



Research Fund

**Towards Inclusive and Environmentally
Sustainable Growth
Call for proposals in Socio-Economics**

February 2020

Towards Inclusive and Environmentally Sustainable Growth

In the past 30 years, many areas in the world have seen high levels of economic growth and development as well as significant advances in innovation and technology. Between 1990 and 2015, the proportion of people living in extreme poverty worldwide more than halved from 33 per cent to 12 percent, meaning that more than 1 billion people had been lifted out of extreme poverty.¹ In that same period, world GDP almost doubled² and literacy rates among those aged between 15 and 24 increased from 83 per cent to 91 per cent.³ However, these positive outcomes were accompanied by major environmental damage and an uneven distribution of growth.

While economic growth has pulled millions out of poverty, particularly in China and India, environmental extraction has led to high levels of air pollution, accelerated climate change, unsustainable supply chains and severe biodiversity loss on a globe with limited resources. What's more, inequality has grown by most measures within regions and countries. Sub-Saharan Africa, for instance, saw its Gini index rise by 9 per cent between 1993 and 2008⁴, while China's coefficient increased by more than 35 per cent between 1990 and 2010⁵ to levels higher than those of the United States. In many economies, households face limited access to housing, healthcare and jobs while the urban-rural divide continues to deepen and intersecting inequalities of race, gender and ethnicity remain. Furthermore, inequality *between*, not within, regions has led to migration and its related political, social and economic effects. In many areas, these inequalities have led to a distrust of institutions and the resurgence of populism.⁶

The opposing results between growth and the environment and inequality raise important questions to better understand the contradiction:

- Are current measures of wealth relevant? How can we incorporate the SDGs into measuring success?
- How can we explain the contradiction and what are the lessons learned? What is the role of structural, historical and social factors in explaining inequality?
- How can growth create opportunities for all?
- What are the sustainable business models, market mechanisms, structural reforms, and institutional innovations that can be implemented towards fairer development models both to society and the environment?

It seems that without significant transformations in our development models, inequality and environmental damage could have major socio-economic and geopolitical consequences. This calls for more socially cohesive and inclusive growth models that support free trade and macroeconomic stability while better redistributing the benefits of growth across society.

AXA is committed to developing solutions to respond to today's challenges and to anticipate tomorrow's risks. It is in this spirit that the AXA Research Fund aims to fund Postdoctoral research in inclusive and sustainable growth including, but not limited to:

- Sustaining profitable growth
- Public policies for inclusive growth
- Inclusive labor markets and investment in human capital
- Driving organizational and behavioral change towards inclusive business

¹ UNCTAD, *Development and globalization facts and figures 2016*, <https://stats.unctad.org/Dgff2016/DGFF2016.pdf>

² Ibid

³ Ibid

⁴ World Bank Development Indicators, 2019

⁵ Ibid

⁶ Guiso, L. et al., *Populism: Demand and supply*, 25 November 2018, <https://www.heliosherrera.com/populism.pdf>

- Institutional confidence and social trust
- Intra-household and inter-household inequalities along race, gender and class
- New approaches to measuring inequality, growth or wellbeing
- Understanding the negative environmental and social externalities of economic growth, for example, the relationship between climate change and migration, or the urban-rural divide.
- Studying the opposing consequences of growth, including structural, historical, legal and social factors.

AXA Fellowships Guidelines

The AXA Research Fund's mission is to support outstanding researchers and is committed to improving peoples' lives through innovative research in areas of Climate & Environment, Health, New Technologies, and Socio-Economics.

AXA Research Fund

AXA Fellowships aim at supporting promising early-career researchers (max. PhD+5 years⁷) on a topic aligned with AXA's priorities and societal challenges. The support of the AXA Research Fund should be transformative for the researcher and the advancement of their field.

Duration

An AXA Postdoctoral Fellowship is awarded for a period of **2 years**.

Institution eligibility

The project calls are global, however, the AXA Research Fund partners with academic institutions only; NGOs, governmental bodies, foundations, independent research centers, cultural institutions (such as museums), hospitals are not eligible.

Institutions can present only one candidate for the whole institution (and not one per department, faculty or laboratory)

Institutions hosting an AXA Chair cannot request for an extra Post-Doctoral fellowship for a researcher working on the AXA Chairholder's team.

Researcher

Candidates should be of the highest caliber and have demonstrated outstanding research achievements, as evidenced by the usual indicators for assessing academic excellence such as research outputs (e.g. publications), research activities (e.g. organizing networks, being involved in communities) and research impact (e.g. policy report, specific recognition through awards, etc.).

Candidates must be awarded their PhD before they submit their Expression of Interest, at the latest on February 3rd, 2020.

Research program

The research program should demonstrate its scientific originality and innovative nature and have the potential to contribute to a step change in the considered field. It is the responsibility of the institution to demonstrate the relevance of the proposed research topic to the AXA Research Fund.

Engagement and Obligations

It is a requirement that researchers would be proactive in engaging science with society when supported by the AXA Research Fund and use an open-data framework when applicable. Our researchers commit to sharing their project and communicating their research to a broad audience, supported by the AXA Research Fund. In addition,

⁷ There is a flexibility of 6 months regarding PhD date (i.e. PhD max 5 full years + 6 months), at the Expression of Interest date (i.e February 3rd, 2020) i.e. PhD awarded after August 3rd, 2014.

funded researchers agree to provide both an annual and a final project report, as well as committing to sharing their research through speaking engagements in collaboration with the AXA Research Fund. Annual and final financial reports will be requested as well.

AXA Support for Dissemination and career development

AXA Research Fund will provide support through proposed training sessions related to media, finance and management.

Diversity

Diversity will be an important criterion in the selection process whether in the research topic, gender or geography. Furthermore, attention will be given to the opportunity for the grant to deliver a significant step-change in the career of the grantee.

Budget

An AXA Fellowship is awarded for a maximum amount of **70 000€**. It is the applicant's responsibility to submit a carefully calibrated budget, appropriate for the ambition of the research program and justified in a detailed and coherent manner. Budget will help cover:

- Annual salary of the researcher (based on institution internal policy)
- Equipment/ resources (databases, survey costs, consumables, etc.), academic activities (conferences, workshops, fieldwork, etc.)
- Outreach activities (beyond academic audiences).

Any other type of costs not listed above should be justified in the application template. No overhead costs can be eligible. No additional budget will be granted. Budget reallocation must be strongly justified.

Host institutions will be expected to participate in the AXA Fellowship's general funding with studentships, PhD support and material resources related to the research program. The Institution should demonstrate this participation in the section dedicated to the budget in the application form. Grants should not substitute for the host institution's responsibilities vis-à-vis its researchers. As a result, the grant cannot be used to procure basic laboratory equipment.

Ethics

The AXA Research Fund places extremely high importance on the ethics of the work it supports. Programs are required to comply fully with all relevant ethical review processes and for this compliance to be evidenced. Cases of scientific misconduct (such as fabrication, falsification, plagiarism or of inappropriate behavior towards staff or other parties) will be considered as breaches of the AXA ethical principles⁸ and will be excluded from funding.

Intellectual property

The researcher and the host institution remain fully independent to conduct the research project. AXA will not claim any right to the ownership or use of the results.

Timeline & Application process

⁸ AXA Group Compliance and Ethics Guide, 2011: <https://www.axa.com/en/newsroom/publications/compliance-ethics-guide>

The AXA Research Fund evaluation process has been designed to assess scientific excellence. The evaluations are monitored to ensure transparency, fairness and impartiality in the treatment of proposals.

The AXA Research Fund partners with independent external providers to carry out the peer review process in accordance with criteria defined with the AXA Research Fund, the results of which are submitted to the Scientific Board for final selection.

Please note that:

- The application must be submitted in English, on time, online, and complete. It must respect the template structure and the page limit.
- The research topic must fall within the scope of the eligible topic focus.
- The candidate must submit a free-standing independent research project involving full-time work for the duration of the fellowship (with an exceptional acceptance of up to 20% time dedicated to teaching).

Timeline

Host institution Phase	Step 1 - Registration <i>Only if your institution is not already registered on the AXA Research Fund's online platform</i>	February 3 – February 21, 2020
	Step 2 - Expression of interest <i>on the AXA RF platform</i>	February 3 – February 25, 2020 4 PM Paris time
Researcher's phase	Step 3 - Research proposal submission <i>on the ESF platform our partner organization (online link to be provided on due time)</i>	March 2 – March 27, 2020 4 PM Paris time
	Step 4 - Rebuttal <i>on the ESF platform</i>	June 24 – June 30, 2020
AXA RF	Results announcement by email to the candidates and published on our website: https://www.axa-research.org/fr	November 30, 2020

Projects selected for funding are expected to start between December 2020 and September 2021

Application process

Step 1 – Registering

To apply for the AXA Fellowship grants, academic institutions must be registered on our platform: <https://institution.axa-research.org/>. You can check if your Institution is already registered in the database via the above link. **If your Institution is already on our database, you can omit the registration and your institution's operational contact can log in directly using the login details they defined.**

Institutions should appoint a single point of contact (“Operational Contact”) who will handle relations with the AXA Research Fund and who will be responsible for candidate’s application.

Step 2 – Expression of Interest **ON OUR ONLINE APPLICATION PLATFORM**

To submit an online Expression of Interest, host institutions need to follow the steps below:

- 1/ Log onto our online application platform: <https://institution.axa-research.org/>
- 2/ Go to the “Application” tab and click the “Post-doc” link to go to the “Expression of Interest” page
- 3/ Click “New” and fill in the online Expression of Interest form. Attach a short CV (3 pages maximum)
- 4/ Click “Submit”

At the stage of Expression of Interest, you will be requested to provide the following information:

- About the candidate
 - Name, last name
 - Birth date
 - PhD defense date
 - Current university he/she is affiliated with
 - Short CV (3 pages maximum)
- About the research program
 - Project’s description: 3000 characters including spaces

You will receive an email confirming that your Expression of Interest has been submitted. If you don’t receive the email, please check your spam folder or contact fellowships@axa.com

You will be able to edit your Expression of Interest as long as you have not clicked on “Submit”. Once submitted, your Expression of Interest can no longer be edited. The Expression of Interest will be reviewed by the AXA Research Fund team. You will be informed of the decision pertaining to your Expression of Interest by email.

Expressions of Interest received after the deadline, by email or incomplete will not be considered.

Step 3 – Full Application

Academic institutions will be given access to the dedicated ESF platform to nominate their candidate by entering his/her name & email address online. Nominated candidates will be invited to submit their research proposals and will be provided with the necessary information to access the application form. Eligibility criteria of the application call will be screened by our partner organization.

Candidates will have maximum 4 weeks to submit their proposals through the ESF platform. Please note that if the host institution doesn’t nominate the candidate on the ESF platform, the candidate won’t have access to the platform.

Step 4 – Scientific assessment

The evaluation of the scientific quality of research proposals is carried out in a fully independent manner by our partner per review organization.

Each application is reviewed by two relevant experts who will assess the candidate’s excellence and the research program’s scientific quality.

Step 5 – Rebuttal

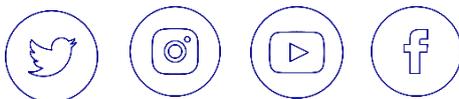
Candidates will have the opportunity to respond online to peer review experts' comments before their applications are reviewed by The AXA Research Fund. The main purpose of the rebuttal is to provide applicants with the possibility to comment on any potential misinterpretations or misunderstandings that may have been made by the experts while initially assessing their proposals.

Step 6 – Selection & results publication

The Scientific Board of the AXA Research Fund selects to fund applications based on strength of the scientific case, peer review assessments, the potential of the project, candidate profile and of the institution and overall impact. The AXA Research Fund informs the candidates of the decisions by email. Results will also be made available on the AXA Research Fund's website ([http:// www.axa-research.org/](http://www.axa-research.org/))

The Scientific Board's decision is final and cannot be appealed. It can neither be disputed nor subject to explanations or justifications.

Participation in the call for applications implies acceptance of the above-mentioned rules.



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