

## Alumni Venture Fund - FAQs

### 2021-2021

1. When is the deadline?  
The deadline to submit proposal applications is December 30,2021.
2. What language can I submit my application in?  
You may submit your application in English or Arabic.
3. Can I submit an application for this cycle if I'm still implementing my MLG project from the previous cycle?  
You may submit an AVF application if you are still completing your MLG project from a previous round, however only Alumni who have finished their previous MLG project and submitted their final reports will be eligible to receive a new grant.
4. What if the global Covid-19 crisis is still continuing when I start my project?  
We are aware of the challenging period that the world is facing right now due to the Covid 19 pandemic and the uncertainty of the situation. Use the Risk Assessment and Mitigation Plan template included with the application to highlight adjustments you could make to your plan, if necessary, in relation to the unpredictability of the current Covid 19 situation and other applicable risks.
5. What if I need more than \$10,000 to implement my project?  
The \$10,000 amount is the maximum that can be allocated to projects. However, we encourage sustainable projects that can continue beyond the AVF award and applicants may also secure additional funding from external resources for their projects.
6. What if my project can't be implemented in four months and I need more time?  
Please note that awards will be for four months only and they will be for projects that will also demonstrate in their application the ability to complete the proposed work during this time frame. The end of the award does not necessarily mean the end of your project and we recognize that some projects require longer commitment. In addition to Alumni Venture Fund resources, the Department of State and the larger international donor community offer additional funding opportunities. The MEPI Alumni Connection hopes to support MEPI alumni through both targeted resources and training to apply for broader opportunities.
7. What is required for the application process?  
The requirements for the application include a completed and signed application (in English or Arabic), a proposed budget, proposed project timeline, risk assessment and

mitigation plan, CVs of the Team, and an agenda for workshops/conferences (if applicable).

8. What if I don't have a concrete idea?

We encourage you to join the coaching session to be organized by MEPI Alumni Connection team during the application period. We also encourage you to take advantage of opportunities to chat with other MEPI Alumni, especially former awardees, in the coaching session, in group discussions or via the MEPI Alumni FB or LinkedIn Groups to hone your idea. This exchange will also give you a chance to find team members.

9. What is the difference between each project category?

- A Community Service project is voluntary work for the betterment of one's community or country.
- A Private Enterprise project is a small business or entrepreneurial project privately managed by an individual or an external company.
- A Social Enterprise project is a small business or entrepreneurial project that has a goal of contributing to the welfare of others (socially, financially, or environmentally) while also making a profit.

10. Who do I contact if I have questions?

Please contact the MEPI Alumni Connection Team at: [mepialumni@irex.org](mailto:mepialumni@irex.org)

11. Who can I have as team members? How many team members can I have?

MEPI Alumni applicants must have at least one collaborator ("Team Member"), who may either be a MEPI or other Department of State (DOS) alum.

12. What if I want to work alone or with my business partner who is not an alum?

The AVF is a way to establish a stronger network of alumni; therefore, you can't work alone. If you'd like to work with a business partner who is not an alum, he/she would be another team member, in addition to your alumni partner. You would first need a partner/team member who is either a MEPI or other DOS alum.

13. What am I responsible for as the Team Lead? What are my team members responsible for?

- The Team Leader is responsible to IREX for all financial responsibilities and project deliverables including a completed Application as well as a signed Terms & Conditions of the Award (T&Cs), a Bank Wire Transfer Form Information of your individual bank account, and a Final Narrative Report as an awardee.
- Team Member and any additional Team Members are responsible for following the rules and regulations of the Alumni Venture Fund and working in collaboration with the Team Lead to implement their project.

14. What am I allowed to spend my award funds on?

- Transportation for activities (e.g. to a hospital, orphanage, or historical location);
- Advertisements to recruit volunteers;
- Supplemental material (e.g. toothpaste for a dental hygiene presentation);
- Venue costs to host a workshop;
- In country travel to host project trainings in several cities; and
- Specialized equipment, if central to project completion, not easily accessible, and within reasonable costs. The applicant must demonstrate that the equipment is essential to the project goals, impact, and completion.
- Other costs may be considered as appropriate within the scope of the project proposal.

15. What am I not allowed to spend my award funds on?

- Purchase scientific equipment (e.g. microscopes, etc.);
- Purchase construction and/or building materials (i.e. lumber, hardware, flooring, siding, lighting, plumbing fixtures, etc.);
- Purchase furniture (tables, desks, chairs);
- Purchase alcohol;
- Give gifts or donations (small prizes for project activities are permissible);
- Tuition or educational expenses of the Team members;
- To supplement the Team's' income, including through honoraria, salary expenses, or consulting fees of any kind;
- To provide honorarium or salaries to Alumni of programs funded by the U.S. Department of State.

16. Can I use my award funds for travel?

Consistent with the pandemic situation, safety and security, and scope of the project proposal, travel within your country may be considered for funding.

17. Why can't I receive 100% of the funds at the beginning instead of 80% in the beginning and 20% after completion?

To ensure all deliverables are submitted by the end of the implementation period, all funds will not be wired to the awardee in the beginning of the project. The remainder of the award funding will be given to the grantee after project completion and when he/she submits all required deliverables.

18. What are examples of projects I can create?

- Examples of a Community Service Project:
  - A recycling campaign at the local high schools with a training workshop and incentives
  - A neighborhood clean-up drive and/or tree planting campaign

- A textbook exchange through student organizations that allows textbooks to be donated to students in underprivileged areas
- Examples of a Private Enterprise Project:
  - Seed funding to develop a model machine to increase efficiency in production of a locally produced resource
  - An employment agency business model that contributes to alleviating unemployment issues
  - A company that provides trainings and resources for farmers on sustainable agriculture techniques
- Examples of a Social Enterprise Project:
  - A project that donates one item of clothing for every item sold in the store
  - A business that uses a positive youth development model to train unemployed youth in the community to work at that business
  - A mobile app that facilitates local businesses in crowd-sourcing information on gaps in local market needs

19. Are all MEPI alumni eligible to apply?

MEPI Alumni from Algeria, Bahrain, Iraq, Israel, Jordan, Kuwait, Lebanon, Morocco, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, Syria, Tunisia, West Bank/Gaza, and Yemen are eligible to apply. We are not able to offer MEPI Alumni Connection activities to all alumni at this time. We encourage you to look for other DOS programs that are open to your country. Materials for other opportunities may be found [here](#), and via your local U.S. embassy's website or social media platform.

20. I am an alumnus of a MEPI program, but my country is not included. Why am I not included?

We are not able to offer MEPI Alumni Connection activities to all alumni at this time.

21. I am a MEPI alum from MENA, but I am currently studying in the U.S., can I still apply for the grant?

Only MEPI alumni residing in Algeria, Bahrain, Iraq, Israel, Jordan, Kuwait, Lebanon, Morocco, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, Syria, Tunisia, West Bank/Gaza, and Yemen are eligible to apply.

22. When will I know if my application was approved?

Approved and rejected applications are expected to be notified in late January 2022

23. Does my country allow individuals to receive foreign funds?

Applicants are expected to check on the regulations and procedures related to receiving foreign funding and follow local laws and regulations of countries where their planned project activities will be implemented.

*For more questions and information, please contact [the MEPI Alumni Connection Team](mailto:mepialumni@irex.org)  
at: [mepialumni@irex.org](mailto:mepialumni@irex.org)*