CALL FOR RESEARCH

The Urban China Initiative (UCI) mission is to develop and support solutions to China’s urbanization challenge. The Initiative seeks solutions that can be applied across cities in China, and that mobilize government, private and social support.

The Urban China Initiative aims to be the source of the best and most innovative solutions to urban development issues in China. To achieve this goal, UCI conducts a grant program to support research concerning China’s urban development and sustainability. UCI accepts research applications on an annual basis for grants up to RMB 100,000. It also provides assistance and guidance during the research process and facilitates the publication of working papers and implementation through city pilots.

The deadline for the upcoming round of funding is January 19, 2018. Research for the grants is expected to be completed within a year. Candidates are required to submit an application package which includes a detailed research proposal and CV (download application form and proposal template) to grant@urbanchinainitiative.org.

AREAS OF RESEARCH

The Initiative supports research on the effectiveness of programs and technologies related to urban development; emerging domestic and global best practices in project design, development, and execution; and paths to successful structural adjustment in China’s cities. Grant-supported research focuses on sustainable urbanization, including but not limited to economic development, energy efficiency, consumer awareness, public finance, industrial policy, migrant labor, urban infrastructure, environmental issues, social development, housing and land, education, and the monitoring and evaluation of urbanization.

GRANT CATEGORIES

Core Grants (up to RMB 100,000) will be identified as Urban China Initiative projects and will receive research assistance and analytical support from the Initiative in addition to grant funding.

Research Grants (up to RMB 50,000) may be used to carry out the grantee’s research proposal, including hiring research assistants, obtaining course relief, and funding travel and per diems.

Research for both grant categories must be completed within one year.
PROPOSAL FORMAT

Proposals may be written in English and Chinese. A proposal consists of the following components:

A. Topic Description, Background, and Significance of the Research
Applicants should provide a summary of the proposed research topic and its background, including a description of any research that has already been completed on the topic, the relationship of the proposed project to prior work, and the significance of the proposed project. Special attention should be paid to the innovativeness of the proposed research. Applicants should also discuss the current demand for the research within the overall landscape of China’s urban challenges.

B. Research Contents, Design, and Methodology
Applicants should clearly state the objectives and anticipated deliverables for the proposed project. This section should detail the main research questions and include a description of data-gathering and analysis techniques. It should also include specific responsibilities for each team member (as applicable).

C. Potential Impact of the Proposed Research
Applicants should discuss the potential of the research to have a tangible effect on China’s urban landscape and/or policy. In particular, applicants should consider the potential to translate theoretical study to action, including future pilots in Chinese cities. This section should consider in what settings the results of the proposed research may be disseminated to have a broader impact.

D. Research Timeline
The Research Timeline should include all stages of the proposed project, including a literature review, data collection, interviews, data analysis, and etcetera. The timeline should take into consideration the UCI’s overall grant timeline and deadlines (see “Grant Timeline” below).

E. Estimated Budget Breakdown
The proposal should include a detailed worksheet with anticipated research costs by category. Possible costs include salaries for each team member, travel, accommodation, purchase of data sets, etcetera.

F. CV(s) of Lead Researcher(s)
The proposal should also include copies of the curriculum vitae of each Lead Researcher.
SELECTION CRITERIA

Grant applicants will be evaluated based on careful consideration of applicants’ research proposals as well as finalist interviews. The UCI will consider the following criteria in selecting grant awardees:

- **The relevancy of research topic**, in the sense of focusing on major challenges faced during China’s urbanization, including: measurement of urbanization and sustainable development, migrant workers, development of mega-regions, urban-rural balanced development, urban planning and construction, urban public service, urban environment, urban management and policies, etc.

- **The innovativeness of the research**, including having a solid foundation in the relevant topic, being able to fill a gap in current research in certain fields, and avoiding duplication of research.

- **The feasibility of the research method**, including the suitability of the research method to its content and purpose, and the likeliness of the method to achieve expected outcomes.

- **The potential for implementation**, in the sense that the expected research outcomes could be applied to planning and decision-making and exert a practical effect on urbanization and urban development.

- **The capabilities and research experience of the candidates**, including an evaluation of project management plans and responsibilities of each team member, if applicable.

- **Value for money**, including whether the proposed cost of researchers, travel, or other expenses are reasonable.

GRANT TIMELINE

Research for all grants must be completed within one year. The grant timeline for the upcoming round of funding is as follows:

- **January 19, 2018**: Application Deadline
- **January, 2018**: Interviews of finalists (as needed)
- **Early February, 2018**: Grant Awardees notified
- **Early March, 2018**: First grant stipend is transferred to awardees (amount of stipend depends on established needs of the project’s first phase)
- **August 31, 2018**: Mid-year reports due to UCI. Second installment of the grant is transferred to awardees
- **September, 2018**: Mid-year grant stipend is transferred to awardees
- **October, 2018**: Forum Presentation
- **November 30, 2018**: Final Reports due to UCI and Final grant installment transfer.

**TERMS OF THE GRANT**

Grant recipients are required to comply with all deadlines established by the UCI. Funding for most projects will be released in three phases. The first funding package will be transmitted soon after notification of the grant award in March.

The second funding package will be transmitted upon favorable review of the Midterm Report in late August. The final funding package will be transferred after the UCI Annual Forum in October. In certain cases, the UCI may allow modifications to this payment timetable. To request an exception to this guideline, grant recipients must provide acceptable written documentation justifying why the project requires an adjusted grant distribution schedule. UCI will withhold and remit taxes and fees according to related regulations and the actual amount of grants could vary.

Grantees may receive funds from other sources for UCI-supported research as long as there is no conflict with meeting the terms, purposes, and overall program of the UCI grant.

Any instance of plagiarism will result in a termination of the grant.

Researchers who fail to meet these requirements will not be considered for future research grants.

Urban China Initiative

November, 2017