Social Observatory Research Program (SORP)

Call for Proposal

2013

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1. Introduction

The National Strategy for Research has highlighted the importance and priority given to investigating social changes through scientific research. Using recommendations from the outcome of the research, effective programs are then put into place. Towards that end, the Social Observatory Program has been initiated in order to examine social changes in a scientific manner. The progressive scientific observation and examination of these changes shall serve the wellbeing of society by analyzing them scientifically and providing decision-makers - and the society - with the findings in order to make informed decisions.

The Social Observatory Research Program is now accepting research proposals for three areas: youth values, family cohesion and employment and standards of living. These shall observe changes during the period of 2013-2014. Programs are accepted from: independent researchers, civil and governmental institutions.

2. Objectives

Social Observatory Research Program strives to be an active institution in social development in the Sultanate through:
- Establishing a basic data infrastructure and social indicators to be provided for utilization continually.
- Observing social changes and highlighting them to be analyzed.
- Providing funds to conduct scientific-oriented research to study social changes and, then, provide research findings to various stakeholders.
- Enriching social research in Oman by establishing relations with different universities, local and international research centers and other global observatories.
- Striving to make it a think tank by funding high-quality research.

3. Scope of Research

The research priority of this program essentially covers three main areas: youth values, family cohesion and employment and standards of livings illustrated in the table (1). The criteria used to specify the topics are as follows:
- The phenomena shall take the Omani context into consideration.
- Findings of research are to be utilized in making decisions and adopting policies.
- Indicators of phenomena should be noticeable and deserve examining.

Table (1): Research Areas

First Area: **Youth Values**	Second Area: **Family Cohesion**	Third Area: **Employment and Standard of living:**

• Citizenship:
  ▪ Customs and public preferences.
  ▪ Public facilities safeguard.
  ▪ Voluntary work
  ▪ Conserving Omani heritage
  ▪ Rules and regulations awareness
• Peer and influence:
  ▪ Social control
  ▪ Societal Environment
  ▪ Juvenile Delinquency
  ▪ Deviant behavior
• leisure time management
• Education and moral values
• Dialogue Culture
	
	• Women Employment
	• Late age marriage
	• Early marriage
	• Family counseling
	• Divorce
	• Child abuse
	• Family disputes
	• Absence of father's role
	• Elderly care
	• Domestic workers
	• People with special needs
		
		• Education and promotion of work culture:
		  ▪ Self-employment and entrepreneurship
		  ▪ Part-time working
		• Poverty
		• Training and rehabilitation:
		  ▪ Mechanisms of market Supply and demands.
		• Saving and consumption culture
		• Foreign expats
		• Social security

4. Conditions of Application

One of the objectives is to promote the national capacity in social research. Hence, this particular program strives to enlarge the number of the researchers who are expected to participate in the program. This table illustrates the different categories of researchers and the conditions that should apply to participate in the program.

Table (2): Conditions for Submission a Research Proposal

Term	Applicants	Local	Not- Local
1	Researcher from an Institution affiliated with TRC electronic system	- PhD holder or an equivalent qualification. - Mater degree with good research record- the Steering Committee will have final decision upon the qualification based on the research record of the applicant) - Work within a team of master degree holders or above.	Not Allowed
2	Researcher from an Institution not affiliated with TRC electronic system	- PhD holder or an equivalent qualification. - Mater degree with good research record- the Steering Committee will have final decision upon the qualification based on the research	- PhD holder or an equivalent qualification. - Must Collaborate with local researcher –PhD holder. -Priority is given to proposals that include post-graduate students.

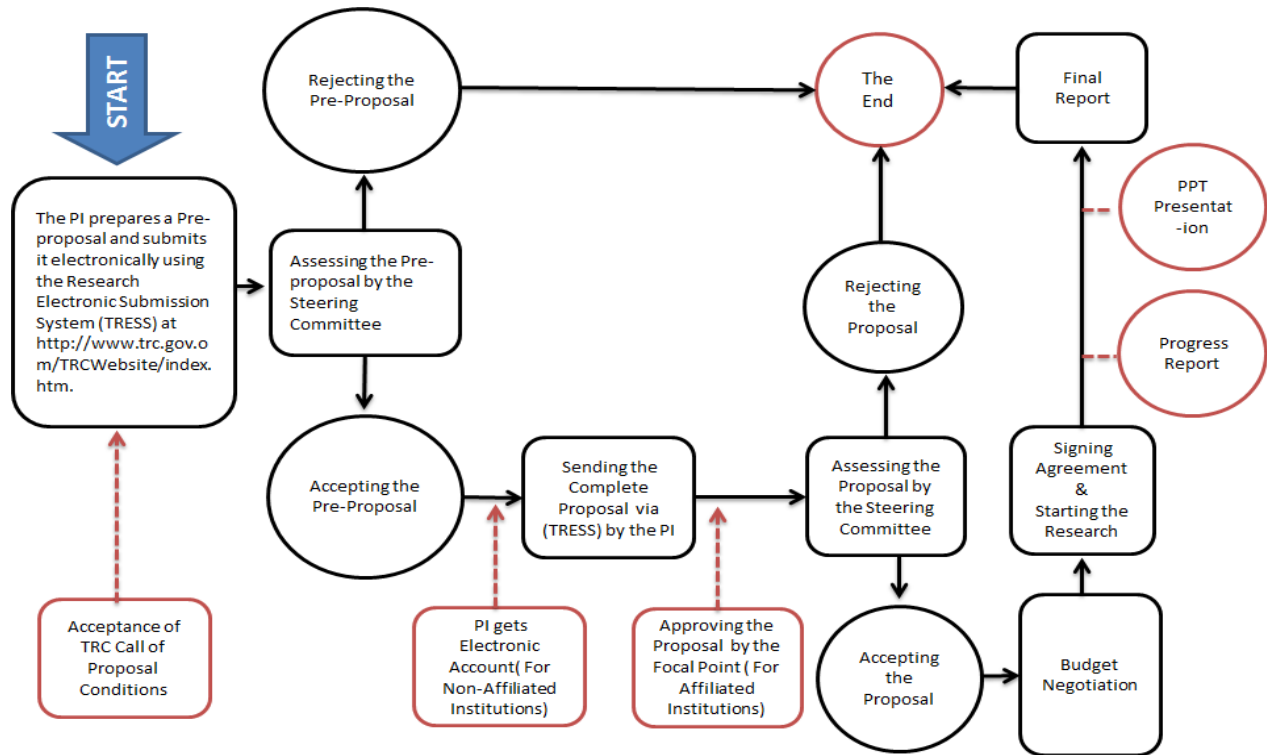|		record of the applicant) - Work within a team of master degree holders or above.	-The contract will be signed between The Research Council and international researcher Organization.
3	Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs)	- PhD holder or an equivalent qualification. -Mater degree with good research record- the Steering Committee will have final decision upon the qualification based on the research record of the applicant) - Work within a team of master degree holders or above. -A contract is signed between the NGOs and TRC	Not allowed

5. Steps to Apply

To participate in the Social Observatory Research Program, the principal investigator shall firstly submit a "Pre-Proposal" through the electronic system located in the TRC website (www.trc.gov.om). After the Pre-proposal being approved by the steering committee of the program, the principal investigator is invited to submit the complete proposal. Bearing in mind, Pre-proposal and full proposal should be submitted to TRC electronically and that any proposal submitted non-electronically shall be rejected. Table (3) illustrates the steps that should be followed to apply either institutions whose have electronic access to TRC system or not.

Table (3):

Affiliated institutions with TRC electronic system	**Non-affiliated** institutions with TRC electronic system
1. The PI prepares a Pre-proposal and submits it electronically using the Research Electronic Submission System (TRESS) at http://www.trc.gov.om/TRCWebsite/index.htm.	1. The PI prepares a Pre-proposal and submits it electronically using the Research Electronic Submission System (TRESS) at http://www.trc.gov.om/TRCWebsite/index.htm.
2. The Pre-proposal is assessed by the Steering Committee of the program. 3. Principal Investigator will be informed about the steering committee's decision. 4. If approved, the PI will be asked to send the complete proposal via the e-	2. The Pre-proposal is assessed by the Steering Committee of the program. 3. Principal Investigator will be informed about the steering committee's decision. 4. If approved, an electronic account is initiated to enable the PI to get access

system (TRESS)	to the Research Electronic Submission System.
5. The institutional Focal Point of the PI endorses or rejects the submission before it reaches the Steering Committee.	5. The PI sends the complete proposal via the e-system (TRESS)
6. Proposal is to be assessed by the Steering Committee and by experts from the proposal research area.	6. Proposal is to be assessed by the Steering Committee and by experts from the proposal research area.
7. Informing the PI about the Steering Committee' decision.	7. Informing the PI about the Steering Committee' decision.
8. Negotiation between the Steering Committee and PI may be required over the requested budget.	8. Negotiation between the Steering Committee and PI may be required over the requested budget.
9. Signing the grant agreement.	9. Signing the grant agreement.
10. A brief report summarizing progress is required mid-way or annually through the project, or as agreed in the agreement.	10. A brief report summarizing progress is required mid-way or annually through the project, or as agreed in the agreement.
11. The PI is to send a final report by the end of the research.	11. The PI sends a final report by the end of the research.
12. The PI will be asked. (If requested by the Steering committee) to do an audio-visual presentation of the findings and the recommendations of the research.	12. The PI will be asked. (If requested by the Steering committee) to do an audio-visual presentation of the findings and the recommendations of the research.

The chart below illustrates the journey of the proposal:

START

Rejecting the Pre-Proposal

The PI prepares a Pre-proposal and submits it electronically using the Research Electronic Submission System (TRESS) at http://www.trc.gov.om/TRCWebsite/index.htm.

Assessing the Pre-proposal by the Steering Committee

The End

Final Report

PPT Presentat-ion

Rejecting the Proposal

Progress Report

Accepting the Pre-Proposal

Sending the Complete Proposal via (TRESS) by the PI

Assessing the Proposal by the Steering Committee

Signing Agreement & Starting the Research

Acceptance of TRC Call of Proposal Conditions

PI gets Electronic Account(For Non-Affiliated Institutions)

Approving the Proposal by the Focal Point (For Affiliated Institutions)

Accepting the Proposal

Budget Negotiation

6. Criteria of Assessing Proposals

1. **Topic identification and research areas of the program**: To what extent the proposals go with the specific areas of the program. TRC welcomes other proposals of other topics if to enrich the current knowledge that is relevant to the program.
2. **Innovative proposals**: the proposals shall enrich the knowledge of research topics which therein help to extend the current local knowledge, leading to adopting policies which are appropriate for the Sultanate and based on a scientific analysis.
3. **Clarity of the proposals**: The proposal shall be clear and complete to the team whose responsibility it is to revise it and examining its validity. The form and content shall be clear with no ambiguities.
4. **Published researches on the topic**: It is necessary to have a look at the current publications to highlight their outcomes and the knowledge they produce in addition to giving a good reason behind the current proposal.
5. **Findings to be measured**: It is also vital for the researchers to see to what extent the project is accurate. Hence, the outcome will be valuable, measurable and relevant to the program.
6. **Research Methodology**: It has to be clearly well-defined to show how data will be collected along with a clear action plan.
7. **Planning and managing the project**: Researchers shall provide details of a clear plan and its management, including human resources and how they will be utilized during the different stages of their study. Also, an illustration of the team in specific if possible.
8. **Abilities of the research team**: Researchers shall have the knowledge and skills to conduct the research. In other words, the principal researcher along with other members should have previous background in the area of the research. Thus, this will lead the proposal to be applicable.
9. **Approximation of budget and time for the project**: The proposal should include the specific possible duration of time to conduct the study. Also, it has to give a description of each stage of the project. The requested budget should be divided and utilized wisely to meet the required expenditures.
10. **Ethical criteria**: Proposals shall show the ethical aspect during the conduction of projects, including humanity and the different customs of Omani society.
11. **Establishing national capacity**: Proposals shall build up national abilities like training national cadres, leading them to pursue masters and PhDs.

7. Terms & Conditions

- The duration of the project period shall not exceed 36 months. The draft of the final report shall be submitted within three months of the end of the grant.
- A contract is signed between the principal researcher and his\her institution with TRC.
- The research team shall be committed to submit a continuous progress report, a final report and an audiovisual presentation as indicated in the contract.

Submission Requirements:

- The researcher shall submit a draft of the final report, which will be looked at by the committee provided that one chance will be given to the researcher to rewrite the proposal according to the committee's comments.
- A brief report after each stage of the project shall be submitted as specified in the contract.
- It is required to write reports which are publishable and are in accordance with the international technical criteria of writing scientific reports.
- TRC has the right to publish the reports of the projects and upload them on TRC's website to make them more accessible.
- It is required to contain a plan of how the outcome of the project is applicable.
- Patents of researches funded by TRC are a part of TRC's IP rules.
- The principal investigator will be responsible for applying the rules when making the financial review before submitting the final draft of the report to the committee of the program.