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**Tsinghua-Imperial Research and Innovation Seed Fund**

CALL DOCUMENT AND GUIDANCE FOR APPLICANT

1. **Purpose**

The Tsinghua-Imperial Research and Innovation Seed Fund aims to help kick-start early-stage, risky and ‘blue skies’ research ideas that might not otherwise be pursued. The Fund promotes and supports early-stage collaboration among academics, researchers and students at Tsinghua and Imperial by facilitating exchange between participating research groups through provision of grants to cover travel, workshops, meetings, hackathons, networks and other activities to explore research directions.

1. **Tsinghua-Imperial Research and Innovation Seed Fund**

To support collaborative endeavours, Imperial and Tsinghua have agreed to provide seed funding to build research capacity and collaboration between both universities.

A total sum of £40,000 from Imperial and ¥350,000 from Tsinghua in financial year 2020/21 will be awarded to successful Imperial and Tsinghua teams, to develop and reinforce lasting contacts with the very best researchers in their field.

Funds can be requested to support one or more of the following activities (NB list is not exhaustive, other activities permitted if they meet overall funding criteria):

* Exploratory research, travel costs and other activities that often do not receive financial support at the earliest stages. Imperial funds can also be used to support small-scale experiments or the development of prototypes;
* Outward/inward visits for academics, research staff and students to investigate the potential for, initiate, follow-up, or work on a collaborative project or training opportunity, and for other stakeholder engagement;
* ‘Research Sandpits’, ‘Hackathons’, ‘Virtual Workshops’ or other collaborative day or week-long networking events involving staff and students from both institutions to foster new links or strengthen existing collaborations; This includes facilitation fees for online workshops, or other expenses associated with developing virtual engagement and programmes. For funds awarded jointly from both sides, the relevant financial policy of the PI’s home university must be followed.
* Longer stays for students or research staff (up to maximum 2 months) to learn new techniques, analyse results or undertake other activities;
* Set up of new networks to promote the exchange of ideas, best practice, and other research goals;
* Networking events such as workshops and seminars to bring together researchers to foster new links or strengthen existing collaborations.

The goal is for these collaborations to support both Imperial and Tsinghua academics to initiate and pursue collaborations that ideally lead to new science, to future applications for external funding, and engagement with industry and innovative ecosystems in the UK and China.

1. **Funding and Project Duration**

This call has an indicative budget of **£40,000 and ¥350,000** to be awarded to **3-4 successful Imperial and Tsinghua collaborating teams** respectively.

Budget requests should not exceed £13,000 from Imperial and **¥**110,000 from Tsinghua per project. Funds can only be spent on activities that fit the purpose of this call. Applicants should itemise their budget using the tables in the application form.

The maximum project duration is **1 year**.

For funds awarded by Tsinghua, travel and other expenses must follow the relevant financial policy of Tsinghua University.

Please refer to the list of fundable/ non-fundable items below:

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Fundable (Y/N)** | **Imperial** | **Tsinghua** |
| Salary | N | N |
| Limited Research Consumables | Y | Y |
| Travel | Y | Y |
| Accommodation | Y | Y |
| Subsistence | Y | Y |
| Equipment  | N | N |
| Bench fees | N | N |
| Indirect and estate costs | N | N |

1. **How to Apply**

This is an Open Call. At Tsinghua, the fund is open to all full time faculty members who hold primary full-time appointment (defined as a minimum of 9 months a year). At Imperial, the fund is open to permanent members of staff only. Proposals must be submitted to both globalseedfunds@imperial.ac.uk and liaison@tsinghua.edu.cn*.* Only applications submitted to these two email addresses, and before the deadline, will be considered.

**One proposal per Principal Applicant per call is permitted.**

**Each application should have one Principal Applicant based at Imperial and one Principal Applicant based at Tsinghua** and should contain:

* A written case for support (maximum 2 pages) to include:
	+ A description of the relevant research/training conducted by the Imperial-based individual/group in recent years;
	+ A description of the activities and collaboration proposed;
	+ Explanation of how the activities proposed will generate demonstrable added value to the PI / Research Group / Department / Faculty / College
	+ A description of the opportunities available for leveraging funding, especially from overseas sources;
* A financial summary: Each application should provide information on the requested costs using the budget section of the application template (see ‘Funding Requested’).
* Applicable only to Imperial Applicants: An InfoEd statement is not needed.

Researchers from **other institutions** may also participate as a Co-Investigators and at their own expense.

Applications must be completed on the template provided and within the page limit stated.

1. **Application Deadline and Project Milestones**
* Deadline for the submission of applications : **1 November 2020**
* Release date of the results : End-December 2020
* Start date of the awarded projects : 1 January 2021
* All awarded projects must end by : 31 December 2021
1. **Review and Selection of Applications**

At Imperial, all eligible applications will be considered for funding by the International Seed Fund Review Committee under the oversight of the Vice-Provost (Research and Enterprise) with assistance of the International Relations Office. The Committee will rank the proposals based on excellence of research, fit to call, value for money, potential strategic value of the partnership (including potential for opportunity to leverage additional funding) and the impact the award would bring to the applicant, based on their career stage and any existing networks or support.

At Tsinghua, all eligible applications will be considered for funding by a review group composed of experts in relevant fields and the Office of International Affairs. The review group will rank the proposals based on excellence of research, fit to call, value for money, potential strategic value of the partnership and the impact the award would bring to the applicant, based on their career stage and any existing networks or support.

Tsinghua and Imperial will then jointly review applications to make a final decision on which applications will receive funding.

1. **Accessing Funds**

At Imperial, Faculty Finance Officers will be informed of decisions and will arrange the set-up of an award account code, where all project related expenditure should be charged.

At Tsinghua, the portion of the grant allocated to the Tsinghua team will be transferred directly to the Tsinghua PI.

1. **Reporting**

Principal Applicants who are successful in receiving an award are required to provide a report within 2 weeks of the end of the award period, to both globalseedfunds@imperial.ac.uk and liaison@tsinghua.edu.cn using a template provided. The narrative element of the report should provide details of the relevant activities supported and how these have addressed the objectives of the call. The financial element of the report serves as a Final Expenditure Statement and should detail the award amount and the award spent. Responsibility remains with the PI to ensure all spend has been charged to the correct award code.

*Imperial is a proud signatory to the San-Francisco Declaration on Research Assessment (DORA),* *which means that in hiring, promotion and research funding decisions we will evaluate applicants on the quality of their work, not the impact factor of the journal where it is published. More information is available at*[*https://www.imperial.ac.uk/research-and-innovation/about-imperial-research/research-evaluation/*](https://www.imperial.ac.uk/research-and-innovation/about-imperial-research/research-evaluation/)*.*

1. **Contacts**

Please contact your respective institution’s coordinator if you have any queries about this grant:

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| **Imperial College London**globalseedfunds@imperial.ac.ukInternational Relations OfficeImperial College LondonFaculty Building Level 2 London, SW7 2AZUnited Kingdom+44 (0)20 7594 2868 | **Tsinghua**liaison@tsinghua.edu.cnOffice of International AffairsRoom 109ATsinghua UniversityBeijing 100084P.R. China+86 0(10) 6278 1943 |