



Research Fund

**AXA Research Fund  
Exceptional Flash Call for Proposals**

**Mitigating risk in the wake of  
the Covid-19 Pandemic**

April 2020

# Call for Proposals: Mitigating risk in the wake of the Covid-19 Pandemic

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The timescale of the current global health crisis linked to the Coronavirus Covid 19 remains uncertain. Its fallout will be dire both socially and economically, with related deaths, job losses and company bankruptcies, broken supply chains, and mental health effects related to lockdown policies amongst others. The disproportionate effects of the crisis on low income populations will deepen both intra- and inter-country social and economic inequalities.

Confinement measures will help slow the outbreak and relieve congestion in hospitals, but with most of the remaining population susceptible to contamination without massive and proven testing, easing precautionary measures will be complicated without a vaccine or treatment. Quality data will be key in determining rates of infections and the effectiveness of lockdown measures, as well as providing the possible options to re-starting the economy while decreasing negative impact on human lives.

The AXA Research Fund has committed support to emergency research initiatives at the beginning of the crisis; however, it is also necessary to inform its aftermath as well as a potential second wave, particularly in lower income countries. It is also a time to start questioning how to better prepare for the next crisis – be it epidemic, climate or ecological – while we learn from the current one. This Research Fund is opening a call for projects in the following areas:

- **Protecting vulnerable populations from epidemics and catastrophes, including COVID-19:** be it migrants, informal settlements, workers in the informal economy, isolated people, people with disabilities, the elderly
- **Improving data collection and quality in health:** how can data and technology help us get out of the crisis, understand it and mitigate it? How can it inform future containment and epidemic control?
- **Understanding the effects of confinement and social distancing:** what are the effects of confinement and social distancing on society and households? What are the mental health consequences? The social and domestic repercussions?
- **Early warning and preparedness:** how do we re-enforce our health infrastructure and ecosystem (including medical devices and drug supply) to be better prepared and how do we protect our health workers and caregivers?
- **Preserving the environment and our health:** connections between climate change, biodiversity loss and the origin of viral disease including socioeconomic dynamics leading to infectious disease outbreaks and sanitary crisis; Learnings from COVID-19 for mitigating future related crises in climate and biodiversity

Preference will be given to projects with a local focus and potential applicability on a global scale.

# AXA Grant Guidelines

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

## AXA Research Fund Awards

These AXA Awards aim at supporting promising mid-career researchers **between PhD + 6 years<sup>1</sup> and PhD + 10 years maximum<sup>2</sup>** on a priority topic for society. The support of the AXA Research Fund should be transformative for the researcher and the advancement of their field.

## Duration

This exceptional AXA grant is awarded for a period between **12 and 24 months**. Longer durations are not *a priori* excluded but should be precisely justified and should not exceed 36 months in total. **Projects selected for funding are expected to start between July and November 2020. Early results should be given in the following 12 months.**

## Institution eligibility

The project calls are global, however, the AXA Research Fund partners with academic institutions only; NGOs, governmental bodies, foundations, cultural institutions (such as museums), hospitals are not eligible but are welcome as a collaborator when it is necessary for the proposed research. Preference will be given to pre-established partnerships.

Ideally applications will go through Institutions. Institutions can present **only one candidate per Institution's department** (meaning from the same Institution, one candidate can be put forward by the department of economics, biology...)

**If 2 candidates or more are put forward by the same Institution's department, all candidates from the department will be dismissed.**

Institutions hosting an AXA Chair cannot request for an extra grant 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.).

The AXA grant aims at supporting mid-career researchers **between PhD + 6 years and PhD + 10 years maximum**.

## 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. Our researchers commit to sharing their project and communicating their research to a broad audience, supported by the AXA Research Fund. In addition, 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.

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<sup>1</sup> No flexibility for this date: candidates below PhD+ 6 years are not eligible.

<sup>2</sup> There is a flexibility of 6 months regarding PhD date (i.e. PhD max 10 full years + 6 months), at the application date (i.e. May 7<sup>th</sup>, 2020) i.e. PhD awarded after November 7<sup>th</sup>, 2010. **Career breaks will not be considered, exceptions will only be made for maternity leave.** Please indicate maternity leave in the "career statement" section of the application.

## 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

The AXA grant is awarded for a **maximum amount of 250 000€ for the whole duration of the project**. Applicants should very carefully identify and justify the duration and cost of the proposed project as needed to meet its objectives. The appropriateness of duration and cost will be a key part of the assessment process. Budget will help cover:

- Annual salary of the researcher (based on institution internal policy)
- Salary of PhD students, Post-Docs, research assistants working under the supervision of the Principal Investigator
- 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. **Work equipment and overhead costs are not eligible for funding.** No additional budget will be granted.

Host institutions will be expected to participate in general funding with studentships 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. The grant 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 and work 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 principles<sup>3</sup> 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

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The AXA Research Fund evaluation process has been designed to assess scientific excellence.

Please note that:

- The application must be submitted in English, on time, and complete. It must respect the template available in appendix and the page limit. Additional documents will not be considered.
- The research topic must fall within the scope of the eligible topic focus.
- The candidate must submit a research project involving full-time work for the duration of the grant (with an exceptional acceptance of up to 20% time dedicated to teaching).

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<sup>3</sup> AXA Group Compliance and Ethics Guide, 2011: <https://www.axa.com/en/newsroom/publications/compliance-ethics-guide>

## Timeline

Step	Date	Owner
Applications	<b>April 14<sup>th</sup> – May 7<sup>th</sup> 2020 4PM Paris time</b> <u>Applications received after the deadline, incomplete or at the wrong email address will not be considered</u>	Academics
Peer-review	<b>May 13<sup>th</sup> – June 12<sup>th</sup>, 2020</b>	AXA RF and its Scientific Board
Results announcement	<b>June 30<sup>th</sup>, 2020</b> <u>Results will be sent by email to academic institutions. A list of selected candidates will be published on our website <a href="https://www.axa-research.org/fr">https://www.axa-research.org/fr</a></u>	AXA RF
Sponsorship agreement	<b>July / September 2020</b>	AXA RF & Academic Institutions

## Application process

### Step 1 – Applications: **Research project template available in appendix**

To apply for the AXA grant, academic institutions must send their candidates applications by email to: [fellowships@axa.com](mailto:fellowships@axa.com) before **May 7<sup>th</sup>, 2020 4PM Paris time**.

- Email subject: “**AXA RF - COVID-19 Call for proposals – [INSTITUTION NAME]**”
- Applications must be sent in **one PDF document** (10 pages maximum, cover page and CV included)
- Application must **respect the template in appendix. Other formats will not be considered.**

Applicants must provide the following elements:

#### **About the researcher:**

- Researcher’s name
- PhD defense date
- Resume (2 pages maximum)

#### **About the research project:**

- Project title
- Summary: 300 words maximum. Avoid technical jargon
- 5 key words regarding the program
- Research programme’s description

- Budget (1/2 page)
- List of 5 relevant publications

#### **Impact of the project**

- Relevance to main risk / insurance business
- Impact on society

#### **Step 2 –Scientific assessment**

The scientific assessment will be organized internally by the researchers from the AXA Research Fund community. No external expertise will be requested.

#### **Step 3 – Selection & results publication**

The Scientific Board of the AXA Research Fund selects to fund applications based on strength of the scientific case, 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.**

## **Appendix: Research Project template**

Use of this Template is mandatory. Other formats will not be considered - please pay attention to the page limit and the formatting requirements:

- Paper size: A4
- Body: Time or equivalent, size 11; single line spacing
- Margins: top, bottom, left and right margins 2 cm
- Do NOT delete any of the sections / Do NOT add any sections
- **Maximum 10 pages INCLUDING COVER PAGE & CV**
- Page number mandatory
- **Please respect the sections' order and send the application in ONE PDF document**
- **Email subject when sending the application: "AXA RF - COVID-19 Call for proposals – *INSTITUTION NAME*"**

*The researcher is free to develop some sections depending on the nature of the proposal without exceeding 10 pages in total.*

**1. Cover page: Please fill in and copy-paste the following table**

**AXA Research Fund – Call for Proposals Covid-19**

<b>Project title</b>	<i>Please avoid long title, maximum 10 words</i>
<b>Research Area</b> (please choose one the following areas)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Protecting vulnerable populations from epidemics and catastrophes, including COVID-19.</li> <li>• Improving data collection and quality in health</li> <li>• Understanding the psychological effects of confinement and social distancing</li> <li>• Early warning and preparedness</li> <li>• Preserving the environment and our health</li> </ul>
<b>Project's duration</b> (in year between 1 and 3 maximum) <b>Amount requested</b> (maximum 250K€ for the whole duration)	
<b>Researcher's Firstname &amp; Lastname</b> <b>Gender</b>	
<b>Researcher's Nationality</b>	
<b>PhD defense date</b> <b>H-index (Google scholar)</b>	
<b>Host Institution</b>	
<b>Host laboratory</b>	
<b>3 to 5 key words regarding the project</b>	

**2. Summary:**

- 300 words maximum. Please avoid technical jargon and acronyms

**3. Research programme description:**

- General context of the proposal and what main areas of the call for projects it addresses



- State of the art
- Achievements already in place to assess the credibility of the proposal
- Work packages and planned tasks (Gantt chart) and methodology

**4. Principal Investigator & team**

- Principal Investigator’s career statement (1/2 page maximum)
- Principal Investigator’s resume (2 pages maximum)
- List of the people most involved in the project and their main role
- List of 5 most relevant publications with links to access them

**5. Impact of the proposal**

- Relevance to insurance business / main risk
- Impact on society

**6. Budget:** Please fill in and copy paste the following table

Total Budget for the entire duration (in €)	Expenses		Funding	
	Amount	Short description/ justification of each budget item	Institution	AXA  (max 250K € in total for the entire duration. No additional budget will be granted)
Salaries				
Equipment/Ressources *				
Academic activities **				
Outreach activities ***				
Other costs (please specify)				
<b>TOTAL</b>				



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