**Tsinghua - Cambridge Joint Research** **Initiative Fund**

**Call for proposals 2023: Approaches to a Sustainable Future**

**BACKGROUND**

In 2019 Tsinghua University (TSINGHUA) and the University of Cambridge (CAMBRIDGE) established the Tsinghua - Cambridge Joint Research Initiative Fund, a five-year initiative to strengthen research collaborations between academics in the two institutions. The initiative reflects the commitment of both universities to work together on addressing global challenges, such as climate change, food security or infectious diseases and has been funding over 25 projects in five calls over the last four years.

The 2023 call will be broadly focused on approaches to a sustainable future.

**SCOPE OF THE CALL**

Projects can address any aspect of sustainability and associated research challenges. Examples of potential key themes include, **but are not limited to**:

* Climate change, Pathways to Net Zero and Climate Repair
* Sustainable use of natural resources
* Pathways to Zero Pollution
* Sustainable agriculture
* Conservation of biodiversity
* Achieving the 17 UN Sustainable Development, including through changes in individual- and societal-level behavior and evidence-based policy
* Climate/Environmental justice

Priority will be given to projects that demonstrate a strong collaboration between the two institutions that makes use of complementary expertise and skills between the UK and Chinese partners. Involvement of project partners at other institutions is possible, but no funding can be provided for third parties and relevant due diligence will be required.

If you have an idea for a proposal, but do not have the appropriate contacts at the other institution, please contact the respective academic leads in Cambridge (Professor Henning Sirringhaus, [hs220@cam.ac.uk](mailto:hs220@cam.ac.uk)) or Tsinghua (Ms. Hannah Zhang, zhang-han@tsinghua.edu.cn) who will be very happy to assist with identifying suitable partners.

**SUPPORTED ACTIVITIES**

The initiative will support the expansion of existing collaborations between academics at the two universities but also the development of new collaborations in order to build a meaningful and productive strategic partnership between the two institutions. Examples of potential supported activities include[[1]](#footnote-1):

* Consumables funding at either partner.
* Cost of research exchanges between PhD students, post-doctoral researchers and academic staff (including virtual exchanges)
* Cost of joint meetings and workshops between research groups (including virtual meetings).
* Funding for joint publications and patent applications.
* Invited lectures and seminars to establish strategic contacts between groups or individuals (including virtual lectures).
* Other forms of collaboration that meet the overall aims of the scheme.
* All eligible research expenditure should be in support of the aims of the collaborative research. Staff costs are not eligible for this call
* The partnership will be focused on research collaborations only and will not include undergraduate education.

Applicants are encouraged to think flexibly about how submissions are put together. Proposals need not be restricted to any one of the above, but could also be a combination. We are keen to support, wherever possible, whatever form of activity applicants think has the best chance achieving the desired outcomes. Alternative ideas that depart significantly from the above should be discussed in advance with the respective academic lead: for Cambridge, Professor Henning Sirringhaus (hs220@cam.ac.uk), for Tsinghua Ms. Hannah Zhang (zhang-han@tsinghua.edu.cn).

**EXPECTED OUTCOMES**

It is expected that there will be tangible outcomes of funded collaborations such as the *submission of co-authored publications, patent applications, joint applications for external grant funding or advice to governments or intergovernmental organisations*. It is hoped that projects could lead to long-lasting substantial collaborations that are maintained beyond the initial funding period and could be supported in the future by government, philanthropic, industrial or other external funding.

**GRANT SIZES**

In this call we intend to fund on the order of 6 projects and project costs should not exceed £12.5k for the Cambridge partners and RMB125k for the Tsinghua partners for a project duration of not more than 12 months. Applicants who have achieved the expected outcomes in the first phase may be invited to submit an extended project for consideration for funding in subsequent years.

**RELEVANT DATES**

Each research proposal must be jointly prepared by PIs from both institutions and each PI must submit an application in English and Chinese, respectively, on the provided application form to his/her own institution by the deadline.

Funding period: 12 months

**Submission deadline: Friday October 20, 2023, 5pm local time**

We will inform successful projects and set up the approved projects once the Steering Committee makes a decision.

Submission to be made to:

* + - Tsinghua University (In Chinese): [zhang-han@tsinghua.edu.cn](mailto:zhang-han@tsinghua.edu.cn)
    - Cambridge University (In English): [tsinghua@admin.cam.ac.uk](mailto:tsinghua@admin.cam.ac.uk)

**ASSESSMENT PROCESS**

Applications will be assessed by an assessment panel comprising academics from both institutions, including academics with the necessary expertise to judge the scientific merit of the proposals. The assessment panel will submit its recommendations to the Steering Committee, which will decide which projects to be funded and how much funding shall be allocated to each project.

Selection criteria will be:

1. Quality and potential impact of the proposed research programme;
2. Strength and complementarity of the research team brought together from both parties;
3. Alignment of proposal with the scope of the call.
4. Likelihood that the proposed research program will achieve the expected outcomes
5. Any concern the assessment panel or the Steering Committee has that may prevent the programme being funded.

**ANNUAL REPORT**

Successful applicants will be expected to submit a short report on their activities, the achieved outcomes as well as future plans and to attend (or send a representative to) a one-day workshop arranged at a future date to encourage interactions and share experience between projects.

**Tsinghua University - Cambridge University**

**Joint Research Initiative Fund Application Form**

**Project Title:**

|  |
| --- |
|  |

**Project Team**:

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **PI (CAMBRIDGE)** | |
| Name: | Department: |
| Email: | |
|  | |
| **PI (TSINGHUA)** | |
| Name: | Department: |
| Email: | |

**Other named investigators: CAMBRIDGE**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Name | School or Department |
|  |  |
|  |  |
|  |  |
| **Other named investigators: TSINGHUA** | |
| Name | School or Department |
|  |  |
|  |  |
|  |  |

**Part I: Case for Support**:

In not more one page, provide details of:

* Proposed research collaboration and activity
* Alignment of project with scope of the call
* How the project will lead to long term collaboration beyond the scope of the seed project
* Expected outcomes of seed grant funding
* Requested resources: The English form should detail only resources requested by Cambridge. The Chinese form should detail resources requested by Tsinghua. Please break down the costs requested by category of expenditure.

**Part II: Track Record of Personnel**

For each PI named in the Project Team, please provide the following in no more than 2 pages per PI:

1. Resume
2. List of 10 most significant career Publications
3. List of Research Funding in the past 3 years:

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Description**  (all named investigators on any proposal or grant/ project/ fellowship in which a Participant is/was involved, project title, source of support and scheme) | **Year award made** | **Duration (years)** | **Total Value (£’000 or RMB)** |
| *Example: X. Wang and J Smith, New Energy Materials, National Research Corporation, Fundamental Projects* | *2018* | *4* | *£500,000* |
|  |  |  |  |
|  |  |  |  |
|  |  |  |  |

1. Please note that costs directly related with Covid-19, e.g. tests, quarantine, etc. cannot be covered by the Fund. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)