



# SAUDI APPLIED RESEARCH & TECHNOLOGY PROGRAM

Call for Pre-Proposal

هيئة تنمية البحث  
والتطوير والابتكار  
Research Development  
and Innovation Authority



# Saudi Applied Research and Technology Program

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## About SART Grants



The Saudi Applied Research & Technology (SART) program is designed to accelerate research breakthroughs and transform them into real-world solutions that drive the Kingdom's national priorities forward.

This initiative serves as the bridge between cutting-edge research and practical application, supporting projects that have moved beyond early-stage development and are poised for commercial success. By focusing on projects with proven feasibility, the initiative empowers researchers to turn promising ideas into impactful technologies that address the Kingdom's most critical needs.

Aligned with the Kingdom's strategic RDI priorities, SART focuses on research across these key areas: Sustainability and Essential Needs, Health and Wellness, Energy and Industrials, and Economies of the Future.

SART helps researchers advance their work from the basic science spectrum to development and potential commercialization. The program encourages collaboration between research institutions and partners from the private, public, and not-for-profit sectors, fostering valuable industry-academia alignment.

The program focuses on three key objectives: proof-of-concept establishment, technology development, and academia-industry partnership and technology transfer, driving innovation and enabling the commercialization of new technologies.

Applicants to SART can submit proposals through the following grants:

Grants	Who can Apply	Funding <sup>1</sup>
<b>Baseload Applied Grant (BAG)</b>	Academia / research institutions or private sector Single applicant / consortia	Up to 1.6 Mn SAR (consider support rate)
<b>Tech. Dev. Grant (TDG)</b>	Academia / research institutions or private sector Single applicant / consortia	Up to 10 Mn SAR (consider support rate)
<b>Academia-Industry Innovation Grant (AIIG)</b>	Only consortia can apply Joint applications from at least two entities, including at least one from academia / research institutions and one from private sector	Up to 12 Mn SAR (consider support rate)

**Support rate:** Applicants from academic entities or research institutions will be supported at 100% of the project cost; SMEs will be supported at 85% of the project cost; Corp. entities will be supported at 50% of the project cost.

The final amount awarded will depend on the project's scope, budget justification, and alignment with the call's objectives. Projects funded under this initiative will typically have a maximum **duration of 3 years** (the project's duration may be extended to up to 5 years in duly justified cases; the same consideration applies for the funding amount).





<sup>1</sup> The grant funding cap is being evaluated at this time.



## Eligibility and Admissibility Criteria



All applicants must comply with the following criteria to participate:

Grants 	Applicant Eligibility 	Pre-Proposal Eligibility 	Pre-Proposal Admissibility 
<b>Baseload Applied Grant (BAG)</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The PI must be from a KSA-based academic entity / research institution or private sector</li> <li>Saudi nationals can reside ex-KSA at time of application but must be affiliated with a local host institution by time of award<sup>1</sup></li> <li>Joint applications by 2 or more entities are eligible; the lead entity must be KSA-based<sup>2</sup></li> <li>The PI should be accomplished with the respective track record and capabilities of coordinating programs of similar scope, achieving significant research outcomes</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Pre-proposals with a clear linkage to the specific research topics outlined in the call are prioritized</li> <li>If the PI resides ex-KSA at time of application, a binding statement from the host institution must confirm its association with- and its support of the project and PI should the proposal be successful<sup>1</sup></li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>All mandatory sections of the pre-proposal should be duly filled</li> <li>Must be submitted before specified deadline</li> <li>Must be readable, accessible and printable</li> <li>Pre-proposal should be submitted only through official portal</li> </ul>
<b>Technology Development Grant (TDG)</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The PI must be from a KSA-based academic entity / research institution or private sector</li> <li>Saudi nationals can reside ex-KSA at time of application but must be affiliated with a local host institution by time of award<sup>1</sup></li> <li>Joint application by 2 or more entities is also eligible; the lead entity must be KSA-based<sup>2</sup></li> <li>The PI should be accomplished with the respective track record and capabilities of coordinating programs with focus on technology development, achieving significant research outcomes</li> </ul>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Pre-proposal should abide by the limit of 6 pages following a set format, unless mentioned otherwise</li> <li>Pre-proposal should satisfy all the formatting criteria</li> </ul>
<b>Academia-Industry Innovation Grant (AIIG)</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Joint application from at least 2 entities with at least one academic entity / research institution and one from the private sector</li> <li>The application must clearly assign a Primary PI and Secondary PI</li> <li>PPI and SPI must be from a KSA-based</li> </ul>		

	<p>institution</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Saudi nationals can reside ex-KSA at time of application but must be affiliated with a local host institution by time of award<sup>1</sup></li> <li>• The PPI and SPI should be accomplished with the respective track record and capabilities of delivering projects with focus on technology development, achieving significant research outcomes</li> </ul>		
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Note: 1) Saudi national researchers who may reside outside of KSA at the time of application wishing to carry out a project with a host institution in KSA are eligible. A KSA-based host institution must engage the PI for at least the duration of the project and must confirm its association with- and its support of the project and PI through a binding statement as part of the application.

2) Co-PI could be KSA- or ex-KSA based, however, proportion of budget spent ex-KSA will be capped at 40%, where applicable



## Research Ethics



It is required that the research is designed and conducted in such a way that it meets specific ethical principles and is subject to appropriate professional and institutional oversight in terms of research governance. Please refer to the following principles:

- The research should aim to maximize benefit for individuals and minimize risk and harm
- The rights and dignity of individuals and groups should be respected
- Wherever possible, participation should be voluntary and appropriately informed
- Research should be conducted with integrity and transparency
- Lines of responsibility and accountability should be clearly defined
- Independence in the research should be maintained, and where conflicts of interest cannot be avoided, they should be made explicit
- All necessary ethical approvals and permissions must be taken prior to the commencement of the project

RDIA will:

- Only fund research that has an adequate and appropriate ethics statement, which takes the ethical dimensions of the research seriously
- Consider reviewer or panel member disagreement with the suggested project approach to ethics as either grounds for a conditional grant or rejection of the proposal (where it calls into question the researcher's competence or the feasibility or validity of a proposal)
- Consider the suspension of payments and grant termination if the review shows that a project requires major changes that will alter it to the extent that it can no longer retain RDIA support
- Only fund research organizations that have processes in place to follow the guidance in this framework and comply with the grant conditions and RDIA's policy and guidelines
- Hold the PI and researchers involved in any allegations of research misconduct and breach of compliance accountable with the grant conditions; this can result in the immediate suspension of the individual project and other projects

## Use of Funds



Funding received from the program may be used for the following categories<sup>2</sup>:

- Manpower costs
- Sub-contracting costs
- Equipment costs
- Travel costs
- Other operating expenses
- Indirect costs

<sup>2</sup> The budget items are under consideration and study at this time.

Although the above expense categories are used to provide applicants with high-level guidance, the program does not set any limits or stringent criteria on how the funding can be efficiently utilized to achieve the intended goals. Rather, it offers them reasonable degrees of freedom to submit high-quality proposals with a cap limit on expenses.

## Allowances of the Project Team



1. This article applies to individuals working on research projects supported by RDIA's grant funding, including the following categories:
  - Faculty members, research faculty, postdocs, graduate students, and those in similar positions
  - Researchers, their assistants, technicians, administrators, and accountants
  - Project managers and their assistants
  - Consultants, referees, and individuals providing expertise relevant to the project
2. Salaries and allowances will be disbursed based on the approved budget for a three-year project in accordance with the next Table. In case of longer project, any subsequent years will follow a similar pattern.

Table: Salaries and allowances disbursement guidelines.

Year	Payment	Description	Disbursement date
First	First	Salaries and allowances to the project staff for the first half of the first year, except researchers	After the contract is signed, implementation plan is approved, and the periodic technical report #1 for the project is submitted
	Second	Salaries and allowances to the project staff for the second half of the first year, except researchers	After the annual technical #1 and financial report #1 is submitted
	Third	Researcher allowances for the first year will be disbursed	After the annual technical #1 and financial report #1 is approved
Second	Fourth	Salaries and allowances to the project staff for the first half of the second year, except researchers	After the contract is signed, implementation plan is approved, and the periodic technical report #2 for the project is submitted
	Fifth	Salaries and allowances to the project staff for the second half of the second year, except researchers	After the annual technical #2 and financial report #2 is submitted
	Sixth	Researcher allowances for the second year will be disbursed	After the annual technical #2 and financial report #2 is approved
Third	Seventh	Salaries and allowances to the project staff for the first half of the third year, except researchers	After the contract is signed, implementation plan is approved, and the periodic technical report #3 for the project is submitted
	Eighth	Salaries and allowances to the project staff for the second half of the third year, except researchers	After the annual technical #3 and financial report #3 is submitted

	<b>Ninth</b>	Researcher allowances for the third year will be disbursed	After the final technical and financial report is approved, along with an electronic copy of all scientific outputs for the project
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- Project-related allowances received by any member of the research team, including the PI, co-PI, and project manager, should not exceed the amount received for three projects per month.
- Before disbursing allowances to the research team, technical reports must be approved as specified in the contract.
- It is not permissible to combine two allowances for any member of the project team.
- Allowances will not be disbursed until the project has commenced.
- Project funds will not be disbursed until the contract has been signed.
- Work on the project will not commence until the entity's account has received the funding.
- Allowances will only be disbursed for research projects that have been approved as specified in the project budget. Participants will receive allowances based on the completion of their assigned tasks and roles, and the amount of allowances will be determined by the RDIU and based on the RDIA's regulations and policies.
- The next Table outlines the guidelines and spending limits for the human resources budget for the research project.

Table: Guidelines and limits for expenditure on the human resources item in the research project

Member	Maximum Allowance <sup>3</sup> (SAR)	Yearly Allowance (Months)	Total (SAR)
<b>Researchers</b>			
<b>Principal Investigator</b>	6,000	10	60,000
<b>Co-Principal Investigator</b>	5,000	10	50,000
<b>Assistants – Part time</b>			
<b>Project Manager</b>	3,000	10	30,000
<b>Masters / PhD holders</b>	3,000	10	30,000
<b>Assistants – Full time (Salaries Exclusively for Project Contracts)<sup>4</sup></b>			
<b>PhD Holder</b>	12,000	12	144,000
<b>Master</b>	9,000	12	108,000
<b>Bachelors</b>	7,000	12	84,000
<b>Technicians and Administrators</b>			
<b>Technicians</b>	2,800	10	28,000
<b>Administrators</b>	2,400	10	24,000

<sup>3</sup> Allowances are under consideration and study at this time and are subject to adjustments.

<sup>4</sup> These are salaries that are exclusively allocated to full-time individuals contracted for the designated project.



Professionals (Skillful Labors)			
Staff/Workers and the like	1,600	12	19,200

11. The next Table outlines the guidelines and spending limits for consultants in the research project.

Table: Guidelines and limits for expenditure on the consultants in the research project

Item	Allowance Incl. Per Diem Allowance (SAR/Day)	Max. Consultation Duration (Days)	Maximum Visits During The Project Period	Providing Tickets	Total	The Total Incl. The Tickets
Within the administrative region for research implementation	1,000	15	unlimited	X	15,000	15,000
Outside the administrative region for research implementation	2,000	10	2	✓	20,000	25,000
Outside the Kingdom	3,000	10	1	✓	30,000	50,000

## Application Process



The SART program employs a two-stage application process:

- Pre-Proposal Submission:** Applicants must submit a concise pre-proposal outlining their project idea, objectives, and potential impact. This stage allows for a preliminary assessment of project relevance and alignment with the call for proposal's objectives.
- Full Proposal Submission:** Upon successful evaluation of the pre-proposal, shortlisted applicants will be invited to submit a comprehensive full proposal. This detailed proposal will undergo a rigorous peer-review process.

Detailed information regarding the application process and templates will be made available on the official RDIA grants portal.

## Review Process



RDIA grants adhere to the global best practices in program management to ensure the highest degree of objectivity and quality. A qualified expert will be appointed to review the pre-proposal. Throughout this process, the grant personnel and selected experts will adhere to all conflict-of-interest and confidentiality requirements. Qualified pre-proposals will be invited to submit a full proposal.

In alignment with best practices, the full proposal will undergo a two-phase process, each phase with its own application review steps:

- In the first phase, an initial review of every application will be conducted upon receipt of the grant application forms to ensure that the proposal meets all the specified requirements. The RDIUs in the institutions will ensure the completeness of the applications per the guidelines and policies and will check for plagiarism.
- In the second phase, complete grant applications that meet the program's priorities and budget constraints will be, subsequently, evaluated in terms of technical merit. This step is conducted by independent experts and/or a panel committee. The summary statement for each proposal will be evaluated by an Oversight Committee, and funding recommendations for high-scoring applications will be recommended. A notice of approval or rejection will be sent to the RDIUs or applicants once the review process is complete.

## Project Quality



Based on the RDIA's system, funding allocations will be performance-based. When applying for grants, it is important for researchers to be aware of the requirements for grant closure to ensure successful completion of the project and proper use of grant funds. These requirements may vary depending on the specific grant but typically include completion of all project activities, submission of all required reports, compliance with RDIA's policies and regulations, and preparation and submission of closeout documentation.

It is important for applicants to include the expected outcomes of the proposed project in the grant application. These outcomes may include various forms of scientific output (e.g., publications, patents, prototypes, and other acceptable results, depending on the type of fund). By including these expected outcomes in the grant application, the applicant is providing a clear indication of the potential impact and significance of the proposed research. This information is important for the RDIA in evaluating the feasibility and potential success of the proposed research project. Additionally, by setting clear expectations for the research outcomes, applicants can better track and document their progress throughout the project, which is critical for a successful grant closure.

## Evaluation



### Baseline Applied Grant

Pre-proposals will be assessed according to the following evaluation criteria:

#### EXCELLENCE AND NOVELTY

**Novelty and Scientific Ambition Compared to the State-of-the-Art:** How novel and ambitious is the proposed research compared to the current state-of-the-art?

**Clarity of Objectives, Hypotheses, or Relevant Previous Work:** Does the proposal clearly articulate its objectives and hypotheses or build upon relevant previous work, providing a strong rationale for the research?

#### POTENTIAL IMPACT

**Relevance to Research Topics:** How well does the proposed research align with the specific

research topics outlined in the grant call?

**Market Insight and Potential Application:** What is the market context, potential use areas and potential commercial value of the results?

**Overall Impact:** What are the potential broader benefits and impact of the project beyond the immediate scientific or technological advancements, considering economic, societal, or environmental factors?

## TEAM AND EXPERTISE

**PI Track Record:** Does the Principal Investigator (PI) have a proven track record and the necessary expertise to lead and conduct the proposed research?

**Quality of Research Team:** Does the research team possess the necessary expertise, experience, diversity, and capacity to successfully execute the project?

## PROJECT IMPLEMENTATION

**Execution Plan:** Is the proposed execution plan well-structured and realistic enough to achieve the project's objectives?

### Technology Development Grant / Academia-Industry Innovation Grant

Pre-proposals will be assessed according to the following evaluation criteria:

## TECHNICAL EXCELLENCE AND NOVELTY

**Novelty of Proposal:** How unique or original is the proposed research compared to existing work in the field?

**Technical Merit of Proposal:** Is the proposed research scientifically sound, technically feasible, and supported by evidence?

**TRL Advancement:** To what extent does this project contribute to advancing the technology from its current TRL? Is the research aligned with the TRL focus of the grant (including targeted outcomes)?

## POTENTIAL IMPACT

**Relevance to Research Topics:** How well does the proposed research align with the specific research topics outlined in the grant call?

**Market Demand:** What is the potential market size, demand, and overall attractiveness for the proposed solution or technology?

**Overall Impact:** What are the potential broader benefits and impact of the project beyond the immediate scientific or technological advancements, considering economic, societal, or environmental factors?

## TEAM AND EXPERTISE

**PI Track Record:** Does the Principal Investigator (PI) have a proven track record and the necessary expertise to lead and conduct the proposed research?

**Quality of Research Team (TDG) / Consortium Capabilities and Commitment (AIIG):** Does the research team or consortium possess the necessary expertise, experience, diversity, and capacity

to successfully execute the project?

## PROJECT IMPLEMENTATION

**Execution Plan:** Is the proposed execution plan well-structured and realistic enough to achieve the project's objectives?

## Terms and Conditions



1. This grant is subject to the RDIA's policies and national regulations for research grants that govern all award personnel and activities.
2. Proposals must not duplicate or have significant overlap with existing grants.
3. The final grant amount may differ from the requested amount based on review recommendations and availability of funds.
4. Any proposal found to include investigators based on personal or reciprocal arrangements, rather than their ability to contribute meaningfully to the project, will be disqualified for favoritism or conflict of interest.
5. Applicants are highly encouraged to share data/ outcomes generated from their projects through open-access platforms.

## Contact Information



For application enquiries, such as eligibility queries, budget preparation questions, or technical issues with the portal, please contact:

[GRANTS-INFO@rdia.gov.sa](mailto:GRANTS-INFO@rdia.gov.sa)