UNIVERSITY OF ILLINOIS SYSTEM / NATIONAL AUTONOMOUS UNIVERSITY OF MEXICO
CALL FOR PROPOSALS - JOINT RESEARCH COLLABORATION PROGRAM

The University of Illinois System and the National Autonomous University of Mexico (UNAM) have agreed to establish a seed funding research program for the 2027–2028 academic year.

This program will fund projects in the following thematic areas: **Food and Health; Water; and Energy**, with the overall objective of the projects being **to contribute to solving problems related to poverty, the environment, and sustainable well-being.** Transdisciplinary approaches and the formation of research teams with balanced participation of women and men will be especially encouraged.

Joint proposals are eligible if they include at least one principal investigator per institution and are submitted by full-time tenured faculty members.

Funding and Eligible Expenses

Each institution will contribute **USD 100,000** to the program. **Five projects** will be funded, each of which may **jointly** request up to **USD 40,000**, distributed as follows:

- up to **USD 20,000** for the University of Illinois System team; and
- up to **USD 20,000** for the UNAM team.

Funds will not be transferable between institutions; each university will exclusively administer and use the funds allocated to its own participating team.

Funding applications may include mobility and housing of students and faculty, materials and consumables, as well as scholarship payments exclusively for undergraduate, master's, and doctoral students. Salaries for academic staff are not eligible. In the case of Illinois, graduate student fees, if needed, are allowed. In the case of UNAM, the awarding of scholarships must comply with current university regulations.

Payment of salaries to postdoctoral researchers is not permitted.

Evaluation of Proposals

All proposals will be evaluated by a review committee appointed by the President of the University of Illinois System and the Rector of the National Autonomous University of Mexico or their representatives. The decisions of this joint review committee will be final. Both universities will have an equal number of members on the committee. The evaluation criteria will include:

- Technical quality
- Relevance of the topic to poverty, the environment, and sustainable well-being
- Complementarity of the team and potential to strengthen collaboration between both institutions
- Potential future collaborations and external funding
- Participation of graduate and/or undergraduate students

Submission of Proposals

Proposals must be submitted no later than November 30, 2026, in English and Spanish, using the form available at the following link: https://forms.illinois.edu/sec/1895210739.

Proposals must be submitted as **a single PDF file**, with a maximum size of **15 MB**, that includes the main proposal and supplementary documentation, which must be organized as follows:

Main Proposal

The main proposal must be no longer than **four (4) pages** and must include the following sections:

1. Summary/Abstract
2. Background
3. Relevance of the Project
4. Review of the Academic Literature
5. Objectives
    a. General Objective(s)
    b. Specific Objectives
6. Methodology
    a. Methods and stages of research
7. Work Plan
    a. Timeline (note that the start of activities may be subject to the release of funds by both institutions, expected during the first half of 2027)
    b. Deliverables
8. Budget
    a. Concise description of the resources requested by the teams from the University of Illinois and UNAM.

Supplementary Documentation

The following sections must be included in the same PDF file but **will not count toward the four-page limit of the main proposal**:

9. Budget Justification

10. References
11. Curriculum vitae of the participating researchers, in English only and with a maximum length of three pages per person
12. Spanish version of the main proposal, corresponding to sections 1 through 8. This version will also not be counted toward the four-page limit

Additionally, each principal investigator must attach a written endorsement statement of the respective UNAM/U of I head of faculty/department/institute.

The Illinois Mexican & Mexican-American Students Initiative (I-MMAS) and the Coordination for Scientific Research UNAM will manage the entire process of receiving and evaluating proposals.

Results will be announced in February 2027, and funding will be available during the first semester of that year. The funds allocated by each institution to each selected project —up to a maximum of USD 20,000— must be spent no later than December 31, 2028.

Important Dates

Publication of the Call for Proposals	October 5, 2026
Deadline for proposals	November 30, 2026
Project evaluation	During the month of January 2027
Notification of results	During the month of February 2027