Institutions for Open Societies
Utrecht University strategic theme
‘Seed Money’ eleventh round
April 2019
Strategic theme
Institutions for Open Societies (IOS)
‘Seed money’ round 11

As already indicated in previous ‘seed money’ rounds the 5 IOS-Hubs will occupy a prominent position within the IOS ‘seed money’ instrument. In this eleventh ‘seed money’ round, this intention has been worked out by allocating a substantial part of the total budget to applications that position themselves within one of the IOS-Hubs. IOS-Hubs core team members cannot apply for buy-out seed money; they are already compensated for their efforts in other ways. In doing so, the Programme Team aims to prevent ‘stacking’, so that there is financial scope to honour other initiatives.

For other IOS research ‘seed money’ funding is therefore offered to a more limited extent in this round.

Institutions for Open Societies
Institutions are the formal and informal rules of human interaction. They may involve laws as well as networks, norms, values, customs or habits. In Utrecht, specialists from various fields, including economists, lawyers, sociologists, historians, public administrators and geographers, focus on the central question of how these institutions contribute to a resilient and open society. Why are some societies more successful than others when it comes to achieving sustainable prosperity, equality, beneficial cooperation and democracy? To what extent are these differences attributable to elements such as citizenship, voluntary cooperation and the market structure? And why is it so difficult to avoid negative side effects such as social polarisation, alienation and environmental pollution?

This seed money round explicitly offers the possibility of funding research proposals that are in line with the IOS-Hubs: 1/ Future of Work, 2/ Future of Citizen-based Initiatives, 3/ Security in Open Societies, 4/ Entrepreneurship for Societal Challenges, 5/ Gender and diversity: Building and Inclusive Society.

The research proposals for ‘seed money’ within the strategic theme Institutions for Open Society (IOS) serve to promote the acquisition of external funding (‘flywheel effect’).
The research proposals, must meet the following conditions:

- High academic quality and innovative;
- Social impact;
- Connecting to one of the IOS-Hubs, or attached to one of the IOS-streams or IOS-platforms, with an interdisciplinary character and preferably interfaculty (Humanities, Law, Economics and Governance, Social and Behavioural Sciences and Geosciences);
- Connecting to the central research theme of the IOS strategic theme, and thus certainly with attention to the institutional components and the effect on open societies;
- Acquire external funding (‘fly-wheel effect’).

Research proposals for ‘seed money’ aim to:

1. Encourage larger grant applications and establish strategic consortia with a focus on larger European funds.
2. Encourage postdocs.

**TIMELINE**

Application: Opens Monday April 1st 2019, submissions can be made to Peter van der Maas (institutions.gw@uu.nl)

Closing: Friday May 10th 2019 at 5 pm (17.00 hours)

Decision-making: as soon as possible, but no later than Thursday June 6th 2019.

**PRACTICAL DEMANDS / PROCEDURE**

A proposal at this first stage of the call consists of a maximum of three pages and provides a concise impression of the subject and the research question, the researchers involved (or, as the case may be, the interdisciplinary team represented by the applicant), the concrete aim (What type of research proposal will follow from this?), the anticipated interdisciplinarity, the academic relevance and possibly the social relevance (principally in the case of applications used for contract funding). Furthermore, it should be indicated which of the five main research themes (Cooperation, Sustainability, Innovation, Equality and Trust) fits the application and for which action (see below) the grant is requested.

The proposal should also include a concise budget plan (what will the requested money be put towards? When will it be used?). The amount of the seed money grant is approximately €15,000 to €25,000. As an exception funding can be higher, depending on the scope of the application. Furthermore, it is important to realize that IOS seed money is intended to prepare an application for research funding and not to carry out the investigation itself (such as pilot projects, for example).

Please note: Proper coordination prior to submission is very important for the purpose of educational planning (short term buy out of educational obligations) and/or the appointment policy of postdocs (Work and Security Act). To ensure that the applicant has discussed this with the managers concerned, the application must be signed by the head of the department, research director or managing director. In case
of an application related to an IOS-Hub, a signature of one the core team members of the relevant IOS-Hub must also be provided.

The Programme Team will strive to approve the maximum number of proposals that meet the above written conditions. If the Programme Team receives more proposals than it can approve, it will have to prioritise. In such cases, the Programme Team will take advice from experts within the Strategic Theme or from external experts.

CATEGORY 1: PROMOTING LARGER GRANT APPLICATIONS AND FORMING OF STRATEGIC CONSORTIA

Releasing permanent staff from different disciplines

Target group: This action applies to permanent and/or temporary staff members, including professors, who are capable of delivering quality research and have an interest in interdisciplinarity. Judging by the meetings of the Strategic Theme to date, this group is exceptionally motivated to conduct interdisciplinary research in the field of the Strategic Theme but does not get round to doing it, enough or at all, due to their teaching and administrative commitments. New in this round is the possibility to request funding for other services, such as research assistance and the space to do pilot experiments.

Content and organisation: With the aid of strategic seed money, permanent members of staff can be partially relieved of their teaching and administrative tasks for a period of three months. Together, the ‘exempted’ members of staff members form an interdisciplinary team. Each team comprises an average of three staff members, each with a different disciplinary background. Post-docs may be added to the team (see Actions 5 and 6).

Results: The interdisciplinary team studies its chosen subject and prepares a project application. The immediate result of this cooperation will be an application submitted either to NWO or an international equivalent of NWO, or to the European Union, or it will be a project proposal to be financed via contract funding (trade and industry / government).

Funding: In all, the seed money grant will finance a number of teams comprising three members of (permanent and/or temporary) staff. Each team will exist for three months. Costs for travel and accommodation expenses or cost for the organisation of conferences etc., are not eligible for seed money. The projects must fall within one of the IOS-Hubs or IOS-streams c.q. IOS-platforms. Maximum funding, including overhead, is € 20,000.

Establishing strategic consortia

Target group: Staff members can use seed money to relieve themselves of teaching and administrative tasks over a prolonged period of time and focus instead on the creation of large long-term consortia, for example to work on applications under the Gravitation (‘Zwaartekracht’) program, NWA route applications, large H2020/European projects or applications of comparable scope (such as COST, ETN or comparable networks).
Content and organisation: The interdisciplinary team explores the selected research subject and prepares a project proposal.

Funding: Creating really large consortiums for large-scale applications and hiring external experts will take more (strategic) time. This means that the funding amounts can be higher and can be used for hiring (or purchasing the services of) consultants (this to a limited extent), community representatives, reviewers etc. as well as for exempting (permanent and/or temporary) staff members. Furthermore, within this action costs for travel, accommodation expenses and costs for the organisation of conferences are eligible for seed money. Maximum funding, including overhead, is € 25,000.

**CATEGORY 2: ENCOURAGING POSTDOCS**

Extending post-doctoral contracts (a maximum of two proposals will be approved this round)

Target group: This action applies to talented post-docs employed with one of the participating research groups and who have proven academic ability. This group deserves to be selected for a further research track, in this case an interdisciplinary track, but the Strategic Theme often lacks sufficient means to organise this.

Content and organisation: With the aid of seed money, these post-docs can have their contracts extended by three to five months. During this period they will participate in one of the interdisciplinary teams mentioned under Action 1.

Results: The post-doc prepares a project application. This may be the application mentioned under Action 1 or an appropriate but independent proposal that can be submitted to NWO or an international equivalent of NWO. If the application is successful, the post-doc will lead the ensuing project.

Funding: Post-docs are financed for a period of three to five months to conduct work within one of IOS-Hubs or IOS-streams c.q. IOS-platforms. Costs for travel and accommodation expenses or cost for the organisation of conferences etc., are not eligible for seed money. Maximum funding, including overhead, is € 17,250.

Recruiting external post-docs (a maximum of two proposals will be approved this round)

Target group: This action applies to talented post-docs employed with one of the participating research groups and who have proven academic ability. This group deserves to be selected for a further research track, in this case an interdisciplinary track, but the Strategic Theme often lacks sufficient means to organise this.

Content and organisation: With the aid of seed money, these post-docs can have their contracts extended by three to five months. During this period they will participate in one of the interdisciplinary teams mentioned under Action 1.
Results: The post-doc prepares a project application. This may be the application mentioned under Action 1 or an appropriate but independent proposal that can be submitted to NWO or an international equivalent of NWO. If the application is successful, the post-doc will lead the ensuing project.

Funding: Post-docs are financed for a period of three to five months to conduct work within one of the IOS-Hubs or IOS-streams c.q. IOS-platforms. Costs for travel and accommodation expenses or cost for the organisation of conferences etc., are not eligible for seed money. Maximum funding, including overhead, is € 17,250.

Temporary contracts for recent PhD graduates (a maximum of two proposals will be approved this round)

Target group: This action applies to recent PhD graduates and to those who have completed their thesis and will soon to be graduating. In addition, these persons must have a proven interest in and talent for interdisciplinary research.

Content and organisation: They will be employed for a period of three to five months in one of the participating research groups and work together with another discipline.

Results: The PhD candidate or graduate prepares a VENI or Rubicon or similar application that can be submitted to NWO.

Funding: The PhD holders and candidates are financed for a period of three to five months to conduct work within one of the IOS-Hubs or IOS-streams c.q. IOS-platforms. Costs for travel and accommodation expenses or cost for the organisation of conferences etc., are not eligible for seed money. Maximum funding, including overhead, is € 12,250.