

Research&Exchanges Service

2018 Rural Policy Research Grants_Autumn call

Date: October 2018

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Rural Policy Research Grants - Call for Proposals

Basing on the Research and Exchange work-plan, the RPLC Research & Exchanges is issuing a call for application for Rural Policy Research Grants.

What:

Rural Policy Grants supports RPLC research projects on rural policy. Such projects should be carried out by students/junior researchers from RPLC partner institutions with the involvement of RPLC faculty members. The project should foresee a strong comparative approach, exchanges or mobilities of students/junior researchers (up to two years from the end of their PhD) between institutions, and have a relatively short/medium-term. The proposals can be related to wider research activities the applicants are working on (i.e. Ph.D. or master thesis or core research of junior researchers).

Aim:

Proposed research projects should be related to topics addressed by RPLC Policy Networks and should aim to develop an interdisciplinary and comparative approach. Thus, the inclusion of a mobility period within the proposal is mandatory. Clear outputs (please, read carefully within eligibility criteria and the Research and Exchange Post mobility period instructions) should be identified and developed in line with RPLC purposes. Collaboration with other partners (both from within and outside the RLPC network) is also mandatory. In addition, the involvement of policy makers is strongly suggested."

Eligibility criteria are the following for project proposals evaluation:

- **Number of involved institutions:** minimum 2 different institutions (at least a RPLC institution must be involved, please see **Annex 1** with the criteria for eligible country/institution);
- **Eligible participants:** proposals must be submitted by Master and PhD students, and early stage postdoctoral fellows (up to two years from the end of their PhD).
Faculty members from involved institutions should be included in the research to ensure support and supervisions, but they cannot apply for the grant;

- **Ineligible proposals:** proposals involving exclusively faculties members are not eligible;
- **Topic:** the proposal should cover topics related to one or more RPLC Policy Theme Networks; interdisciplinary approaches are encouraged; the involvement of policy-makers will be considered an added value in the evaluation phase;
- **Field research & exchanges:** the proposal must foresee a period of mobility and exchanges for field research (i.e. to collect data, carry out interviews, etc.): eligible and preferred destinations depend on the institution of origin; please, check the table in Annex 1;
- **Methods:** a comparative approach between countries or regions is strongly recommended and will represent a key criterion in the selection of the proposals;
- **Tangible outputs:** the main requested outputs of the grant are: a two-page summary about the research topic and thesis with a specific session on relevance for policy impact, a brief and engaging abstract about the exchange period for RPLC; a short video (of a couple of minutes) during the period of the exchange (the last two outputs are contributions for RPLC blog and RPLC webinars). The participation to conferences and other dissemination activities will represent an additional value.
More details are provided in **Annex 4**.
- **Co-financing** of the research projects by one of the involved RPLC institution will represent additional value. In-kind contribution as faculty time/salary or facilities are not considered co-financing, since these are expected to be provided as basic resources.
- **Duration:** projects must be finalised within 12 months from their starting date; the minimum continuous duration of single research & exchange periods is 3 months;
- **Budget criteria:**
 - *eligible costs for applicants involved in the research project* include: travels, accommodation, database access, publication costs, host support student cost (i.e. a small reimbursement for a student from the hosting institution who is providing support and guidance to the winner of the grant), field work costs (for the applicant and/or support student). For costs covered by the faculties members involved in the project, a maximum reimbursement of 50% only for travel and accommodation is allowed. For more details about costs, please read carefully the Grant Guidelines.
 - *ineligible costs* include staff costs (e.g. salaries, scholarships for the applicant, workhours of the applicant).

A required project proposal format is developed and circulated with calls for proposals as **Annex 2**.

When:

Deadline **for proposal submission is 25th of November 2018 POSTPONED TO 3RD OF DECMEBER 2018**. Successful proposals will be announced by the end of December 2018. **Research projects could start from mid of January 2019 until the end of December 2019** and can last maximum one year.

Two or three grants per call will be issued, the exact number depends on the amount of the grant requests.

Budget:

Maximum CAN 7,500 per proposal (CAN 9,000 in case of overseas mobility, i.e. EU to US/CAN or viceversa).

Please, consider a buffer budget in case of currency conversion from euro, US dollar to Canadian dollar. More details are available in the RPLC Research and Exchange grant guidelines (**Annex 3**).

How:

Proposals must be submitted using the attached form and sending it via email to:

Francesca Regoli (francesca.regoli@unibo.it) and Fabio De Menna (fabio.demenna2@unibo.it).

Annex 1 - Criteria for eligible country/institution

Applicants are categorized according to institution and country of origin and institution and country of destination.

Among applicants coming FROM RPLC partner institutions, priority will be given to those moving to RPLC destinations, then to NON RPLC Canadians destinations, and finally to NON RPLC Non Canadian destinations.

Applicants coming from NON RPLC institutions can only move to RPLC Canadian institutions. Those from NON RPLC Canadian institutions have priority over NON Canadian ones. In both cases, applicants from NON RPLC institutions will have two extra requirements for the application:

- a formal letter of invitation undersigned by the RPLC Canadian hosting institution;
- a statement in the proposal about the value of the proposed research to RPLC topics addressed by RPLC Policy Theme Networks.

Furthermore, grant will be transferred to the RPLC Canadian hosting institution, which will then proceed to anticipation/reimbursement of grantee expenses.

		TO			
		RPLC Canadian	RPLC Non Canadian	NON RPLC Canadian	NON RPLC Non Canadian
FROM	RPLC	+++++	+++++	++++	+++
	NON RPLC Canadian	++	NO	NO	NO
	NON RPLC Non Canadian	+	NO	NO	NO

Note:

+++++ it is the most preferred among eligible proposals;

+ it is the least preferred solution for eligibility.

Annex 2 - Application Form Template

Please, fill the following form (blank cells)

Title of the proposal				
Name, current position (i.e. Master or PhD student, early stage postdoctoral fellows -up to two years from the end of their PhD), and institution of involved applicant(s)				
<i>Please, indicate whether the institution is part of RPLC Network</i>				
Names, current position, the institution of the involved faculty members (at least 2 from different RPLC institutions) and policy stakeholders				
E-mail address of the applicant				
RPLC Topic addressed				
<i>Please, select covered topics relevant for RPLC Policy Networks (http://rplc-capr.ca/our-network/)</i>				
RPLC Policy Network			Cross those covered by your project proposal	
Rural Governance Network				
Migration in Remote and Rural Areas Network				
Natural Resource Development Network				
Rural Renewable Energy Network				
Transformations in Indigenous Communities				
Description of the proposal				
<i>Please, provide a description of your research proposal (max. 1500 words).</i>				
It must include: general and specific goals; the approach and methodology you plan to apply; expected outputs and outcomes and their relevance for RPLC with a focus on policy relevance and implications.				
Overall Duration and Period of implementation				
<i>Please, indicate expected start and end date (minimum 3 months and maximum 1 year from the approval)</i>				
Mobility period(s)				
<i>Please describe the planned field research & exchanges period(s): duration, destination, relation with the objective of the research proposal (max. 500 words). Minimum eligible continuous duration is 3 months.</i>				
Previously received RPLC funds (y/n)				
Estimated budget				
<i>Please use the following table to detail expected costs based on described activities, assumed unit cost, requested total and co-financed total. Please, report the costs in Canadian dollar.</i>				
Description	Amount in CAD	Unit cost	Requested	Co-financed (if you are receiving fund from other sources, please provide the amount of co-financement)

TOTAL AMOUNT				

Annex 3 - Guidelines for RPLC - research and exchanges grants

These guidelines should be considered as a “living document”. They get updated and improved based on the best practices established during the mobility periods.

1. **The grant covers only incurred costs.** Budget indicated by the applicant in the application form is intended as a tentative one; the total approved amount will represent the maximum eligible costs that will be awarded within the grant. Should real costs be lower, the final grant will correspond only to incurred costs.
2. **Changes in the budget:** grantees can propose changes (e.g. move funds from one budget item to another) within the approved budget, in coordination with the referent faculty member. R&E Service and RPLC coordinators from BU (ref. Wayne Kelly) will confirm the acceptance of these changes. Changes cannot cause an increase of the approved budget.
3. **All costs should have an invoice in order to be eligible.** Further details in the following points.
4. **The grant can be transferred** to the candidate according to **three alternative options**:
 - a. **University transfer:** The University of origin has an agreement with Brandon University and can cover her/his costs, since BU then transfer the money to that University upon exhibition of an invoice. In this case, except for the flight ticket, no other invoice or receipts is requested by BU on behalf of the grant winner. This option is available only for some Institutions and can require time. Please, check with the contact person at your own Institution.
 - b. **Partial upfront payment:** BU anticipates those costs that can be paid directly by BU through an invoice issued directly to BU, such as flight costs, accommodation costs (within a University campus); the remaining expenses are anticipated by the student that afterwards asks for reimbursement (see following option).
 - c. **Reimbursement:** The student covers directly all or partial costs and then asks for reimbursement once per month (sending the related invoices to BU) and/or in the middle of the mobility period (sending the related invoices to BU) and/or at the end of the period (sending all the related invoices to BU). For this procedure, the “reimbursement steps” should be agreed with BU. Further details or exceptions in the following points.
5. The grant or the reimbursements are transferred **via cheque or wire transfer**. Please, note that reimbursement for expenses will typically take 2-4 weeks, but it may take longer depending on specific circumstances.
6. **Coverage of incurred costs:** travel costs, such as flight tickets, or rent costs (for accommodation) can be covered directly by Brandon University (BU) as an anticipation of the grant (see Option b. above). This procedure will allow the student not to anticipate all the costs.
7. **Travel insurance costs:** these costs can be classified within “other costs category”, when possible. Many institutions provide students and faculty with travel insurance and participants need to determine first if they have pre-existing coverage. Note that flight cancellation insurance is required when booking flights as part of the RPLC project and can be covered directly by BU through their travel agency (see Option b. above).

8. **Meals costs:** a *per diem* up to a maximum of \$420 per month can be budgeted. No receipt is needed; it will be transferred by BU monthly to the student via wire transfer.
9. **Accommodation costs:** a maximum of \$500 can be claimed for a monthly rent. For shorter periods of stay (up to 7 days), the daily accommodation cost can be max. 100 \$.
10. **Host support student cost:** this cost refers to the support of a student from the hosting institution who is providing support and guidance to the winner of the grant, i.e. carrying out interviews or similar activities. This kind of support can be for a maximum of \$2,000. In this case, RPLC can cover directly the cost of the support student by receiving an invoice for the specific amount and transferring the agreed amount to him/her via cheque/wire transfer. For these costs, an appointment letter should be prepared in order to transfer the amount directly to the “support student”.
11. **Reimbursement claims and related invoices must be sent** – via e-mail – to Co-leaders of Research and Exchange Service (Francesca Regoli and Fabio De Menna) for a check on the eligibility criteria according to the guidelines and the approved project proposal. After the approval by R&E team, the reimbursement claims and related invoices can be sent to Brandon University.
12. To balance out fluctuating **exchange rates** from a foreign currency to Canadian dollar (CAD), an update on actual and remaining costs is needed at least one month before the end of the mobility period. This update will be provided by the student and reviewed by the Co-leaders of Research and Exchange Team and the RPLC team at Brandon University. This will allow to check the real costs, according to exchange rate, and to avoid any risk of overpassing the approved budget.
13. **Co-funding:** the candidate is required to submit few lines description - within the application form - describing how eventual co-funding budget was spent (e.g. grants from institutions/programmes other than RPLC).

Updated in October 2018.

Annex 4 - Research and Exchange Grant – Post mobility period. Outputs:

The main outputs of the grant should be:

- Two page summary about the research topic and thesis, with a specific focus on policy relevance and policy impacts.
- A brief and engaging blog post about the exchange period for RPLC Website (e.g. contribution on RPLC blog and RPLC webinars). Some questions should be addressed:
 - ✓ Who is doing the research/exchange?
 - ✓ Where is the exchange period taking place?
 - ✓ What is the research about?
 - ✓ Why is the exchange important?
 - ✓ Which lessons have you learned by this experience (scientific and/or personal ones)?
 - ✓ After conducting your research, what recommendations can you provide to help guide rural policy in your topic area?
- Few pictures of the student and the locations where the exchanges are taking place, as well as about rural contexts related to the research.
- A 2 minutes video during the exchange period. Possibly the video should be shot in a location with a rural-related backdrop or at the hosting institution. The video can be shot with a camera, a cell phone or a webcam. In the video, please, describe your experience:
 - ✓ Where you are
 - ✓ Which purpose
 - ✓ How? RPLC mobility grant plus other contributions?
 - ✓ Main elements you got from the experience
 - ✓ Some pills to help guide rural policy in your topic area
- The participation to conferences and other dissemination activities will represent additional value.

It is recommended to include the logos of the home, the host institutions and RPLC network in the summary of the exchange period.

Please provide these documents within 60 days from your return back home.