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Rapid Response Seed Fund for Public Engagement with Research during social distancing

Guidance Notes

Imperial's Rapid Response Seed Fund for Public Engagement with Research will support staff to engage the wider public with our research through digital or remote activities in the absence of face-to-face engagement, for mutual benefit. The scheme is coordinated by the Public Engagement department.

Guidance information on the scheme can be found below. **We are now inviting applications and will review these on a rolling basis.**

Aims for the Rapid Response Seed Fund for Public Engagement with Research

This scheme has been launched with the following aims:

- Support Imperial staff to develop and deliver public engagement with research during social distancing measures
- Enable piloting of new approaches to digital and remote engagement with public audiences that could support our Public Engagement with Research Programme beyond the social distancing measures.
- Facilitate engagement with research at a time where face-to-face engagement is not possible

This scheme is in addition to our usual annual Societal Engagement (SE) Seed Fund that runs Sept to July.

Proposals supported as part of this new seed fund could involve discrete activities or piloting aspects of a larger programme. Projects will be:

- Delivered via digital or online platforms or alternatively physical activities which can be completed remotely. The development and delivery of projects should be suitable for the current environment and adhering to social distancing guidelines.
- Relating to an area of Imperial's research. Activities must relate to an area of current research and ideally be developed and/or delivered with the involvement of researchers.
- Two-way with mutual benefit for public participants and research. Projects should involve meaningful interaction between scientists and public or community groups leading to positive experiences and impacts for both public participants and research outcomes. (Projects which deliver only one-way communication/broadcasting /dissemination will not be funded).
- Rapid – we are looking for projects that can make a positive difference this year. Activities may be pilots for a longer-term project and of course may be on-going beyond the funded period.

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In addition, projects may meet some or all of the following:

- Encourage innovative approaches to collaboration across public and non-academic partners
- Share learning about engagement approaches with colleagues

The Societal Engagement Team has run an annual seed fund since 2016. Please see previously funded projects here.

Funding and eligibility

In addition to the points above relating to the aims of the scheme, the following eligibility criteria apply:

1. The Principal Applicant must be an Imperial staff member, but proposals can involve a team made up of students and/or external partners as well as the Principal Applicant.
2. Proposals can have international reach and can involve international collaborators, partners and/or audiences.
3. Existing engagement activities will not be eligible for funding, unless the proposal demonstrates that a significant new/different element is being introduced, such as a new collaborator, audience or approach.
4. Projects need to engage one or more of the following audiences – schools, local community groups, patients and the wider public. The target audience of activities should be those who do not currently have a formal relationship with university (such as students, staff and academic research collaborators).
5. Projects can involve the engagement of other stakeholders, such as from industry, government or the media, however projects that only engage these stakeholders and not the audiences listed in Eligibility Point 4, would not be eligible.

Funds available

We expect project proposals in the region of £500 - £2,500.

If you have an idea for a project that will cost more than £2,500 please do still get in touch (societal_engagement@imperial.ac.uk) as there may be a different funding route we can help you with.

Eligible costs

A case can be made for technical equipment, but the seed funding should not solely be spent on general equipment such as laptops or cameras. This fund is to support public engagement with research and therefore costs should be directed towards resources that facilitate the development and delivery of these activities specifically. Please see table below for other eligible costs:

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Eligible costs	Internal	External
Staff costs	Not eligible	Students and/or freelancers are eligible costs (i.e. a day rate)
Travel	Eligible	Eligible
Subsistence	Eligible	Eligible
Consumables/equipment	Eligible	Eligible
Training costs	Eligible	Eligible
Indirect and estate costs	Not eligible	Not eligible
Bench costs	Not eligible	Not eligible

How to apply

Project proposals are invited on a rolling basis - there is no deadline for applications.

Applicants should complete the application form and send to societal_engagement@imperial.ac.uk. One supporting document is allowed per application (no more than one page in length) that either provides images or diagrams, or provides details of a previous similar project, to help illustrate your proposal.

For any questions, please contact societal_engagement@imperial.ac.uk.

Review of applications

This award is offered by Academic Partnerships, led by the Associate-Provost Professor Maggie Dallman, and coordinated by the Public Engagement department.

Proposals will be reviewed according to the order they are received.

We will aim to get back to applicants within one week of submission.

In the interests of speed, proposals will be reviewed by a small panel from the Public Engagement team. Specialist guest reviewers (internal or external) will be invited where appropriate, such as where technical advice is needed on a particular platform or where others have experience with the proposed approach or target audience.

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The review panel will consist of:
- Head of Public Engagement
- Senior Public Engagement Programmes Manager
- Engagement Manager (capacity building and Evaluation)
- Specialist digital adviser where necessary

Applications will be judged against the following seven criteria:

Quality of approach	The engagement activities facilitate two-way engagement with research. *For example, audiences and/or collaborators are involved in the development of the engagement process and/or involved in an Imperial research process – rather than solely being a recipient of the dissemination of our research.*
Suitability of approach	The proposed approach would enable digital, online, remote or self-led engagement with research. Potential platforms or formats have been well selected and are appropriate for the aims of the project (considering target audience, accessibility, reach, functionality and style).
Targeted audience	Targeting of specific audiences with a clear rationale for why those participants, collaborators, and/or partners have been targeted, and evidence that there is sufficient means to reach those audiences. *Detailed descriptions are encouraged rather than broad terms such as 'the general public' e.g. specific research beneficiaries, ethnic minorities, socioeconomic groups, school key stages, geographically isolated communities, independent adults, families with under 5s.*
Impact	What is the need for the project and how will it benefit all those involved. For example participants, audiences and collaborators, as well as meeting Imperial's research and strategic goals. *Relevance of the project or research to the target audience(s). The potential to impact research and/or researchers. Timeliness – Why is this needed now? E.g. linking to external events or agendas e.g. local activity or anniversaries of key people/events.. Or linking to specific elements of the research lifecycle.*
Evaluation	Evidence of realistic evaluation commensurate to the project.
Timeframe and achievability	Clear and realistic objectives and timelines with a clear plan for delivery of the project and the right expertise involved to make the project a success. Potential for the project to realise benefits within a short timeframe.
Legacy	The extent to which the project leaves a legacy beyond the life of the project. *This could be skills developed (internally and/or externally), relationships/collaborations developed and/or maintained, new avenues for funding being sought or lessons learnt to inform future engagement projects.*

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<tr><td>**Accessing funds and reporting**</td></tr>
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- A degree of evaluation commensurate to the project scale will be required from you.

- A brief final report will be required to summarise achievements and findings from your evaluation. Final reports should be sent to societal_engagement@imperial.ac.uk at the agreed project end date.

- Project activities will need to be documented in some way e.g. where possible by photography or AV, social media comments, blogs or other participant reactions, to capture the process and the outcome, which may be shared with the wider College community through the Societal Engagement webpages and/or internal news stories.

- For successful projects, please contact your Finance Officers for advice on setting up an internal G account code linked to the relevant departmental cost centre. Once your code is established, please inform societal_engagement@imperial.ac.uk who will arrange for the funds to be transferred to you.