

Economic Research Mentoring program at China Russia Eurasian Studies Centre.

Call for proposals

Deadline for applications: October 10th, 2021

The China-Russia Eurasian studies Center (CREC) was created in 2021 in a partnership between the **Hong Kong University of Science & Technology (HKUST)**, the **New Economic School (NES)**, and the **Moscow School of Management (MSM)-SKOLKOVO** to become the world's leading research institution focused on understanding the relationship between China, Russia and Eurasia. The partnership between HKUST, NES, and MSM-SKOLKOVO together with outside expertise on China, Russia, and Eurasia, promotes interdisciplinary research on the contemporary technological, financial, political, social, economic and business development in the region. CREC pursues high-level theoretical, empirical, and applied research to make measured but decisive contributions to regional and international public policy debates as well as business development.

The main impact of CREC is its scholarly theoretical and applied research with relevance for policy and practice, which provides opportunities for its dissemination in Eurasian countries through seminars, training course, summer schools targeting participants from Eurasian countries. The main research areas of CREC focus on but are not limited to Comparative studies of China and Russia, Technological Development, Challenges of Eurasia, Trade and Investment, Energy and Environment, that reflect the research expertise of the center members.

CREC has opened a representative office in Nur-Sultan, Kazakhstan in collaboration with "Astana International Financial Centre Authority" JSC, the key partner in Central Asia, to achieve key objectives of CREC in the region and develop a mutually beneficial partnership. CREC engagement in Eurasia aims to pursue applied research to make decisive contributions to the regional and international policy discussion, provide capacity building opportunities in order to facilitate advancement of a regional body of researchers as well as establish a network of private, public and multi-lateral institutions in the region.

About Economic Research Mentoring program

The purpose of the Economic Research Mentoring Program (ERMP) is to support economic research by advanced PhD students and other junior scholars/researchers working in academic, business, and government institutions in either Armenia, Azerbaijan, Georgia, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Mongolia, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, or Uzbekistan. ERMP will provide an opportunity for scholars to work with leading international economic experts in refining and developing their research projects and turning their research results into publishable papers and well formulated policy recommendations.

During the grant period, research outputs are peer-reviewed by thematic expert panels, which include members of the CREC Academic Advisory Board (AAB) and other reputable researchers. Research mentorship and capacity building is provided at CREC/AIFC semi-annual research workshops and through consultations with program staff and experts. The final reports will be submitted to reputable international journals and CREC will provide the necessary assistance with submission of manuscripts. The final output of each project shall be a publishable working paper/article and a policy brief. Those participants who have submitted their work to a reputable journal, the definition of which will depend on area of research, and received at least “revise and resubmit” from the editor within a year after the completion of the project, would receive an additional bonus.

1. Thematic focus

Researchers are invited to submit proposals for research projects relevant to the Eurasian region across the following topics:

- A. Sustainability
- B. Energy and environment
- C. Banking
- D. Health Care
- E. Technological development and economic growth
- F. Trade: global and regional challenges
- G. Socioeconomic challenges: inequality, social mobility and migration

Participants are expected to submit a developed research proposal or an early draft of a paper containing preliminary results. If accepted, the proposal will be presented in a program workshop involving the other participants and a panel of experts in December 2021. This first workshop will be conducted on-line. The workshop participants and experts will discuss the potential contribution of each research proposal presented and how to develop the research further.

Invited economic experts will provide written comments on how to improve the project and how to strengthen its results, and then remain available to mentor the development of the project over a period of 12 months.

2. Eligibility

Applicants must be citizens of Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Uzbekistan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, Mongolia, Georgia, Azerbaijan or Armenia. However, in special cases the consideration will be given to citizens of other countries, especially if their research targets the challenges of Eurasia. ERMP admits participants of any faith, race, color and ethnic origin, or gender on a competitive basis. There is no age requirement but the preference will be given to younger research career applicants in order to support the project mission to mentor and strengthen the participants' capabilities.

Important:

- Researchers may submit only **one** research proposal, either individually or as members of a research team.
- Scholars who are currently studying for a PhD outside of the above-mentioned countries are **not eligible** for a grant. An exception of this rule can be made if the applicant commits to spend **at least 6 months** during the grant period to work in the region, shows that his/her research requires him/her staying in the region and demonstrates that he/she really needs ERMP support for research which would not be funded otherwise. A cover letter requesting such exceptions needs to be submitted at the time of application.
- Students pursuing a PhD outside of above-mentioned countries but plan to return to the region soon should indicate the date of comprehensive exam(s), tentative date of graduation and intended duration of their stay in Central Asia or the Caucasus during the grant period.

3. Funding: terms and conditions

Grants are in the amount of up to US \$ 10,000 and are typically provided for up to 12 months of work. Young researchers may be offered smaller-scale development grants (up to US \$2,000). All participants are offered capacity building and mentorship opportunities with invited economic experts.

4. Workshop Schedule

Due to the current situation in the regions caused by the Covid-19 pandemic, the first workshop upcoming in December 2021 will be held virtually. The next two events that are planned for 2022 to be held in Nur-Sultan, Kazakhstan in person are scheduled as follows:

- WS 1- 6 to 8 December 2021 (virtual)
- WS 2 - June 2022, Nur-Sultan
- WS 3 - November/December 2022, Nur-Sultan

Participants whose projects have shown sufficient promise in the December 2021 workshop will be asked to return to the second workshop in June 2022 to Nur-Sultan and present the further developed project incorporating the suggestions from the experts in form of an interim report on the research project. Again, suggestions for improvement and mentoring will be provided by experts. An opportunity to present a final report and discuss the research project results will be provided in a third workshop appearance in November/December 2022 in Nur-Sultan.

Each workshop will be spread across two days to allow not only the presentation of all selected research proposals but also time for interaction among the researchers and experts. Each research proposal presentation will be followed by time for discussion and comments by experts. Following the workshop, the experts will provide summary comments on the research proposals presented and suggestions for further development.

5. Application procedure

Application procedure involves filling out a form in Google Form via the link <https://forms.gle/nAHMa3f7S88fJubR9>. A complete application package must be submitted online ***no later than 11:59 pm, 10th of October, 2021 GMT+6 time***. Incomplete or late applications will not be accepted.

Application package

An application package shall include the following:

1. Online application form completed via Google forms that includes a research proposal and curriculum vitae in English (for each research team member).

We highly recommend to apply in advance to avoid late applications. Please fill all required fields carefully. After clarifying the eligibility requirements, you should be able to fill the application form through the link. The application form includes an individual questionnaire (contact information, information about education and current employment) and must be filled for each project participant separately. After that the applicants will be asked to submit project documents.

2. Research proposal (in English)

Research proposal is not to exceed 10 typewritten pages (*excluding attachments*), double spaced, font size at least 11, and should typically have the following structure:

Objectives	Provide a clear and concise statement of the project's objectives ("the problem")
Practical contribution of research	Describe the economic policy context of the problem you are addressing in the project. Provide a brief overview of policy alternatives you are aware of and explain how your project will contribute to their evaluation and/or development of new policy instruments and/or legislation.
Hypotheses	Provide a clear formulation of research hypotheses that are to be tested empirically. Please note that purely descriptive studies which do not aim at <i>explaining</i> observed behavior are most often rejected
Literature review	Critical examination of modern literature that is directly relevant to the project. Outline the project's potential contribution to the ongoing academic debate.
Methodology	<p>a) <i>Data: if relevant</i>, describe sources and structure of existing and available data. In case of new data collection, please include, <i>as an attachment</i>, a sample questionnaire.</p> <p>b) <i>Theoretical model: if relevant</i>, provide a brief formal (mathematical) description of your theoretical model, including the main behavioral assumptions and constraints.</p> <p>c) <i>Estimation: if relevant</i>, provide an outline of the econometric model you will use to test your hypotheses. Describe any other methods you will use to assess empirical evidence and relate it to your research questions. Discuss estimation problems, including lack of relevant data and/or methodological/statistical difficulties.</p> <p>d) <i>Expected research outputs</i>: provide an outline of potential outputs and how they answer the questions you pose in the project. Any interim results (if available) could be provided as an attachment.</p>
Bibliography	Provide an alphabetical list of the literature <i>cited in the proposal document</i> . Please list names and titles in the original language.
Participants	Specify the roles of all project participants and their research experience. Provide names of foreign collaborators, if any, including scientific degree and affiliation.
Alternative/additional sources of funding	List, separately for each project participant, other available or potential sources of funding for the project, including research grants, submitted grant proposals, and wages (if the project is

	performed in connection with your regular duties). If alternative sources of funding do exist, please specify the value added to be produced with the CREC's support.
Project timetable	Work is scheduled for each stage until November/December 2022.

3. Curriculum vitae for each project participant (in English)

- Each project participant should submit a copy of CV in English (up to two pages) covering education and work experience (in reverse chronological order)
- project-related publications (no more than five)
- past and present research grants awarded from other sources (include title of project, size and period of grant); also, other competitions which you are presently taking part in.

CREC reserves the right to discontinue financing your project in case information provided in this section is found to be incomplete or incorrect.

6. Evaluation Criteria

Proposal evaluation is based on the following criteria:

- Relevance to current policy concerns.
- Clarity and originality of the proposed research question.
- Use of modern research methodology, soundness and appropriateness of the proposed research methods.
- Availability of relevant data.
- The authors' experience and familiarity with relevant research literature.
- Realistic and sound work plan and budget.
- Quality of project presentation and the authors' participation in the workshop discussion.

In evaluating proposals, *ceteris paribus*, the Academic Advisory Board will also take into account the extent to which the grant will contribute to the authors' professional growth, and the goal of building research capacity in the outlying regions of CREC related countries.

If you have any questions, please contact Dr. Barbara Igel at barbara_igel@skolkovo.ru and copy Dinara Datbayeva at dinaraiub@gmail.com.