

# AAES-CUBA GRANTS PROGRAM 2017

## STRENGTHENING AUBURN-CUBA PARTNERSHIP RESEARCH COLLABORATIONS IN AGRICULTURE AND RELATED PROGRAMS

### THE NEED FOR COLLABORATION WITH CUBA

Cuba is an upper-middle-income country and one of the largest economies in Central America and the Caribbean. It has a population of 11.3 million, 23% of which is rural (World Bank, 2013). Cuba is a multi-ethnic nation that is home to people of different ethnic and national backgrounds with 71% of the population between the ages of 15 and 64. Cuba ranks relatively high in human development, at 44th out of 187 countries in the 2014 UN Human Development Index.

Once the tourism mecca of the Caribbean, Cuba's isolation has virtually frozen the nation in the 1950s. Cuban producers turned the declining availability of chemical inputs into an opportunity to shift towards organic production with numerous environmental, social and economic gains. As a result Cuban agriculture has developed a more organic/systems approach to farming known as "agro-ecology". Cuba has launched policies and strategies to guarantee food and nutritional security for all, targeting in particular the most vulnerable groups. It is anticipated that normalization of relations with the US will open a tremendous opportunity for mutually-beneficial academic partnerships including faculty/student exchange and joint research in food systems and allied disciplines. Academic links between Cuba and Auburn University date back 30 years in the areas of agriculture and crop protection. The Auburn University/AAES Cuba Working Group was recently established to develop/strengthen academic partnerships with Cuba, in particular in the fields of agriculture/food systems, nutrition and hospitality.

### PURPOSE

The goal of this Request for Applications is to fund projects that will strengthen and further develop meaningful and mutually-beneficial research, outreach and teaching activities under the agreement between Auburn University (AU) and two Cuban institutions: UNAH (Agrarian University of Havana) and CENSA (Centro Nacional de Sanidad Agropecuaria) signed in May 2015. The agreement can be found at [http://ocm.auburn.edu/newsroom/news\\_articles/2015/06/college-of-agriculture-signs-academic-exchange-pact-with-cuba.htm](http://ocm.auburn.edu/newsroom/news_articles/2015/06/college-of-agriculture-signs-academic-exchange-pact-with-cuba.htm). There is also potential for developing additional collaborations.

Funded projects will stimulate academic collaborations with the above two institutions and other partnering Cuban institutions including University of Havana, INISAV (Instituto de Investigaciones de Sanidad Vegetal - Plant Health Research Institute of Cuba), the Cuba Soil Institute, Pasture and Forage Research Institute - Indio Hatuey, and related institutions/agencies. Specific objectives of proposals should be to develop, facilitate and expand research collaborations between AU faculty and Cuban scientists in the above listed institutions. In addition to the activities outlined in this RFP, the AAES-Cuba grants program has earmarked up to \$20,000 per year to support students interested in study abroad opportunities in Cuba. The Cuba study abroad scholarship funds is being administered through a separate call for proposals. ***For this program please do not write proposals that include study abroad initiatives.***

### AWARDS

**We are requesting proposals for activities in two project categories aimed at strengthening and expanding research collaborations between AU and Cuban scientists:**

- 1. INTEGRATED RESEARCH PROJECTS/PLANNING PROPOSALS** to facilitate research collaborations in sustainable food production, animal and plant health, and nutrition. The goal is to promote cross disciplinary collaboration among AU and Cuban scientists, using a systems approach. Integrated projects may combine research-extension or research-teaching activities. Proposals must provide evidence that the project/planning activity will have a high probability of success in terms of leveraging of extramural funding. It is anticipated that up to two (2) integrated/planning proposals will be funded at up to \$25,000 per year (this total includes a minimum of 25% cash cost share provided by the AU faculty members).
- 2. MINI-GRANTS** to foster new collaborations with partnering Cuban institutions in the areas of research, teaching and outreach. We propose up to four (4) mini grants to AU faculty of \$5,000 each (this total includes a minimum of 25% cash cost share provided by the AU faculty members) as seed money to facilitate developing new projects with Cuban counterparts. ***Note: All awards are for the duration of one year.***

## ELIGIBILITY

All tenured/tenure-track faculty of Auburn University with an Alabama Agricultural Experiment Station (AAES) or Alabama Cooperative Extension System (ACES) appointment are eligible to apply.

## COST SHARE

The project budget must include cost share by the PI(s) or the PIs' department(s) or college(s) at a minimum of 25% (i.e., for a \$5,000 budget, the PI or his/her department or college must provide at least \$1,250 as cost share meaning that the project will receive a maximum of \$3,750 from the AAES-Cuba Grants program). PIs are encouraged to cost share above the 25%.

## PROPOSALS

Proposals are limited to 6 single-spaced pages for the Integrated/planning projects and 3 single-spaced pages for the Mini-grants. Proposals must be formatted using 8¼ x 11 inch pages with 1 inch margins, 12 point font, and should consist of the following sections:

- a) Title; PI and all co-PIs, affiliations, contact information - must include co-PI(s) from one or more partnering Cuban institutions.
- b) A project summary.
- c) A proposal narrative - containing justification for the work, objectives, experimental approach, timeline, expected results and outcomes, and plans for leveraging of funds.

*The following sections must be included in the proposal, but do not count toward the page limit:*

- d) References cited in the narrative.
- e) Budget (including cost share) and Budget justification (for all elements of the budget).
- f) Evidence of AU cost share (cash only). If cost share is to be provided by Dean's office or department/school/ ACES, please include a letter from your Dean or Department Head/Chair/Director and the FOAP.
- g) Letters of support from co-PIs from partnering Cuban institution with commitment to the proposed project (i.e., personnel, infrastructure, etc.). If you need assistance identifying Cuban partners please contact the College of Ag. Office of Global Programs ([ogp@auburn.edu](mailto:ogp@auburn.edu)).

## PROPOSAL SUBMISSION

Please email your application packet including the appropriate signatures, all in a single pdf file to [ogp@auburn.edu](mailto:ogp@auburn.edu) by **May 26, 2017**.

## EVALUATION

To be successful, a research proposal (integrated/planning or mini-grant) must include Cuban collaborator(s) and demonstrate how the seed money will be used to leverage extramural funding. Cost sharing of at least 25% by the PI(s) or their departments/schools/ colleges/ACES is required (higher cost share is encouraged). Note that investigators previously funded by the AAES-Cuba grants program must submit a report on their previously funded project together with a new proposal. The report (limited to 6 pages) must include project accomplishments, outcomes and attempt to leverage funds. The proposals will be peer-reviewed using appropriate AAES grants review processes.

## REPORT

Within 3 months of the conclusion of the project, a final report (maximum of 6 pages) must be submitted to the Office of Global Programs ([ogp@auburn.edu](mailto:ogp@auburn.edu)). This report must detail all aspects of the project, including all products and outcomes and attempt to leverage funds. Any publications and presentations deriving from the funded project must acknowledge support from the AAES-Cuba Grants program.

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## CONTACT

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