



Second Request for Proposals – 2008

**Supporting Latin America and Caribbean Applied Collaborative ICT Research
LACCIR Funding Initiative for ICT Research**

080623RFP0002

Request For Proposal Number	0002
Emission Date	May 14 th 2008
Opening Reception Date	June 23 rd 2008
Latest Research Proposals Reception Date	September 22 nd 2008. Noon 12:00 PM GMT- 3:00
Latest Funding Response Date	December 15 th 2008.
Inquiries to	hub@laccir.org
Additional Information and Contacts	www.laccir.org

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Executive Summary

This RFP will support world-class academic research to expand the capabilities of information and communications technology in Latin America.

In order to promote international collaboration, the research proposal should be jointly developed by a team from at least two (2) Latin American universities in two (2) different countries. There must be a Federation Institution in the team that submits the RFP. Federation Universities include:

- Pontificia Universidad Catolica de Chile
- Universiad de Chile
- Universidad de la República, Uruguay
- Tecnológico de Monterrey, Mexico
- Instituto Politécnico Nacional, Mexico
- Pontificia Universidade Católica do Rio de Janeiro, Brazil
- Universidad de Buenos Aires, Argentina
- Universidad de Costa Rica

The amount available under this second request for proposals is US\$300,000, provided to our Virtual Institute as an open grant from Microsoft Research (US\$200,000) and Inter-American Development Bank – IADB - (US\$100,000).

LACCIR Virtual Institute (VI) anticipates granting 6 to 8 awards in the range of US\$35,000–US\$50,000.

All proposals received in compliance with the eligibility criteria, will be reviewed and evaluated by LACCIR VI Technical Committee (VITC). Based on evaluations by the Technical Committee, the Joint Steering Committee of LACCIR VI will select the most worthy proposals for funding. LACCIR VI reserves the right to fund winning proposals at an amount less or greater than the amount requested, up to the stated maximum amount for individual awards. Due to the volume of submissions, LACCIR VI cannot provide individual feedback on those proposals not selected for funding.

There are multiple scientific and technological challenges in making progress with respect to advance ICT research in a wide range of areas, including education, healthcare, environment, energy, transportation, agriculture, economic development, and other Latin American social priorities/challenges. With this request for proposals, the LACCIR Federation will support academic research in specific technologies with a keen interest in multidisciplinary approaches. The objective of these research projects must be to advance the state-of-the-art of technologies relevant to ICT challenges.



It is expected that projects be formulated for one year of duration.

It is important to note that the recipients of the grant awards would need to agree to the terms of a COLLABORATING RESEARCH INSTITUTION AGREEMENT, described in this document.

Proposals will be accepted in electronic form only through the LACCIR Web site:
[http:// www.laccir.org](http://www.laccir.org)

Please send any questions to hub@laccir.org. Please write “RFP Inquiry” in the subject line of your e-mail message to ensure a prompt and proper response.

First date for submission of proposals	June 23 rd , 2008.
Last date for submission of proposals:	September 22 nd 2008. Noon 12:00 GMT- 3:00
Notification of Awards:	December 15 th , 2008

(Full Proposal Document continues on the next page.)

Full Proposal Document:

Background and Context

The goal of the Latin American and Caribbean Collaborative ICT Research (LACCIR) Federation is to support world-class academic research projects that will generate new knowledge and contribute to expand the capabilities of information and communication technologies across the LAC (Latin America and Caribbean) regions. This federation, also known as the “Virtual Institute,” will build academic research capacity and collaboration throughout the LAC academic research community.

LACCIR values and promotes collaboration. The research proposal should be jointly developed by a team from at least two (2) Latin American universities in two (2) different countries. There must be a Federation Institution in the team that submits the RFP. Federation Universities include:

- Pontificia Universidad Católica de Chile
- Universidad de Chile
- Universidad de la República, Uruguay
- Tecnológico de Monterrey, Mexico
- Instituto Politécnico Nacional, Mexico
- Pontificia Universidade Católica do Rio de Janeiro, Brazil
- Universidad de Buenos Aires, Argentina
- Universidad de Costa Rica

Novel approaches in computing technology have the potential for great impact in a wide range of areas, including education, healthcare, environment, energy, transportation, agriculture, economic development, and other priority social challenges. There are difficult technological problems to solve to realize the vision.

This RFP will support academic research that can lead to scientific and technical advances in ICT. Such research initiatives may be in the field of Computer Science and Engineering, but it might also require support of other fields such as Health Sciences, Material Sciences, Psychology, Linguistics, Anthropology, Sociology, Economy, Geography, and Design. Multidisciplinary approaches are welcome.

Request for Academic Research Proposals

There are multiple scientific and technological challenges in making progress with respect to advance ICT research in several areas, such as health, education, economy, environment, energy, etc. The objective of these research projects must be to advance the state-of-the-art of technologies relevant to ICT challenges.

Priority Application Areas

The following is a list of priority research areas that can contribute to enhance the access to information and knowledge. *This list, of course, is not exhaustive.* It is the **intent of this RFP to primarily stimulate creative world-class research in ICT.**

- Development of integrated systems and mobile applications related to health-care delivery and management
- Solutions for food security, agriculture, agri-business, fishing industries, and biotechnology (Bio-agro; Aquaculture; Biodiversity)
- Systems for primary, secondary, higher education, systems for adult life-long learning
- Stimulation of micro-economies and ICT systems
- Solutions for energy conservation, production, and management (energy, oil, gas, nuclear technology)
- Systems for micro- and nano-technology and material sciences
- Interfaces and human-computer interaction, oriented to diversified and heterogeneous populations, such as illiterate and semi-literate users.
- Transportation (inclusive of robotics, autonomous systems, etc.)
- Electronic government (social innovation)
- Research on networking solutions

Projects Duration

It is expected that projects be formulated for one year of duration.

Awards

The amount available under this second request for proposals is US\$300,000, provided to our Virtual Institute as an open grant from Microsoft Research (US\$200,000) and Inter-American Development Bank – IADB - (US\$100,000). LACCIR Virtual Institute anticipates granting 6 to 8 awards in the range of US\$35,000–US\$50,000.

Applicants are expected to scale their funding requests appropriately to match the scope of the research project in the geography. The appropriateness of the requested funding amount is a primary review consideration. In addition, LACCIR Virtual Institute reserves the right to propose lower funding levels for projects. All awards are made in US Dollars as unrestricted gifts to the winner institutions.

It is important to note that the recipients of the grant awards would need to agree to the terms of a COLLABORATING RESEARCH INSTITUTION AGREEMENT. This agreement covers such issues as the handling of the funding for the research project, progress reports, conduct of the project and intellectual property. The Pontificia Universidad Católica de Chile will sign this agreement as the granting institution, in representation of the Administrative Hub of the LACCIR Federation. Copies of these agreements can be reviewed on <http://www.laccir.org>.

Recipients are required to provide LACCIR Virtual Institute with suitable progress reports twice in the year, indicating the level of achievement of the project goals. These goals should also include publishing in conferences and recognized scientific journals.

Awards under this program are for one year only, but may be renewable by submitting a new Project Proposal to the next RFP.

Eligibility

Conditions of eligibility listed below will be strictly adhered to, so please read them carefully. Proposals not meeting all these criteria will not be considered.

1. The proposed research project must focus on the objective of supporting **high-quality fundamental research** in computing technologies.
2. In order to promote **international collaboration**, the research proposal should be jointly developed by a team from at least two (2) LAC universities in two (2) different countries. There must be a Federation Institution in the team.
3. The leading proposing institution must be a graduate-studies-granting college or university (or international equivalent) with a non-profit status.
4. Teams must include a Principal Investigator with solid research experience. Initial researchers may join a team and thus acquire valuable expertise.
5. Award resources should not be oriented to improve researchers' salaries.
6. The research project and its participating institutions should have the potential to attract other equivalent **matching funds**.

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7. Proposals will be excluded from consideration at the sole discretion of the LACCIR Virtual Institute if the proposal:
 - Is incomplete
 - Does not address the items in the “Proposal Sections” below,
 - Requested funds are in excess of the maximum award available
 - Is submitted after the established deadline
 - Is not responsive to the terms and conditions of this RFP
8. There may be proposals from or on behalf of persons participating in the LACCIR Technical Committee; in this case, they will be excluded from the evaluation process for this RFP. Technical Committee Members belonging to the same Institution or Country as the Project Researchers will not evaluate those proposals.
9. Proposals should evidence a commitment to make all results arising from a funded project (including all intellectual property in those results) broadly available by either: (i) dedicating such results to the public domain; or (ii) making the results available under a non-restrictive license that allows modification and redistribution without any significant restrictions or conditions, such as the BSD license available at <http://opensource.org/licenses/bsd-license.php>. Proposals should further evidence willingness to contribute any resulting material to the LACCIR Virtual Institute Repository at <http://www.laccir.org>.

Submission Process

Proposals will be accepted in electronic form only through the LACCIR Web site: [http:// www.laccir.org](http://www.laccir.org). LACCIR Virtual Institute cannot assume responsibility for the confidentiality of information in the submitted proposals. Therefore, proposals should not contain information that is confidential, restricted, or sensitive. LACCIR reserves the right to make public those proposals that receive awards, except portions containing budgetary or personally identifiable information.

The submission process includes three parts:

- 1. Upload a brief summary and contact information on the submission Web Site.** Applicants must provide full contact information for principal investigators, amount requested and a brief abstract (in English); providing a succinct definition of the Research Project, including goals overview, expected outcomes, and basic project data, such as ICT application area and countries of impact. This information will be submitted through a Web form as part of the submission process.
- 2. Attach the complete proposal,** written in English, and containing full detail on the proposed project; seven (7) pages maximum, 10-point font or larger, double-spaced,

in either Microsoft Word or PDF format. Longer proposals will be excluded from the evaluation process. This length limit for the proposals does not consider the list of publications of the research team members. The Principal Investigator must fill a form with his/her list of relevant publications. The form can be downloaded from LACCIR web site. It is optional to include relevant publications by other team members in the project.

- 3. Attached Researchers Background**, containing a list of ISI publications according to the template available on the LACCIR website: www.laccir.org.

Proposal Sections

Proposals should fully address each of the items listed below under separate numbered headings.

- 1. Problem Statement:** What is the problem area addressed by the proposal and why is it important? What is the potential contribution to the field of the project if successful? Cite relevant work in the field (if appropriate).
- 2. Expected Outcomes and Dissemination:** What tangible assets, if any, will be created or produced as a result of the proposed project? How will the results of this project be disseminated to others? How will the results of this project be evaluated (if appropriate), and how will they be disseminated to others? Under what general license terms will the results be made available?
- 3. Description of Activities and Schedule:** Include a description of the activities to be performed, the time schedule of such activities, the expected results, the organization, and execution of the project, and the disbursements of the resources. Reference should be made to the duration of the project. When is the project to be completed? What milestones will be used to measure progress of the project and when will they be completed? If the project described is part of a larger ongoing research program, estimate the time for completion of this project only. Indicate the activities and processes by which the operation will be executed and their duration. Please also identify the executing agency and its structure and capacity to contract and assume obligations.
- 4. Use of Funds:** Prepare a detailed spreadsheet table of estimated costs (US\$) for the project operation, separating each item in the following categories: LACCIR funding, participating institutions funding, other funds and totals. Also, include fees for graduate students, indicating estimated hours/week of dedication for each one. Indicate any travel expenses, as well as other operational expenses required. Detail the cost of travels to disseminate the project results, i.e. participation in conferences. Include all equipment, materials, or external services required to implement the project. A totals bottom line is required, separated in the described categories.

5. **Additional Funding Sources:** Identify any additional sources of funding that are supporting this research, along with any proposed departures from the intellectual property terms of the Agreement that would be necessary to allow such co-funding. If not applicable now, report any new additional sources of funding to the Federation Joint Steering Committee. Note that authors of winning proposals will be required to submit an original letter on department letterhead certifying the commitment of any additional or matching support described in the proposal.
6. **Qualifications of Principal Investigator and Institution:** Include a brief description of any relevant prior research, teaching, publication, or other professional experience. Identify briefly researchers and institutions background history, and other relevant background, as well as the role it will play the project. A detailed vita is not mandatory; however, a list of ISI publications is required as a separate document according to the template described above.
7. **Sustainability:** Describe project sustainability, and the possibilities for replication of the resulting experiences in the same or in other countries. If possible, state concrete means for verification of the suggested impact and benefits.
8. **Dissemination and Potential for Academic Publication:** Research results should be widely disseminated through relevant scientific communities using established academic channels, such as international conferences and refereed journals. All funded projects should result in a detailed Web presence and relevant conference publications or presentations. Other channels for community development include regional workshops and graduate seminars.
9. **Technologies Used in the Project:** List the technologies that will be used in the project; i.e. programming languages, operating systems, networking technologies, application software, etc. Microsoft Research (MSR) has a large repository of code and software tools that can be used by the selected projects. Information on these repositories and tools is available at <http://www.research.microsoft.com/>. MSR will be able to provide PIs (principal investigators) of winning proposals with special support through free access to software, tools, and technical workshops. In any case, the choice of technologies to be used must be justified in technical terms.
10. **Reporting:** In addition to a project progress report and budget report every 6 months that details the progress of the research and informs expenditures in the period, list other additional reports, conferences, status updates that are desirable.

Selection Process and Criteria

All proposals received in compliance with the eligibility criteria, will be reviewed and evaluated by LACCIR VI Technical Committee (VITC). Based on evaluations by the VITC, the Joint Steering Committee of LACCIR VI will select the most worthy proposals for funding. LACCIR VI reserves the right to fund winning proposals at an amount less or greater than the amount requested, up to the stated maximum amount for individual awards. **Due to the volume of submissions, LACCIR VI cannot provide individual feedback on those proposals that are not funded.**

All proposals will be evaluated based upon the following criteria:

1. **Novelty and ambition** of the proposed academic research project, as it relates to the described research goals of this RFP; well-defined research goals and objectives that, if achieved, have the potential to have a significant impact on the specified research domain.
2. **Qualifications of principal investigator**, including previous history of publications, work in relevant areas, successful completion of previous funded projects, research and teaching awards.
3. **Engineering diligence**, including interface definitions, testing methodology, and plans for experimental deployment.
4. Through this RFP program, LACCIR VI is keenly interested in encouraging **partnerships between university research teams among different countries in LAC**. As such, joint proposals of more than two universities and countries are strongly encouraged and will receive prime consideration. In the proposal document, please state the name of the partner organization and their proposed work in the project.
5. **Ability to complete the project**, including the adequacy of resources available, reasonableness of timelines, and number and qualifications of identified contributors; value, which encompasses the efficient use of requested resources and funding.
6. **Potential for wide dissemination and use** of intellectual property created, including specific plans for publications, conference presentations, and distance learning, as well as plans to distribute content in multiple formats or languages.

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Schedule and Deadlines

Announcement:	May 14 th , 2008.
First date for submission of proposals	June 23 rd , 2008.
Last date for submission of proposals:	September 22 nd 2008. Noon 12:00 GMT- 3:00
Notification of Awards:	December 15 th , 2008
First Report from Selected Projects:	August 25 th , 2009
Final Report from Selected Projects:	March 11 th , 2010

Please send any questions to hub@laccir.org. Please write “RFP Inquiry” in the subject line of your e-mail message to ensure a prompt and proper response.

Operational Matters

The following is a summary of the terms of agreement that would be required from any university receiving research funds through the Latin American Collaborative Research Institute.

For research projects accepted by the joint steering committee for the Latin American Collaborative Research Institute, the recipient university will be presented with a standard “Grant Award Agreement”. The following is a brief synopsis of the key provisions of the agreement.

OPERATIONAL MATTERS

- You are an independent agent; you are not an employee of the LACCIR Federation. You are responsible for staffing the project as you deem appropriate to achieve your goals. You are responsible for payment of all salaries and benefits to your staff.
- The timing and amounts of funds disbursement will be mutually agreed upon between you and the LACCIR Federation.

- Funds will be held in an account and may only be used for the research project.
- Any equipment or materials you wish to acquire to assist you in your research will be subject to standard local laws and concession of use requirements.
- You are required to provide the LACCIR Federation with half-yearly progress reports. These reports will be shared with the joint steering committee.
- You will notify and obtain approval from the LACCIR Federation prior to publication of any details about the research project.
- You will acknowledge LACCIR Federation and Microsoft’s support in any approved publication or press release regarding your research project.

INTELLECTUAL PROPERTY RIGHTS

- You are the owner of any intellectual property you create as a result of the research project.
- You are responsible for safeguarding that intellectual property.
- If you and Microsoft engage in any joint research activities, both will jointly own any inventions.
- In consideration of the funding being provided, you will grant to Microsoft a non-exclusive, royalty free license to any intellectual property arising from the funded research project. (You always *retain ownership* to code or other intellectual property that you create as part of the funded research project. Non-exclusive means that you can grant as many licenses for your code to as many other individuals or companies as you wish. You do, however, agree to provide to Microsoft a non-exclusive, royalty free license to that code or other creation – meaning Microsoft can use it, test it, and create a derivative work or other extension to it. Royalty free means your license to Microsoft is without charge. Should Microsoft wish to pursue an *exclusive* license, a specific contract would be negotiated to obtain exclusivity.)
- If the research project results in patentable inventions, you must notify Microsoft who then can decide if it wants to engage with you for an exclusive license. Terms of that exclusive license (fees, etc.) will be mutually agreed upon. You will retain the right to use the technology for research and teaching purposes.

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INTELLECTUAL PROPERTY LIMITATIONS

- If you wish to use any pre-existing materials in the research project, you must obtain adequate rights from the owner so that you can grant the licenses to Microsoft as stated above. We recognize and support there may be a need or preference for you to use pre-existing code or tools in the research project. This is fine so long as those pre-existing materials are identified by you and using them does not interfere with the non-exclusive license grant you are required to give to Microsoft. (For example, if you wished to incorporate in your project, code that you had worked on as part of another funded project. If the company, organization, or individual that provided the funds for the other project demanded that they have an *exclusive* license to anything you created, then you would *not* be able to grant the non-exclusive license to Microsoft – the project would be encumbered by that prior obligation.)
- You may not subject the research project to the terms of an “Excluded License”. This does not mean that you cannot use “open source” technology in your research project but that you may not use it in a fashion that might subject the project to the terms of an Excluded License (which might eliminate the ability to patent the technology or negotiate an exclusive license).

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