

SHASS+ Connectivity Fund Request for Proposals

Background and Focus

The SHASS+ Connectivity Fund is designed to support multidisciplinary projects that build bridges between SHASS researchers and colleagues in other units at MIT. Proposals should feature projects that could not be accomplished successfully without combining the expertise of researchers from within SHASS with that of MIT colleagues outside of SHASS. Proposals require a project lead in SHASS (PI) and another MIT-based project lead, whose primary appointment is outside of SHASS (Co-PI). The SHASS PI serves as overall project leader. The fund will award up to \$2 million per year across all projects.

The SHASS+ Connectivity Fund can provide initial support to new collaborations as well as provide resources to ongoing collaborations.

Proposals are welcome to support research, workshops, collaborative meetings or seminar series, conferences, performances, installations, etc. Collaborations that focus narrowly upon curriculum development are not eligible and should apply to the d'Arbeloff fund, Education Innovation Fund (fka Alumni Class funds), and/or the SHASS Education Innovation Fund.

We intend to fund several proposals in 2026, with new funding available in 2027. We will consider full proposals as well as smaller planning grants that would be used to build relationships, explore a topic collaboratively, and study a topic further in order to prepare a subsequent proposal.

Selection Criteria

Proposals will be evaluated based on:

- **Intellectual merit:** How original is the proposed project? In what ways will it advance existing scholarship and/or artistic practices in novel ways?
- **Depth of collaboration:** Is this a robustly multidisciplinary endeavor, for which SHASS elements are central? How does the project depend on the expertise of collaborators across disciplines through various stages of the project?
- **Potential impact:** Is this a substantial and transformative project, or (for planning grants) does it have the potential to become one?
- **Feasibility:** Is the project realistic given the proposed timeline and budget?

Eligibility

Anyone with PI status is eligible to apply. If needed, prospective project leads can request one-time PI status from their Dean's Office.

There must be one project lead whose primary appointment is in SHASS (PI) and one project lead whose primary appointment is at MIT but not in SHASS (Co-PI). SHASS faculty with shared or dual appointments with another School/College can apply either as the SHASS PI or the non-SHASS Co-PI. Justification in the application will be requested from shared appointments asking to apply as a non-SHASS Co-PI. The SHASS project lead should submit the application and serve as the primary point of contact with MITHIC. An individual, either PI or Co-PI, may only be the project lead on one full proposal per fund but may submit multiple planning grants or be listed as a collaborator on multiple proposals.

Additional collaborators outside MIT are welcome, but all funding must be managed at MIT and no subawards will be considered.

All grant recipients are required to submit a progress report a month before the deadline of the next round of funding, as well as a final report within 1 month of project completion. If you received funding in the first round you must be in good standing at the time of the application review.

Proposal Deadline

Proposals are due by 12:00pm on Tuesday, March 17, 2026.

Funding and Resources

A total of up to \$2M is available, which is anticipated to be awarded across 10-15 projects, including both small planning grants and full proposals.

Budgets for planning grants should not be less than \$10k (direct costs) or exceed \$30K (direct costs). Full proposals should not be less than \$30K (direct costs) or exceed \$200K (direct costs).

In addition to the requested budget, proposals may request supplemental resources such as:

- UROPs - Projects are encouraged to make use of UROP resources. Selection committees will not consider UROP costs (max 2 – fall or spring terms only – pending funding availability) in evaluating total project costs
- Part-time use of a space in Building 16 with a common area

Projects anticipating or desiring public policy relevance should consult with the MIT Policy Lab during proposal development. The Policy Lab can provide assistance with incorporating policy implications into the proposal as well as ongoing engagement of policy communities with project outcomes. Please contact Drew Story (dstory@mit.edu) at least 3 weeks ahead of the proposal deadline to discuss available resources and support.

Timeline

February 2026 – Application portal will open

Tuesday, March 17 – Proposals are due by 12:00pm

April 2026 – Selected projects notified

July 2026 – Earliest project start date

August 2027 – Project report due

Proposal Review

Proposals will be reviewed by a selection committee consisting of two co-chairs, 5 additional members from SHASS, plus one representative each from the School of Engineering, School of Science, School of Architecture and Planning, Sloan School of Management, and the Schwarzman College of Computing.

Those on the selection committee may apply for funding but will be asked to recuse themselves from discussion of their proposal. All questions regarding potential conflicts of interest during the review stage will be decided at the discretion of the MITHIC faculty lead.

Submitted proposals, whether funded or not, may be shared more widely to inform future cycles and to support connections among researchers across the Institute.

Contact

For questions, please contact mithic-connectivity@mit.edu.

MITHIC Website

Visit mithic.mit.edu for future updates and other information related to MITHIC.

Frequently Asked Questions

How long should the proposed projects last?

Projects will be funded for one year at a time (July to June). Project leads may elect to spread one year of funding over 2 or 3 years if that would lead to a more successful outcome. Planning grants are only for one year at a time.

What are planning grants?

Planning grants are smaller awards to enable a team to work together to plan a future collaboration and prepare to apply to one of the funds in the following cycle.

Can I apply to more than one fund?

Yes, an individual may be the project lead on one proposal per fund.

Can I submit more than one proposal to the same fund?

An individual may only be the project lead on one proposal per fund but may be listed as a collaborator on multiple proposals. Multiple planning grants can be submitted to the same fund.

Are collaborators outside of MIT permitted?

Additional collaborators outside MIT are welcome, but all funding must be managed at MIT and no subawards will be considered.

What can I include in the budget? Are there any restrictions on the use of the funds?

All planned spending should be in accordance with [MIT policy](#). Summer salary is permissible. Funds for replacement teaching are not permissible.

What impact does the MIT hiring freeze have on MITHIC funded projects?

Hiring for positions included in awarded MITHIC projects will still need to be routed through the MIT hiring exception process, but since dedicated funding is secured, we anticipate successful exceptions. MITemps & Contractors (when less than 6 months) are exempt from the hiring freeze, and do not require an exception.

Do I have to include UROPs in the proposal budget?

UROPs are not a requirement of the proposal. When requesting UROPs, please add all requests directly into your budget template.

Can Round 2 MITHIC awarded projects be expanded or renewed?

Previously awarded MITHIC project leads can submit a new proposal for additional funds for existing projects in later rounds. These proposals should reference the existing project and explain how the additional funds would allow for an expansion of the work. These proposals must demonstrate that earlier funds are either spent down or committed before receiving additional funding. Otherwise, if awarded, any unexpended funds will reduce the size of the potential second round of funding. These renewals will undergo full review and are not guaranteed.

What reports or presentations will be required of funded projects?

Project leads for funded projects may be selected to present at a future MITHIC event (date TBD). All project leads will be required to provide a short, written progress report, including progress on spending, a month before the deadline of the next round of funding. To be eligible for new or additional funding you must have a complete progress report. A final report will be due within 1 month of project completion.

Can I apply if I currently have an active award?

If your project is on track to be completed by your project end date, then yes you can apply for a different project in the next round. To be eligible for new or additional funding you must have a complete progress report.

How will the progress report be used?

The MITHIC team as well as the co-chairs for the fund will review the interim reports. If you apply for additional funding or a new project, your progress on your current project will be a factor in any future award decisions.

What about extenuating circumstances?

If progress on your project is delayed by circumstances outside of your control, contact MITHIC.

What makes a proposal stand out to reviewers?

A one-page guide with practical tips on writing a competitive funding proposal can be found [here](#).