**Tübingen - Durham Seedcorn Fund - 2020**

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 for the call. Applications will be invited for a maximum of €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 ran from 1st February – 1st April 2019

The third will run from 5th February – 15th May 2020

**Eligibility**

- Applicants/PIs must be academic staff at either Durham or Tübingen Universities (or equivalent with the duration of stay equal to the applied funding period) 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 the external partners’ 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:

- Strengthening of the longstanding ties between Tübingen and Durham and the broadening of the existing partnership.
- 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**
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 any future, external grant application.

- Alignment with the research strategy of both universities and their faculties/ departments / schools.

- Clarity of intentions, including timetable of submission and targeted external funding scheme.

Proposals will be jointly evaluated by a panel which includes senior academics from each university. Where possible, the selection panel will award an equal number of awards to DU-led and TU-led projects.

**Monitoring**
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.

**Equality, Diversity and Inclusion**
Durham and Tübingen are committed to encouraging applications from women and other groups who are currently under-represented. This will be taken into consideration by the panel. Both universities would particularly hope to continue improving the gender balance of applications.

Furthermore, Durham and Tübingen expects that equality, diversity and inclusion is embedded at all levels, and in all aspects of research practice.
Allowable and ineligible costs

See below for a list of **allowable** indicative costs:

- Travel, accommodation\(^1\) 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)\(^2\)

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
- Travel or accommodation for non-DU or TU project partners

The panel reserve the right to withdraw or reduce funding for elements of the project if deemed ineligible, excessive or inappropriate.

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

**Succession and Sustainability**

Prior to each application round opening, universities will share an information document including external grant funding opportunities for cooperative projects between the UK and Germany.

Proposals must demonstrate sustainability beyond the funded period.

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\(^1\) For budgeting purposes, the average cost of accommodation (per room per night) is £95 in Durham and Tübingen. Flights between Stuttgart (TU) and Newcastle airports (DU) vary in cost throughout the year but are on average around £200 per person, return, when booked in advance.

\(^2\) 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.*
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.

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

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