

C3.ai Digital Transformation Institute Call for Proposals Frequently Asked Questions (Posted April 13, 2020)

1. Will C3.ai DTI support fundamental research which may take a few years to bear fruit? Will all funded projects be required to have immediate impact? Or will the Institute select a portfolio of projects, many of which will have immediate impact, while others will develop mathematical models and methods which can be useful for understanding pandemics in the future?

Proposals that offer the promise of near-term impact will receive preference.

2. Most academics and their students have not used the C3 AI Suite before. Is it sufficient to demonstrate in their proposal that they have large data processing needs, rather than precisely saying how they will use the platform?

Yes, but projects that commit to leveraging the C3 AI Suite will receive preference.

3. Will someone at C3.ai train me?

Free, online training and support is available to all C3.ai DTI participants.

4. Does the institute have a mechanism to help researchers form teams or connect researchers to data?

Yes, we already have access to multiple data sets, including a “C3.ai COVID-19 Data Lake” that will be available in mid-April, and expanded in May. We do not yet have a formal mechanism for matching PI to partners, but we will be glad to work with you on an individual basis. Please contact your [C3.ai DTI Campus Lead](#) for assistance.

5. I have an application that would be of value to the C3.ai DTI community but do not have any data to provide. Would this be something I could propose?

Yes. We encourage applicants to gather and load data appropriate to the problem they propose to address.

6. For my project I have data, but the data is private and cannot be shared. Is this allowable if the results from my research are published?

Data security is a fundamental requirement that is systematically addressed throughout the C3 AI Suite, including access controls, encryption, user roles, and data retention/destruction. More information on the platform’s governance and security features is available [here](#).

7. How much will evaluation of the proposals emphasize using very large amounts of data? For example, new device design may require data analysis but perhaps not massive data sets. Does a project like that have a chance of being funded through the Institute?

C3.ai DTI will favor projects that propose to employ sufficient data volumes to draw conclusions with high confidence levels.

8. My collaborator is at another institution (not one of the 6 member institutions). His institution requires that overhead be charged. Is this allowed?

No. The budget must clearly indicate that no overhead is charged at any institution funded by an award.

9. I have a federal grant already for this. Can I use this to help support that effort?

You should identify a supplementary activity that is synergistic to your federal grant.

10. My research is about public health for COVID-19 but does not include AI or ML applications. Is my project eligible?

C3.ai DTI will prioritize projects that align with the Institute's mission, which is to advance AI, ML, IoT, and similar tools and methodologies for the transformation of society. Proposals that deal with social norms, ethics, and public policy will also be considered for awards.

11. I want to mass-produce face masks or ventilators. Is my project eligible?

C3.ai DTI will prioritize projects that align with the Institute's mission, which is to advance AI, ML, IoT, and similar tools and methodologies for the transformation of society. In general, medical device development is outside the scope of this call for proposals.

12. I want to develop a mathematical model for the spread of COVID-19, but I don't have the data yet to validate the model. Would a proposal focusing on the development of the model, with theoretical guarantees and software to use the model when data are available, be suitable for this solicitation?

It is best if all projects evaluate models using data; we suggest you consider ways of validating your model using available data to improve the suitability of this project.

13. I won't be ready to submit by May 1. Can I submit late?

No. Proposals submitted after the due date of 11:59pm PDT May 1, 2020 will not be considered.

14. I'm a postdoc. Can I apply for a C3.ai DTI award?

Yes, if your campus allows you to have Principal Investigator (PI) status.

15. Will you still be interested in receiving proposals for COVID-19 research in the next round?

We have not yet decided what topics will be covered in subsequent calls. This decision will be made later, at the discretion of the C3.ai DTI Executive Committee and Advisory Board.

16. What does it mean that the majority of the funds must be used in one of the consortium partner institutions? For example, would spending \$200K out of \$500K at another school be acceptable, as long as it is clear that the other school brings much needed expertise to the project?

The majority of the funds will be awarded to consortium partners across the call, but each proposal will be evaluated on its own merits. The evaluation will depend on what each PI brings to the project to make it successful.

17. What expenses are allowed or excluded? Is equipment an allowed expense? What about administrative support? Graduate student tuition? Travel?

Awards are primarily intended to support research personnel time and associated administrative support, travel, materials, and supplies. Large equipment purchases are discouraged and justification for any unusual budget items, or very large time commitments by the PI or other senior personnel, will need justification. Please also consult your office of sponsored research or industrial alliances office for any additional requirements.

18. Can my budget include partial academic-year salary to allow me to focus on this project?

Yes. Please specify in your budget the number of months or percent of time to be dedicated to your proposed project.

19. I am a clinician at a hospital. How much of my salary can I request?

Your request should be commensurate with the amount or level of effort you plan to dedicate to your proposed project.

20. I really need a two-year award: in the first year I will gather data, and in the second I'll do the computational work (train the model, test, and then use the model for predictions). Can I write this as a proposal for a two-year award instead of a one-year award?

Proposals can request awards of \$100,000, \$250,000 or \$500,000 for a period of one (1) year. An award may possibly be extended beyond the initial period of performance if needed with reasonable justification and approval, however it is expected that the work proposed and funds awarded will be for a period of one (1) year.