

Societal Engagement Seed Fund – How to Avoid Common Pitfalls

- **Be clear about your aims.** Ensure that your application talks about what you are hoping to achieve through your engagement, and not just what activities you are hoping to run. The panel will want to know what impact you hope to make through this project. Don't only write about the events or activities you want to organise, but why and how they will help lead to change and outcomes.
- **Make sure you meet the criteria of the fund.** No matter how incredible your idea or how well-written your application is, if it does not fit our criteria, unfortunately, it cannot be awarded funding. Double-check our eligibility criteria to make sure it's worth applying and check for other grants you might be more suitable for. For example, to be eligible for the seed fund activities should have a new aspect to them – funding for existing activities is not eligible unless you are trying out something new such as targeting a new audience. If you're unsure if your project is valid, you can always [contact our team](#).
- **Societal engagement is a two-way process.** Many applications we receive are important but involve more one-way communication rather than engagement. By engagement we mean a two-way interaction, sharing of information, ideas and experiences, with benefits for all involved. Projects such as delivering information through a website, teaching students, or gaining feedback or data through focus groups, tend to involve more one-way communication, with more obvious benefits for one or other party, and are less likely to be competitive in this funding scheme. To make your project stand out, consider how you can work together with your target audience to produce a collaborative outcome, learning from their insights, and how you can both inform one another?
- **Keep it simple but include details.** In order for our panel to see the value in your project they need to understand exactly what you plan to do. Therefore you should ensure enough detail is in your proposal and that these details are clear, i.e. that they are not hidden within long paragraphs. Make a list of everything you plan to do and what you'll need to prepare. Where are your events going to happen and when? How many will attend and how will you reach them? Who or what resources will you need to work with? Then consider how you can explain this in the most succinct manner.
- **Be prepared.** The panel wishes to know that the projects they decide to fund will be achievable and therefore doing some preparatory work can help present a convincing proposal. If you have collaborators, let us know what stage you are at with them. Have they been approached yet? Do they agree to participate in principle? What about your venues, have you gotten quotes for costs?
- **Evaluation.** Evaluation is an important part of effective societal engagement. We need to know whether the project was successful in its aims, had an impact and how it can be improved. Consider how you will understand whether you have met the aims of your project and what data you might look for to demonstrate this. Think about which methods might be best to gather this data – try to be creative, a survey might not be the best way!
- **Get help.** The societal engagement team provides assistance with seed fund applications in various ways. You might for example attend one of our [masterclasses](#), go to the advice clinic or [contact us](#) with a specific question. Make sure to read our guidelines and the application questions carefully.