**Tübingen - Durham Seedcorn Fund**

Durham and Tübingen wish to develop a stronger bilateral relationship, building on their collaborations through the Matariki Network of Universities. The *Tübingen-Durham Seedcorn Fund* follows delegations hosted by each partner and an MoU first signed in 1989.

Through a competitive process, Durham and Tübingen universities will jointly advertise, select and fund projects in research and education. Successful research projects are expected to result in third-party funding applications. Parameters of this scheme are outlined below:

**Awards**

Each university will make available €50,000 each year for a first period of two years. Applications will be invited in the range €10,000 - €25,000 for activity duration of between 6 and 24 months. Financial expenditure plans should indicate spend over the full duration of the proposed projects.

The first call ran from 1st March – 1st May 2018

The second call opens 1st February – 15th April 2019

**Eligibility**

- Applicants/ PIs must be academic staff at either Durham or Tübingen Universities at any stage of their careers, and can include faculty from cooperating institutes.
- Additional external partners can be involved, however a strong argument should be made where contribution exceeds 20%.
- Applicants must have expertise in the applied projects.
- Projects incorporating Early Career Researchers (ECRs) or postgraduate students are encouraged.

**Objectives**

The TU-DU Seedcorn Fund supports:

- Development of joint applications for large external grants. Funding can be used, *inter alia*, to engage with additional partners (academic or non-academic) in order to develop collaborative research proposals, to establish interactions with beneficiaries who will co-fund a proposal or help to develop the impact of the research, to conduct short proof-of-principle studies, or to carry out a specialised literature review in a new field of research.
- It is expected that the seedcorn funding for research will lead to the submission of an external grant application and/or major research output. The proposal should address either:
  a. The funding body, timescale for submission of the external proposal and likely scope and value of the grant application;
  b. Or, how this project will achieve increased international exposure, i.e. plans for dissemination.

**Priority areas**

Applications to the Tübingen-Durham Seedcorn Fund should be aligned with the strategies of both universities.
Selection and monitoring

Applications will be assessed using the below indicators:

- Academic quality of the proposed research including ambition, significance and originality.
- Importance of seedcorn funding for the likely success of the proposal.
- Fit with research strategy of the Departments/Schools and the universities.
- Clarity of intentions, including timetable of submission and targeted external funding scheme.

Proposals will be jointly evaluated by a panel of senior academics with responsibility for research at each university. Where possible, the selection panel will award an equal number of awards to DU and TU lead applicants.

A Project Completion Report must be completed by award holders on completion of the work defined in the seedcorn application. For 2 year projects, a progress report is expected at the end of the first year.

Allowable and ineligible costs

See below for a list of allowable indicative costs:

- Travel, accommodation and subsistence
- Facilitation of a workshop with potential academic or non-academic partners, with the aim of refining the content and objectives of a research proposal, or developing strategies for external impact
- Catering and room hire
- Administrative costs of organising meetings or workshops
- Consumables costs for a proof-of-principle study
- Market research
- Ad-hoc / short-term assistance from a research assistant (RA)\(^1\)

An exceptional cost is given below:

- Consultancy costs (external consultants).

  The applicant must provide an argument for the inclusion of these costs.

An indicative list of ineligible costs is given below:

- Computers, equipment, software
- Salary support for the applicant(s)
- Teaching buy-out
- Business start-up costs
- Salary support for extended periods for doctoral students and / or research assistants.

Full details of all anticipated costs/activities must be clearly itemised on the application form.

Succession and Sustainability

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\(^1\) Where short-term assistance from a research assistant (RA) is requested on a taxable fees basis, the name of the proposed RA, together with the current status (e.g. postgraduate, employment contract) and proposed dates of engagement, must be provided, to ensure eligibility of the RA to undertake the work can be checked. Employment contracts will only be considered by exception and must be in line with the host university’s recruitment procedures and policies. The role of the RA must be fully specified. The role and length of time the RA is funded must be proportionate to the seedcorn proposal activities and duration and fully detailed and justified. It is expected that assistance provided by a RA will be fully directed by the lead applicant.
Prior to each application round opening, universities will share information on current external grant funding opportunities for cooperative projects between the UK and Germany.

Proposals must demonstrate sustainability beyond the funded period.

Projects that reach out to a wider audience of students and researchers will also be looked on favourably. For example, training of PhD candidates through sharing of expertise is encouraged.

Research Support colleagues will support PIs and Co-Is to develop external funding applications following the completion of the Tübingen-Durham Seedcorn Scheme.

Outcomes

Approval: Where a seedcorn application is approved for funding, funds will be provided approx. equally from Durham and Tübingen Universities.

Amendment: Where the panel is unable to approve funding but believes that the proposal might be fundable with minor changes, the applicants will be informed and asked to resubmit following the panel’s recommendations for changes.

Refusal: Where an application is refused for funding, the applicant will be informed of the panel decision and feedback.

A record of the outcome of each seedcorn application will be maintained by:

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