be attended to on the next working day with the above turnaround time.