

Tiny Beam Fund
Burning Questions Initiative (BQI) Research Planning Grants
Application Opens August 7, Closes October 11, 2019

I. Overview

The Burning Questions Initiative (BQI) that houses the Research Planning Grants Program

- The Research Planning Grants Program sits within Tiny Beam Fund’s *Burning Questions Initiative (BQI): Coming to grips with pressing practical questions on tackling negative impacts of global industrial food animal production*.
- BQI first came into existence in 2016/7 as a small pilot initiative. It was fiscally sponsored by an organization of environmental funders. In January 2019 the non-profit private foundation Tiny Beam Fund was set up, and BQI became its flagship initiative.
- BQI was launched to address a particular need – the need for a deeper understanding of the problem of industrial food animal production especially in low- and middle-income countries.
 - There is an assortment of persons grappling with complex issues related to various negative impacts of animal agriculture on an industrial scale in these countries.
 - BQI uses the term “*front-line persons*” as shorthand to refer to these persons. Broadly speaking, they include: Staff and volunteers in organizations working collaboratively with different stakeholders to address the problem (e.g. work with multiple partners to raise animal welfare standards), activists mounting public campaigns to oppose certain practice or principle in this system of production, small local farmers experiencing first-hand unfavorable impacts from industrial producers, communities contending with predicaments such as environmental pollution. The term also includes major philanthropic grant-makers that support all these groups of persons.
 - A nuanced and sophisticated understanding of the problem is essential to these front-line persons’ search for and implementation of meaningful, long-lasting solutions. They also have questions that they would like to see answered.
 - But acquiring such understanding and answers is very challenging because of a multitude of reasons (e.g. the scarcity of reliable data that are available to front-line persons).
- BQI seeks the assistance of the academic research sector to address these persons’ need for deeper understanding and answers.
 - Academic researchers, with their unique set of skills, knowledge, perspectives, and resources are well-positioned to study and shed light on front-line persons’ questions.
 - Academics are also showing increasing interest in studying negative aspects of global industrial animal production for their own research purposes.
- BQI builds bridges to connect front-line persons with academic researchers.
 - The reality is that the NGO [non governmental organizations] sector and academe each has its own orbit and “language”. Academics have their jargons and special way of presenting their research to their peers which is often unintelligible to non-academics.
 - A funder such as Tiny Beam Fund that has affinities with the academic research sector as well as front-line persons is ideally suited to play the role of bridge-builder.

Reasons for offering these grants

- BQI has collected a number of questions related to negative impacts of industrial food animal production (especially in low- and middle-income countries). These “[burning questions](#)” were

submitted and prioritized by an invited group of mostly advocates and campaigners actively tackling this complex problem, as well as a handful of researchers and funders.

- BQI uses the planning grants to encourage academic researchers to explore the feasibility of developing robust projects to study these questions.
- These grants also aim at incentivizing researchers who have started projects recently that are highly relevant to these questions to move forward rapidly with their ideas and projects.
- In a nutshell, the grants assist researchers to develop strong plans and make thorough preparations for research that goes beyond the work funded by the grants. They are meant to serve as stepping stones. *Applicants must have larger, more substantial projects in mind, or in an early development phase, or in progress only for a short time when they apply.*

Examples of purpose for which these grants can be used

- Hire graduate students to assist with preliminary literature surveys.
- Obtain help for teaching in order to have more time to prepare proposals for government grants.
- Undertake pilot studies that produce a ‘proof of concept’ that lead to full studies.

II. Grant Amounts and Award Period

- Each applicant can request a grant amount from US\$1,000 (minimum) to US\$10,000 (maximum).
- Multiple grants are available. Tiny Beam Fund intends to fund all excellent grant proposals.
- Award period is four months.
- Grants will be paid at the beginning of award periods.

II. Eligibility

- Applicants need not reside in the United States at the time of application and award.
- An applicant (or the principal applicant if it is a team) must hold the PhD degree (or equivalent) or be enrolled in a PhD (or equivalent) program.
- A team should consist of 2 – 4 members. Apart from the principal applicant, the other members of a team need not be PhD holders/students, and need not be associated with universities.
- An applicant (or the principal applicant if it is a team) must be enrolled in or employed by a university or research institute that is or would be comparable to a US-based not-for-profit tax-exempt organization. *Grants are sent directly to universities and institutes, not to individuals.*
- Grants will not directly fund tuition, overhead expenses, or other indirect costs.
- A recipient of Research Planning Grants or Burning Questions Fellowships is eligible to apply if:
 1. The deadline for submitting proposals for this round of application (i.e. October 11, 2019) does *not* fall within the recipient’s current award period.
 2. The research planning that is seeking support for this time is *not* very similar to the research and topics funded previously by Tiny Beam Fund or its predecessor. (If in doubt, please check with Tiny Beam Fund.)

III. Application Instructions

Part 1: Applicant’s general information

1.1 Name and contact information of applicant.

- For a team, provide name and contact information for every person on the team.

1.2 Name and full address of applicant’s (or principal applicant’s) university / research institute.

1.2.1 Name and contact information of the party responsible for accounts receivable and grants management at your institution if the application is successful and funded.

1.3 Short CV of applicant.

- Indicate clearly in the CV whether you currently hold a PhD/doctoral degree, or are enrolled in a PhD/doctoral program (this includes candidates expecting their degrees in the coming months).
- For a team, provide a short CV for every person on the team.

Part 2: "Burning questions" and countries

2.1 Which “burning question(s)” is/are relevant to your grant and research plan?

- Refer to [the current list of burning questions](#).
- Indicate clearly the unique ID number of each “burning question” to which the topics are relevant. ID numbers always begin with a # mark (e.g. #PT)
- Even if a topic is relevant to a small part of a “burning question”, indicate its ID number.
- If your topics are relevant to one part of a “burning question” and one part of another “burning question”, state the ID numbers of all questions concerned.

2.2 Is the work supported by the planning grant focused on particular low- or middle-income countries, or these countries in general?

Part 3: Reasons for applying

Note to PhD students: If the larger project is your dissertation and the grant is to help you plan your dissertation, the primary theme and focus of your dissertation must be of significant relevance to at least one main issue of a “burning question”. Please check with us if you are not sure.

3.1 Why do you need a planning grant?

3.1.1 What is the larger project or fuller study you want to pursue or have started to explore? Can you describe succinctly its key research questions, issues, or subject matter?

3.1.2 How does the planning grant enable you to develop and advance this larger project?

3.2 How does your larger, more substantial project – if/when completed – improve one’s understanding of key issues mentioned in the burning question(s) you indicated above? What are the things that will be made clearer?

3.3 Do you need additional funding in order to complete your larger project? If so, how do you plan to go about securing it? If not, why not?

3.4 Do you intend to share your research findings beyond the academic sphere should you be able to complete your full study and larger project? If yes, how and with whom? If no, why not?

3.5 When do you want your award period to start?

- The award period is four months. We prefer a start date that is before December 15, 2019.

Part 4: Grant amount requested

4.1 What grant amount are you requesting?

- The grant amount must have a minimum of US\$1,000 and a maximum of \$10,000.

- Institutions may charge overhead and/or other indirect costs against the grant on a % basis. Applicants should account for this in calculating the amount of their grant request.

4.2 What is the estimated budget of the planning grant? What specific activities will the grant be used for?

- Use broad categories, for example: Personnel (e.g. teaching release time; research assistant wages to help with literature review). Travel and accommodation. Supplies. Contractual (e.g. consultant fees for language assistance). Other direct costs (e.g. cost to access special databases).

Part 5: Personal statement

5.1 Is doing academic research that addresses real-life problems and societal concerns important to you? Why? When you choose your research topics, how much weight do you give to whether they are useful to and usable by people outside academe?

5.2 Is there anything else that is very important to your application that you want us to know?

IV. Announcement of Results. Deliverables Expected from Grant Recipients.

- All grant applicants are notified of the result of their applications on October 25, 2019.
- *At the end of the grant award period*, each grantee is to submit:
 1. A short report of 1,000 – 1,500 words (excluding appendix, etc.) describing: (i) what has been achieved with the grant; (ii) lessons learned, challenges faced, surprises; (iii) next steps.
 2. A finance account of how the grant funds have been used.
- *Nine months after the end of the award period*, each grantee is to submit:
 1. A follow-up note of no more than 1,000 words (excluding appendix, etc.) on: (i) whether “the next steps” mentioned in the short report were taken; (ii) the status of the larger project which the grant has been used to plan and advance.

Important points:

1. These grants are meant to help research work in the development or early stage. They should not be used for research projects that are already halfway to completion.
2. The work to be supported by the grants should be focused on low and/or middle-income countries.
3. All the work funded by the grants must be accomplished within the four-month award period.
4. Applicants’ should make sure that their universities or research institutes are able to receive grants in US\$ from a U.S. non-profit organization.

Researchers are not required to contact us before submitting full proposals, but they are urged to express their interest in the grants as early as possible so we can give feedback and help them prepare strong applications.

Inquiries and applications accepted from August 7, 2019 to October 11, 2019.

Contact: Min@tinybeamfund.org

