Application Guidelines for the READ Fellowship Program
(Albanian Resident Scholars)

The READ Program Overview

In 2021, Albanian—American Development Foundation (AADF), in coordination with the Institute of International Education (IIE), has established the Albanian Diaspora Fellowship Program called Research Expertise from the Academic Diaspora (READ) Program. READ is a 7-year project that will connect Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) in Albania with the Albanian scientific diaspora and their respective academic institutions. The program is built on AADF's strategic priorities in education, especially in the higher education system. As diaspora engagement initiatives have been sporadic, AADF will play a leading role in establishing a well-structured path for channeling contributions of the scientific diaspora in ways beneficial to the Albanian HEIs. The READ Fellowship Program will benefit from the existing networks of AADF and other initiatives in higher education such as CleanScore, Center for School Leadership, and Junior Achievement of Albania.

This program offers a unique opportunity to address the untapped potential of the Albanian intellectual diaspora in ways that would enhance capacities and bring about structural changes in the Albanian higher education system. The READ Fellowship Program will address this gap by setting up a *catalytic model* for Fellows and Albanian HEI alike to benefit from creative collaborations. On the one hand, READ will allow diaspora scholars to make a meaningful contribution to Albania. On the other hand, the program will strengthen the capacities of Albanian HEIs by making full use of the valuable skills and experiences of the diaspora.

The READ Fellowship Program provides a formalized and structured fellowship program through which the Albanian academic diaspora can contribute to the development of HEIs in Albania and the overall development of scientific research in the country. READ will offer short-term fellowships (from one to six months) to highly qualified diaspora scholars (Albanian-born and second-generation Albanian) in OECD countries to pursue capacity-building collaborative research projects at Albanian HEIs. The Fellowship will contribute to Albania's research output and will connect Albanian academic institutions with peers abroad. It will also help Albanian researchers

access research grants from different donors by training them in grant application and project design skills.

The program is designed on the successful model of diaspora fellowships implemented and administered in collaboration with Institute of International Education (IIE). READ supports Albanian collaboration among Albanian HEIs and diaspora scholars through four main activities: **collaborative research, joint supervision of PhDs, curricula and course development, and co-teaching.**

The three key program objectives are: **Sustainability—**sustainable collaborations between diaspora scholars and Albanian HEIs while fostering the opportunity for new collaborations and increasing access to research funding; **Institutional Capacity Building**—educational projects in collaborative research, curriculum offerings, graduate programming, and PhD mentoring; **Community Engagement**—knowledge production, international collaborative networks, and increased visibility and engagement with Albanian HEIs.

To enable institutions to seamlessly launch, implement, and scale collaborative activities with diaspora scholars, the framework of the diaspora fellowship programs includes the following key elements:
-   An Advisory Council comprised of thought leaders from the Albanian diaspora and researchers from HEIs in Albania will select priority fields of academic scholarship aligned with national interests and demands in human capacity development.
-   Universities identify their needs for new curriculum and research in priority academic fields and propose projects for international academic collaboration.
-   Scholars from the diaspora express interest and are matched with projects based on expertise and mutual interest.
-   Selected scholars carry out short-term fellowships at the universities to complete the projects and co-teach and mentor undergraduate and graduate students.
-   Scholars and universities participate in alumni engagement activities and convenings to enhance the fellowship experience for future cohorts, contribute to the program's sustainability, and continually identify areas for collaboration.

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I. ELIGIBILTY CRITERIA

Albanian Resident Scholars are academics based at an eligible institution in Albania. The Albanian Resident Scholar(s) will collaborate with Diaspora Scholar on the project request. If selected, the Albanian Resident Scholar(s) will be the primary point of contact for the Diaspora Scholar during the fellowship period.

For the 2023 competition, academics at the following institutions are eligible to submit a project to READ:

- Aleksander Moisiu University, Durrës
- Aleksandër Xhuvani University, Elbasan
- Epoka University
- Eqrem Çabej University, Gjirokastër
- European University of Tirana
- Fan S. Noli University, Korça
- Ismail Qemali University of Vlorë
- Luigj Gurakuqi University, Shkodër
- Marin Barleti University
- POLIS University
- Polytechnic University of Tirana
- Sports University of Tirana
- University of Agriculture of Tirana
- University of Medicine
- University of New York Tirana
- University of Tirana

Additionally, Albanian Resident Scholars must possess **all** the following qualifications in order to be eligible for the READ Program:

- ✓ Albanian lecturer/ scholar/ academic staff currently working at Higher Education Institution in Albania.

- ✓ PhD or equivalent degrees.

- ✓ More than 5 years of working experience at a university/HEIs or research center in Albania, within the last 10 years.

- ✓ Proficiency in English appropriate to the research project to be carried out in Albania.

- ✓ Track record of building partnerships for the strengthening of Albanian higher education. (ex previous joint teaching or research work)
- ✓ Knowledge of the field of expertise and willingness to share and commit with the Diaspora Scholar.
- ✓ A team with two or more scholars from HEIs has an advantage.[1]

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[1] It is mandatory only for the team leader to have a PhD. While the co-applicants should have at least MSC or PhD candidates

II.   NATURE OF FELLOWSHIPS

The benefits awarded to the Albanian Resident Scholars include:
- Research grants of up to $ 5,000, and up to $10,000 for projects in STEM fields. Applicants will be asked to provide a detailed financial proposal for the project activities.
- Fellowships are awarded for a period of 1 to 6 months for the below categories:
    - Collaborative research (joint research paper and/or joint research project),
    - Joint supervision of PhDs,
    - Curricula and course development, and
    - Co-teaching.
- Projects should be a minimum of 1 month and a maximum of 6 months.
- Project Requests by a team of scholars will be given priority.

A grant may be revoked, terminated, or suspended. Grounds for revocation or termination include, but are not limited to: (1) violation of any law of the Republic of Albania; (2) failure to observe satisfactory academic or professional standards; (3) physical or mental incapacitation; (4) engaging in any unauthorized income-producing activity; (5) failure to comply with the grant's terms and conditions.

A grant may be suspended if (1) the grantee ceases to carry out the project or academic program during the grant period or (2) the grantee leaves Albania without authorization of the READ Program.

III.   APPLICATION AND REVIEW PROCESS
- Albanian Resident Scholars at Albanian HEIs are responsible for submitting the details of the envisioned project. READ projects must include collaborative research, joint supervision of PhDs, curricula and course development and/or co-teaching.
- Projects are submitted during the annual application cycle by the relevant deadline set by the READ Program.
- In the project, Albanian Resident Scholars may identify a Diaspora Scholar with whom they wish to collaborate, or request that READ seek a Diaspora Scholar match for the project's requirements.
- After the deadline, initial screening and endorsement of applications are done by AADF and IIE. If READ coordinates the matching of a project and a Diaspora Scholar, the parties involved will be notified prior to the project entering the peer review process for approval.
- Once a project from a Albanian Resident Scholar is linked to a Diaspora Scholar (either through READ matching or through the Diaspora scholar being named in the Project Request), the linked project/Diaspora scholar pair will be sent to a peer review panel.

- Final selection of all Fellows is made by the Advisory Council from the Project Requests recommended in peer review.
- Notifications will be sent at each stage of the review process (initial screening; peer review; Advisory Council selection) to the Albanian Resident Scholar.
- Selected Host and Diaspora Fellows will be provided with orientation sessions and asked to develop a work plan before the Diaspora Fellow's arrival in Albania.

IV. DEVELOPING A PROJECT WITH AN ALBANIAN DIASPORA SCHOLAR

READ is a two-sided application process requiring a project submitted by a Albanian Resident Scholar at an Albanian HEI, and the credentials of a Diaspora Scholar submitted to the Roster. In many cases, READ anticipates that Albanian Scholars are in contact with colleagues from Diaspora at an OECD country and will collaborate on the project details submitted by the Albanian Resident Scholar. READ encourages this kind of cooperation, although it does not increase the likelihood of selection in comparison to projects without such prior cooperation.

V. APPLICATION GUIDELINES

- At the time of application, you **must submit the following: (a) application form; (b) curriculum vitae; (c) recommendation letter**
- All submitted materials **must be in English.**
- The application is online, and any uploaded documents must be typed or computer-generated, in 12-point or larger type. Handwritten projects will not be accepted.
- If there are more than one Albanian Resident Scholars collaborating on a project, the application should indicate a project lead as the primary point of contact.

1. **Albanian Resident Scholar(s) and Institution Details**
   a. Primary Albanian Resident Fellow (Albanian Resident Scholar)
      i. Full Name (Give your name exactly as it appears on your passport) and title.
      i. Country of current residence
      ii. Country of citizenship
      iii. Country of second citizenship (if applicable)
      iv. Date of Birth (Month/Day/Year)
      v. Place of birth (city/country)
      vi. Phone
      vii. E-mail address (primary and alternate)
      viii. Home address
      ix. Gender
      x. Current Position and Start Date, Department/Office, Institution
      xi. Educational History
            4. Institution

5. Field of Study
6. Faculty or Department
7. Year PhD was awarded

    xii. Most Significant Professional Accomplishments, honors and awards and up to three significant publications

    xiii. Number of peer-reviewed publications

b. Host institution information
   i. Institution name
   ii. Department
   iii. Address (Street, City, Country)
   iv. University website

c. Secondary Albanian Resident Scholar Contact Information (if more than one Albanian Resident Scholar will collaborate with the diaspora scholar please add their information)
   i. Name
   ii. Institutional Affiliation
   iii. Email

2. Project Details

Please select one or more of the following activities supported by READ. READ encourages projects that include co-teaching combined with other activities.

- Collaborative research (joint research paper and/or joint research project),
- Joint supervision of PhDs,
- Curricula and course development, and
- Co-teaching.

a. Field of Study (dropdown menu)
   i. Please select one discipline from the list below that best describes your general area of expertise (in alphabet order): *Archaeology, Architecture, Biological Sciences, Business Administration, Business Management, Chemistry, Communications, Computer Science, Economics, Education, Engineering, Environmental Sciences, Geography, Geology, History, Information Sciences, Journalism, Language, Law, Linguistics, Literature, Marketing, Mathematics, Medical Sciences, Philosophy, Physics/Astronomy, Political Science, Psychology, Public Administration, Public/Global Health, Social Work, Sociology.*

b. Subfield (a second dropdown)

c. Research Areas of Interest (100 words)

d. Project Title

e. Abstract (100 words)

f. Project Description: With reference to the project activities selected above, please describe the proposed activities to be pursued by the Diaspora fellow requested. (Up to 500 words)

g. Methodology: Describe the project. Explain the approach, methods and plan you will use (for example, interviews, library or archival research, or laboratory experiments). Indicate whether the proposed research is quantitative, qualitative or mixed methods. For projects that do not involve research, please use this section to comment on any educational philosophies or pedagogical strategies that characterize your work. (Up to 500 words)

h. Project Workplan: Please describe how the project activities will take place within the proposed timeline. (Up to 500 words,)

i. Project Objectives: Please address why the project is needed, and how this project will address those needs. (Up to 500 words)
j. Expected impact of the project proposal (Up to 500)

k. Depending on selected activities, the following numerical estimates:
   I. If research, dissemination/publishing plan w/number of articles and targeted journals
   II. If supervision, number of PhDs to supervise
   III. If curriculum, number of new courses/curricula projected

IV.   If co-teaching, number of teaching hours estimated

k.   Sustainability: How will the research collaboration proposed here continue into the future? What steps will be taken during the project visit to ensure sustainability? (250 words)

3.   **Albanian Resident Fellow Research Grant Budget**

The Albanian Resident Fellow(s) are eligible for a grant of up to $5000 (up to $10,000 for projects in STEM fields) to support the project proposed. Please provide an estimated amount in US Dollars of each of the below items and a justification of the amounts requested. Research grants awarded by READ may be for all or part of the amounts requested. (250 words)

Resource Materials: Purchase of books, e-books, journal subscriptions, shipping costs, software, portable power sources and wireless internet devices which benefit the proposed project and the host institution. Amount Requested: _____ USD

Research: Purchase of research materials, equipment and services. Fieldwork research costs -- transport to field, survey costs, meals, accommodation in field if needed, for fellow and students. Amount Requested: _____ USD

Publishing: Publishing fees and other costs. Amount Requested: _____ USD

Technology: Laptops, printers, tablets or projectors and any other related equipment necessary for the proposed project. Amount Requested: _____ USD

Conferences/Workshops: Rental spaces, materials and refreshments for any necessary events. Amount Requested: _____ USD

Other: Please specify in the narrative space provided any other costs necessary for the proposed project. Amount Requested: _____ USD

Total Research Grant Budget Request: _____ USD

4. **Project Timeline**
    a. Physical visit of Diaspora Scholar
        i.   Arrival date in Albania
        ii. Departure date from Albania
            1. Proposed working days in Albania
        iii. If Multi-Visit, Flex is selected above, repeat section for subsequent visits
    b. (If Hybrid) Virtual collaboration dates
        i.   Virtual start date
        ii. Virtual end date
            1. Proposed working days virtually
    c. Total timeline of collaboration (Auto-sum of above date ranges)

       i.   Total working days (Auto-sum of above)

5. **Albanian Diaspora Scholar Request**

    a.   Contact Details
    b.   Field of Study
    c.   Justification: Why are you requesting this academic?
    d.   Relationship: What relationship, if any, do you have to the academic requested?

6. **Curriculum Vitae (6 page maximum)**

When composing a curriculum vitae, it is important to include:

*   Education (universities attended, degrees earned and dates received)
*   Positions held
*   Courses taught and other services provided to students and the home institution
*   Publications (provide full citations and list them starting with the most recent)
*   Other professional activities, such as workshops, seminars and consultations
*   Membership and activities in professional associations
*   Professional honors, awards and fellowships
*   Community service

The application asks for similar information, but provides limited space for answers. In the curriculum vitae, you should expand upon these topics to fully illustrate your accomplishments.

7. **Recommendation Letter from chief of department/institute/Dean**

VI. CHECKLIST

Please check each box to confirm your submission of the following:

- Completed application form
- Uploaded CV
- Recommendation Letter from **chief of department/institute/Dean**

VII. OUTREACH ASSSESSMENT

Please do let us know how you heard about READ Program:

- Friend/colleague
- Poster/flyer
- READ website

- Social media
- University in Albania (if checked, please specify which university)
- Other (please specify)