1. Purpose

The MIT-Imperial Seed Fund aims to kick-start early-stage, risky and ‘blue skies’ research ideas that might not otherwise be pursued. The Fund will support early-stage collaboration among academics, researchers and students at MIT 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.

Applicants will need to demonstrate how the funding will be used to enable researchers at MIT and Imperial to build or reinforce lasting contacts with the very best researchers in their field. Collaborations can therefore be with new collaborators or existing collaborators or previous collaborators, providing that the application demonstrates a strong development of the collaborations proposed.

Such activities may include, but are not limited to:

- Exploratory research, travel costs and other activities that often do not receive financial support at the earliest stages. Imperial funds can also be used fund small-scale experiments or the development of prototypes.
- Visits between MIT and Imperial for academics/faculty, research staff and students to investigate the potential for, initiate, follow-up, or work on a collaborative project or training opportunity.
- ‘Hackathon’ or other collaborative day or week-long events involving staff and students from both institutions to explore new risky and ‘blue skies’ research directions and ideas.
- Networking events such as international workshops and seminars to bring together researchers to strengthen existing collaborations and foster new links.
- Longer stays for students or research staff (up to 2 months) to learn new techniques or how to use new equipment, analyse results or to undertake other activities.
- Set up of new networks to promote the exchange of ideas, best practice, and other research goals.

This list is not exhaustive and applicants are encouraged to propose new and creative activities that involve Imperial and MIT staff and students to explore and promote new ideas and directions for collaboration.
2. Funding

An indicative budget of up to a total of $100,000 / £66,000 per annum, in the first instance, will be distributed internally as additional expenditure through the College’s budgets. There is no upper limit to individual budget requests, though requests are not expected to exceed $30,000-$50,000 / £20,000-£35,000 per application. Funds can only be spent on activities which fit the purpose of this call. Funds will be available for use for a period of up to eighteen (18) months. Any unused portions of grants shall be returned to the Fund and distributed in equal shares to MIT and Imperial.

Use of funds

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Eligible (Y/N)</th>
<th>Imperial</th>
<th>MIT</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Salary</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>N</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Limited Research Consumables</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>N</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Travel</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>Y</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Accommodation</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>Y</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Subsistence</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>Y</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Equipment</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>N</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bench fees</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>N</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Indirect and estate costs</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>N</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

- Funding may be used to cover travel and meeting costs to facilitate projects and collaboration between Imperial and MIT.
- At Imperial, funding may be used to fund small-scale experiments or the development of prototypes. Funds cannot be spent this way at MIT.
- Funds may not be used to cover salaries.
- Funds are not intended to be used for long-term stays (over two months) at Imperial or MIT.
- Funds may not be used to cover MIT Visiting Student fees.
- Funds will be made available to Imperial applicants via the International Relations Office and the applicant’s department. For MIT applicants, the funds must be administered by his or her department.

**Imperial – Travel expense guidelines**
For funds awarded by Imperial, travel and other expenses must follow the College’s Expenses Policy.

**MIT - Travel expense guidelines**
For funds awarded by MIT, awards may cover up to 75% of the US Department of State maximum per diem rate for the proposed travel abroad plus a reasonable estimate of the economy-class airfare. For travel to MIT, applicants are eligible for up to $250 per day in expenses, plus economy-class airfare.

3. How to apply

Applications must submit their proposals jointly using the online application portal administered by MIT International Science and Technology Initiative (MISTI).

Applications will need:

a) Brief abstract of the proposed project written for an audience of non-experts. (250 words)

b) Brief history of the collaboration, if relevant (250 words)
c) Description of the proposed project (1500 words)
d) Description of the exchanges and activities planned, including student participation (250 words)
e) Additional activities are planned outside of the seed funding, if relevant (250 words)
f) A note on the sustainability of the project after the seed funding (250 words)
g) Proposed budget for the projects, with spending by Imperial and MIT

Applicant eligibility
Applications to the MIT-Imperial Seed Fund must be submitted jointly by Imperial and MIT. At Imperial, applicants must be staff with an academic contract. At MIT, applicants must be faculty members or research staff with principal investigator privileges (principal research scientists and senior research scientists). Staff are encouraged to involve students in their proposed activities, but applications must come from staff or faculty.

Student involvement
Applicants are encouraged to involve Imperial and MIT students in their projects by including them in visits, workshops or other opportunities. MIT students participating in projects will be expected to attend country-specific training through MISTI.

4. Deadlines

The deadline for the 2016-2017 grant cycle is 19 September 2016 (23.59 Boston, USA time). Applicants will be notified of results in December 2016.

Grantees will be required to complete a short activity report at the end of the grant period.

5. Review and Selection of Applications

All eligible applications will be considered for funding jointly by MIT and Imperial. At MIT, applications will be reviewed by MISTI in collaboration with a selection board composed of MIT faculty from each of MIT’s five Schools. At Imperial, applications will be considered by the Vice-Provost (Research) with the Cross-College Research Proposal Review Group with guidance from the Associate Provost (Academic Partnerships) and the International Relations Office.

Selection criteria
Priority will be given to projects that:
- are likely to make an important contribution to the field
- are new or are entering a new phase
- include a balanced exchange between participating teams
- demonstrate complementarity between participating teams
- involve students in a meaningful way
- are likely to be sustainable beyond the grant period

Applicants will be informed of the results of the funding meeting via email in mid-March 2016. At MIT, applicants will be contacted by MISTI. Feedback on unsuccessful applications will be limited unless the joint committee decides that additional feedback is necessary or useful.
6. Accessing Funds

Grants would be jointly awarded by MIT and Imperial College London. MIT will transfer the portion of the grant allocated to the MIT team directly to the MIT PI; Imperial College London will transfer the portion of the grant allocated to the Imperial team directly to the Imperial PI.

7. Reporting

Grantees who are successful in receiving an award are required to provide a narrative report by the end of the grant period directly to MISTI. The report should provide details of the funding provided, the relevant activities supported, and how these have addressed the objectives of the call. MISTI will collect the final reports from grantees and share them with Imperial.