

# Faculty-Driven Initiative Seed Fund Call for Proposals

## Background and Focus

The MIT Human Insight Collaborative (MITHIC) is seeking proposals for Faculty-Driven Initiatives (FDIs). FDIs are programs that build community and scholarship on a defined topic of relevance to the humanities, arts, or social sciences. FDIs should bring together faculty or teaching staff from multiple units across SHASS or the Institute, collaborating on a common area of study or issue. At least one faculty lead must have their primary appointment in SHASS. FDIs are not curricular; they do not offer majors or minors.

## Selection Criteria

Proposals will be evaluated using the criteria below.

### Scholarly Leadership

*Can the FDI position MIT as a leader in a new or emerging area of study?*

The FDI should demonstrate to the world beyond MIT that MIT is a leader in this area of study. This includes both new and emerging research as well as communication about the research program.

### Breadth Across MIT

*Does the FDI have, or have the potential for, broad faculty participation, possibly across different departments or schools?*

Participation from more than one unit is required for FDIs. This can be more than one unit in SHASS, a unit in SHASS and a unit outside of SHASS, or a combination of these. There is no limit on the number of units that can be included.

### Planned Agenda

*Does the FDI have a program of activities?*

The FDI should have active ongoing and planned activities (if already existing) or a robust set of planned activities (if new). This could include opportunities for researchers to connect, presentations to the public, opportunities for students or other activities that will further the mission of the FDI.

## Sustainability

*Does the FDI have the potential to be sustainable and have lasting impact?*

The goal is to provide support for a FDI that will endure beyond the next several years, with an area of focus that is broad enough to continue to spark scholarship, inspire research, and bring in funding support beyond the initial funding period. The proposal should explain how the FDI would plan to continue beyond the initial funding.

## MIT Context

*Does the FDI leverage MIT's unique intellectual environment?*

MIT is unique in many ways (such as culture, academic and non-academic programs, areas of research, geographic location, STEM focus, design and the arts, etc.). The FDI should take advantage of something about MIT that distinguishes the work from what could happen at another institution. This is preferred but not required.

## Eligibility

At least one faculty lead must have their primary appointment in SHASS. The faculty leads cannot all be from the same unit, and units outside of SHASS are welcome to be involved. Larger groups of faculty (5+) actively involved in the FDI are preferred. Teaching staff and research staff are eligible to be part of an FDI. Senior Lecturers and Professors of the Practice can serve as a faculty lead.

## Proposal Deadline

Proposals are due April 7, 2025 at 5:00pm ET.

## Funding and Resources

One proposal will be awarded up to \$500k as a seed grant.

## Timeline

Monday, April 7 – Proposals are due by 5:00pm

Late April/Early May – Finalists presentation and interviews

Mid-May – Selected projects notified

June 2 – Earliest FDI start date

Fall 2025 (date TBD) – Awardees present their idea at MITHIC celebration event

Spring 2026 – Progress report due

## Proposal Review

Proposals will be reviewed by a selection committee consisting of several members of the MITHIC Steering Committee.

Those on the selection committee may not be faculty leads for an FDI but can be part of an FDI proposal. They will be asked to recuse themselves from discussion of a proposal they appear on. All questions regarding potential conflicts of interest during the review stage will be decided at the discretion of the MITHIC faculty lead.

Proposals will not be shared outside of MITHIC, the CISO's office, the SHASS Dean's office, and the selection committee; the selection committee's evaluation process will be confidential.

## Contact

For questions, please contact [mithic@mit.edu](mailto:mithic@mit.edu).

## Proposal Sections

Proposals should be 4-5 pages, not including budget and budget justification. Proposals will include the following sections (see application for more details).

- FDI Team
- Research Initiative Statement
- Initiative Design and Objectives
- Scholarly Leadership
- Breadth Across MIT
- Planned Agenda
- Sustainability
- MIT Context
- Program Timeline
- Other Information (optional)
- Budget and Justification