

Tsinghua - Cambridge Joint Research Initiative Fund in Sustainability and Future Emerging Technologies – Extraordinary call for proposals in response to the Covid-19 pandemic – 2nd closing

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. In its first call in the fall of 2019 the initiative supported 13 currently ongoing projects within the broad theme of sustainability and future emerging technologies.

The initiative recently issued an extraordinary call for funding a number of collaborative projects between academic groups at the two universities that are seeking to contribute to addressing urgent challenges in relation to the Covid-19 global health emergency. The pandemic requires a strong, collaborative international response and open sharing of experience gained in tackling it. Two projects have already been funded under this extraordinary call. However, we are aware that there was significant interest in this call but not all interested researchers were able to submit proposals due to the short timescale for the submission of proposals. Therefore, the call will remain open for a **2nd closing at the end of August.**

SCOPE OF THE CALL

Projects can address any aspect of the Covid-19 emergency. Examples may include, but are not limited to, projects that aim to share best practice in clinical treatment or most effective public health interventions based on experience gained in the UK and China, develop medical equipment or treatments, develop or improve epidemic models or provide advice on most appropriate economic interventions. Priority will be given to projects with potential impact on a short to medium timescale and projects that demonstrate a strong collaboration between the two institutions that makes use of complementary expertise, skills or access to information between the UK and Chinese partners.

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 Siringhaus, hs220@cam.ac.uk) or Tsinghua (Dr. Jiang Yongbin, ybjiang@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:

- Consumables funding at either partner.
- Short-term staff costs for researchers involved in the project are allowable for this extraordinary call.
- Cost of research exchanges between PhD students, post-doctoral researchers and academic staff (virtual exchanges are encouraged under the current circumstances)
- Cost of joint meetings and workshops between research groups (virtual meetings are encouraged under the current circumstances).

- Funding for joint publications and patent applications.
- Invited lectures and seminars to establish strategic contacts between groups or individuals (virtual lectures are encouraged under the current circumstances).
- Other forms of collaboration that meet the overall aims of the scheme.
- The partnership will be focused on research collaborations only and will not include undergraduate education.
- Projects should aim to avoid the use of currently shut down university facilities. Where access to such facilities is absolutely required such access needs to be clearly justified and all health and safety aspects need to be carefully considered. In such circumstances approval will need to be sought for facility access through the appropriate channels if the proposal is selected for funding.

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 Dr. Jiang Yongbin (ybjiang@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 public health bodies*. Despite the focus on addressing this urgent challenge 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 extraordinary call we envisage making between 3-8 awards 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.

Submission deadline: Monday August 31, 2020, 5pm local time

We will seek to inform successful projects within 1-2 weeks of the submission deadline and set up the approved projects as soon as possible afterwards.

Submission to be made to:

- Tsinghua University (In Chinese): ybjiang@tsinghua.edu.cn
- Cambridge University (In English): 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:

- a) Quality and potential impact of the proposed research programme;
- b) Strength and complementarity of the research team brought together from both parties;
- c) Alignment of proposal with the scope of the call.
- d) Likelihood that the proposed research program will achieve the expected outcomes

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:

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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.

Please outline in a separate section (not subject to the one page length limit), if your project requires access to currently shut-down research facilities and, if yes, what health-and-safety precautions and social distancing provisions would be put in place to ensure the project can be undertaken safely under the current circumstances.

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:

- a) Resume
- b) List of 10 most significant career Publications
- c) 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)
<i>Example: X. Wang and J Smith, New Energy Materials, National Research Corporation, Fundamental Projects</i>	2018	4	£500,000