



The University of Manchester, KTH Royal Institute of Technology and Stockholm University Joint Research Seed Fund

Guidelines for Applicants

Deadline: Wednesday 14 June 2023

The University of Manchester (UoM), KTH Royal Institute of Technology (KTH) and Stockholm University (SU) are pleased to announce the third round of our joint research seed fund to support collaborative research projects. The aim of the fund is to catalyze new collaborations and in the longer term to build global teams with the capability to secure external funding to continue their research.

This fund is open to all areas and we encourage applicants from any discipline to submit proposals.

This initiative stems out of a series of meetings between the senior leadership teams and an online [workshop](#) for academic staff which took place in December 2020. Further workshops were held in Stockholm in April 2022 and six key research areas were identified in which to develop collaborations: digital trust, privacy and security; sustainability and circular economy; molecular biosciences; water; inequalities in higher education and quantum science.

Applicants are encouraged to develop cross- disciplinary projects with attention to complementary areas including e.g. social science, behavioural science, environmental science, research ethics etc.

We will give priority to trilateral proposals (involving all three partners) but strong bilateral projects are also encouraged. Please note that UoM must be a partner in any bilateral project i.e. a KTH and SU bilateral project would not be eligible for this call.

If you are looking for collaborators at one of the partner universities, please get in touch with us (contact details at the end of the document) and we will help identify researchers with similar interests.

Proposals will be assessed and recommended for selection by a panel composed of academic staff from all 3 partners.

Projects and funding

- Each proposal **MUST** include a lead (PI/Co-I) from UoM and at least one lead (PI/Co-I) from KTH or SU. Applications from all three partners are strongly encouraged.
- **Proposals must include at least two researchers from each partner institution on the team.** Eligible applicants (see eligibility details below) may only lead one application but can be listed in the project team on other applications.
- The seed funding granted will be up to GBP 5,000 (SEK 60,000) per participating university in each project. For 2-way projects, total funding will be up to GBP 10,000 (SEK 120,000) and for 3-way projects (UoM-KTH-SU), total funding will be up to GBP 15,000 (SEK 180,000). We expect to fund approximately 10 projects.

- Applicants from all disciplines and research areas are welcome to apply.
- Projects will be funded for a period up to 18 months, starting from August 2023. There is flexibility on start dates but we would expect all projects to be underway by October 2023 at the latest.
- Proposals demonstrating strong relevance to strategic priorities at the participating institutions and with the potential for sustainability beyond the initial funding period are encouraged.
- Mutual external collaborators (including researchers from other universities internationally, or those working in non-academic contexts such as industry or government) cannot lead an application but can be involved in the proposed activities at their own expense, where the benefit of their involvement to the collaboration is justified in the proposal.

Costs and proposal

- Proposals may include but are not limited to workshops (face-to-face and virtual), symposia, staff exchanges, research seminars/presentations and formation, development of a collaborative network and/or practical pilot or feasibility research activities (such as experiments, surveys, etc.).
- Eligible costs include travel and subsistence, consumables and the cost of research assistants e.g. PhD students, research associates and technicians which are directly related to the project. Existing staff time including the lead applicants (PI/Co-I) time cannot be costed to the project. The fund does not support equipment, scholarships, conference attendance or tuition fees.
- UoM collaborators – A fEC costing is not required. Please note that only directly incurred costs are allowed and not directly allocated.
- Each institution will pay funds directly to its researchers. Approval of expenditure will be governed by each university for the portion of funding provided.
- Each partner should pay its own costs and there can be no transfer of funds between institutions. For example, travel costs for UoM staff should be in the UoM budget, costs for subsistence for KTH staff should be allocated in the KTH budget and costs of hosting a workshop at SU, should be costed in the SU budget.

Eligible costs	Ineligible costs
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Travel costs including flights, hotels and subsistence • Directly incurred staff e.g. Research Assistant* • Research costs including consumables • Costs associated with organising workshops and meetings 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Replacement research/teaching costs • Directly allocated costs including applicants' time ** • Indirect costs/estates costs • Equipment • Scholarships • Conference attendance • Tuition fees • Honoraria

Directly incurred and directly allocated costs are terms used by UK funders:

*Directly Incurred costs are project-specific (i.e. they arise as a direct consequence of the project taking place).

** Directly Allocated costs are not project-specific (i.e. they are incurred whether or not the project takes place), and are estimated at project level e.g. Investigator time, Technician time (where not directly incurred).

Eligibility

1. Academic staff members from all disciplines and at all levels are welcome to apply. We encourage early-stage/early career researchers to apply. PhD students may be included in the project team but cannot lead a project.
2. Applicants do not need to have a permanent post, but they must have an existing contract at the time of application, and that contract must cover the full period of the grant.
3. Previous applicants and award holders are eligible to apply for this fund, as long as there is a clear rationale that the new project proposal is either an innovative development of the previous project, or a new project. The previous project needs to have submitted a final report in order for the new proposal to be eligible.

Equality, Diversity and Inclusion

Adherence to respective equality, diversity and inclusion (EDI) policies are an important feature of this scheme to ensure that all participants can do their best work, thrive and succeed. Applicant teams should consider how they can take meaningful steps in their future collaborations to foster an environment that values, supports and respects a diverse range of views, knowledge and experiences. Applicants should consider EDI as it applies to gender, disabilities, career stages and sectors.

Timeline

Call for proposals opens	Monday 8 May (12 noon UK time, 1pm Swedish time)
Deadline for submission	Wednesday 14 June (12 noon UK time, 1pm Swedish time)
Applicants notified	Late June/early July
Project start date	August - October 2023

Submission of Proposals

This is a joint call and a single application should be submitted online using [SmartSurvey](#). The form can be previewed [here](#). It can be completed collaboratively and applicants should use the 'save and continue' feature to save the form and continue later (a link is sent to the applicant's email address). The link can be shared with collaborators to contribute to the application.

The full proposal is comprised of the following elements:

- **Applicants' details – affiliations from each institution with contact details**
 - **Co-Investigator information**
 - **Project team information**
- **Research Proposal – details of the project**
 - **Title:** of the Research Project
 - **Key words** that relate to the main topic of your proposal

- **Abstract** (project design and rationale): a brief description of the project.
 - **Proposed Timeframe** (project design and rationale): project dates, a project timeline and a description of the planned activities.
 - **Project clarification:** if you have previously received a seed-funding grant, please clarify in which way your new project proposal is eligible, for example, if it is either an innovative development of the previous project, or a new project.
 - **Collaborator complementarity and impact:** A description of how the proposed activities combine mutual areas of interest and strength and the added value of this combined expertise. Include any corresponding deliverables, e.g. a publication, blog, a meeting, a report etc. Also include any involvement of early-stage/early career researchers and/or graduate researchers/PhD students and any direct anticipated benefits to those researchers themselves.
 - **Capacity for future collaboration/funding:** A description of the potential future collaborations and outcomes that will be possible as a result of having undertaken the current collaboration. For example, joint publications, joint supervision of graduate researchers, joint teaching, joint patent applications, joint reports to governments, joint funding applications etc.
 - **Potential impact:** The anticipated benefits of the collaboration to the faculty member's other active research projects and on strengthening the overall partnership between KTH, SU and UoM. In addition, improvement and changes within/between the university/universities, the local community, wider society, country or globally.
- **Proposed budget**
 - A breakdown of the cost of the activity e.g. flights, travel, hotels etc.
- **Support documents**
 - Abbreviated Curriculum Vitae: (not more than 2 pages) of the Co-PIs with a selected list of publications.
 - A letter of support: from your Line Manager or Head of Department to apply for the grant, including an explanation of how the project aligns with your Faculty's strategy.
- **Communication feedback**
 - Confirmation of how you heard about this fund, this will help us to promote future funds.
- **Declaration and approval**
 - Confirmation you understand the rules and regulations of the fund.

UoM collaborators - A FEC costing is not required. The budget section of the application is easy to complete and should not require input from Research Services teams. If however, you feel you need support then please follow local School procedures for submitting grant applications.

Evaluation criteria

A joint review panel will assess each proposal according to the academic merit and the following criteria:

- **Project design and rationale (Abstract and Proposed Timeframe)**
How clearly presented and justified is the basis for, and design of, the project? How do the proposed activities assist with establishing new and emerging research collaborations? (25% of the evaluation score).
- **Collaborator complementarity and impact**

What is the added value of the new or emerging collaboration? How do the proposed activities combine mutual areas of interest and strength? What are the anticipated benefits of involving early-stage/early career researchers and/or graduate researchers/PhD students? (25% of the evaluation score).

- **Capacity for future collaboration/funding**

What is the potential for this project to foster ongoing collaboration, and through what mechanism(s)? How well does the proposed collaboration plan to access external funding? (25% of the evaluation score).

- **Potential impact**

What desired outcomes do the planned activities set out to achieve? What are the anticipated benefits of the activities to local or international communities? (25% of the evaluation score).

Reporting after project completion

All awardees must, as a condition of receiving an award under this call, complete a narrative report that describes the outcomes, nature of collaboration, project impact, trainee involvement and opportunities for future collaboration that evolved from their project.

Information about this call

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