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| ISSF3 Collaboration Panel: Interlinking AwardExpression of Interest (EOI) Guidance |

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| **1. Background - Interlinking Awards (up to £145K)** |
| **IMPORTANT INFORMATION:**  **The programme successfully completed its mid-term review to unlock the full £7M allocation from Wellcome Trust. However, the programme must complete its project spend within the programme period (30th June 2021) and so funded projects need time to recruit, implement and deliver project outcomes. As a result, the budget is profiled to commit the majority of resource by this stage of ISSF3. Some additional schemes may run in 2020 but the timing, which schemes and the budget allocation will not be guaranteed. Public engagement calls are profiled separately so will continue to run into 2020. If you have innovative project ideas, then please submit them during this final full period to avoid any future disappointment.**  The Interlinking Award is a funding scheme that has been introduced in ISSF3 with the aim of supporting collaborative, team-focused science research. Successful awards will bring together disciplinary distinct research groups across the College, University and / or via external partners and will focus on research aimed at addressing a large-scale biomedical / societal / environmental research challenge. Interlinking Awards are designed to lead to very large-scale (in the order of £4-6M) collaborative bids which should be reflected in the research ambition and sustainability plans.  Funding should be used to support a set of thematically interlinked, but focused projects where the research outcomes are enhanced by application of different disciplinary approaches in parallel, and where evidencing a track-record of collaboration between research groups would help support a sustainable large-scale funding bid (e.g., a Wellcome Trust Collaboration Award or small-scale Centre bid). With a strong focus on early career researchers as part of Wellcome Trust ISSF3, we also expect that Interlinking Awards will enhance opportunities for early career researchers, exposing them to new research disciplines and collaborations, and placing them in a position to develop a unique collaborative research niche that would support an application for an early career fellowship or new researcher grant.  Awards must be led by a researcher based in the College of Biomedical and Life Sciences, but inclusion of applicants from other Colleges at Cardiff University, especially where research aligns to the priorities of the Wellcome Trust would be viewed highly positively. Collaboration with external Institutions (including outside of the UK) is also encouraged, consistent with the requirements of the Wellcome Trust Collaborative Awards.  **Summary:** The Interlinking Award will fund exciting, innovative and thematically-linked projects which have the potential to develop sustainable cross-disciplinary partnerships in areas of significant societal / health / environmental need.  **Expressions of Interest (EOI):** In the implementation phase of ISSF3, 2 panels reviewed a number of Interlinking Award applications. Whilst the quality of the science contained in those applications was excellent, there was a general consensus that the research ambition was not sufficiently aligned with the objectives for this funding call and that applicants would benefit from additional feedback during the development phase. As a result, this expression of interest stage has been introduced for the Interlinking Award (only). EOIs will be reviewed by the ISSF management team and feedback produced giving general project guidance. Project structure areas will consider including the call alignment, project positioning (scope and scale), team selection, sustainability plans and interlinking nature of the project. A detailed assessment of the project science will not be evaluated as this is the role of the panel. EOI applicants will be supplied with feedback and invited to submit full applications to the next available ISSF3 Collaboration Funding Panel. The Expression of Interest stage will operate as an “always open” opportunity for the community and applicants will be expected to have submitted an EOI prior to full submission a minimum of 2 months prior to other advertised call deadlines for the Collaboration Panel (e.g. Translational Kickstart, Cross-Disciplinary and Population Award). This will ensure timely feedback and sufficient time for the project team to act on advice prior to submission. Submissions after this date will still be reviewed but applicants will be invited to the next panel.  Please read the further guidance below, complete the EOI and return this the below email address at any time: [ISSFAdmin@cardiff.ac.uk](mailto:ISSFAdmin@cardiff.ac.uk) |

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| **2. Application Guidance** |
| The EOI application has different sections, which we will use to provide first stage feedback. **Please use the suggested word limit.**  **Proposed Title –** An accessible and exciting project title is required, however the project teams can modify this and all aspects of the project following EOI stage feedback.  **Grand challenge to be addressed –** In this section please provide a readily accessible overview of the grand challenge area(s) to be addressed in the project. A grand challenge is one or more specific critical barrier(s) that, if removed, would help solve an important problem with a high likelihood of economic / societal impact through widespread implementation in the long term. The grand challenges selected should reflect the strategies of major funders you intend to target in future and evidence of the need and benefits of research in the area.  **Award Lead applicant details –** This individual will be the single point of contact for the EOI stage feedback but does not necessarily need to be the final stage PI.  **Project Scale Overview –** Core grant information of start date (month, year), grant cost and duration. A CAP form is not required at this stage and an estimate to the nearest £5-10K will be sufficient.  **Project Team -** A brief description of the other project contributors and a description of the key skill sets that they contribute to the project. The expectation here is that the skill sets complement each other in service of the project and addressing the grand challenge.  **Project Overview -** Please provide a scientific summary outlining the main experimental themes and approaches of the award. Please use the requested headings to give an understanding of the novelty and innovative approach being applied. The major research objectives and the wider knowledge that will be obtained from completing them. The expected outcomes and scientific importance should also be described. The Research/ Experimental plans should overview the techniques and approaches in addition to highlighting any new methods being developed or introduced into non-conventional disciplines. This interlinking nature of projects has not always been readily accessible so this section should be clear to non-experts in the field how this award has step-change potential.  **Collaborative Partnership –** Given you are establishing a new research team, please explain how you will work together in order to deliver this interdisciplinary award and build a sustainable research framework capable of targeting large scale projects. In this section you should describe the rationale and justification for the selected team /skill sets. This section’s focus should be on team composition rather than an individual’s track record and demonstrate why this grouping would be competitive with larger scale projects.  **Project Structure -** This section should describe the project structure and management structures that clearly define the roles and responsibilities of the team members. Project structure should ensure effective knowledge/ data exchange between disciplines is hard-wired into the team structure, working practices and proposal. In this section visual representations of the project structures are welcome as clarity, feasibility and efficiency will be key considerations.  **Research Ambition/ Sustainability –** Please provide a clear pathway to external funding. A common error here is for applicants to list a range of different funding schemes. We are looking for evidence of a more focused approach to sustainability where you have identified a clear funding opportunity where your research aligns to the strategic priorities of that funder and there is a suitable call within a relevant timeframe of completion of your award. The information you provide here will be one of the sustainable measures of success for the project, and provided for monitoring purposes to the Wellcome Trust. The scale of ambition should be appropriate for the objectives of the call (i.e. leading to very large-scale, £4-6M, collaborative bids). This ambition could be as a single award or a portfolio of complementary applications, however the intent and justification should be clearly aligned to addressing the stated grand challenge, University and funder strategies.  **Justification of Resources –** No CAP form is required at this stage as the core requirements and project balance can be evaluated with approximate values. Exact costings are not required but it is critical to justify your requested finances, and to provide a clear breakdown using the suggested headings. Consumables should be justified individually rather than providing a single lump sum request. For Interlinking Awards, we also require a breakdown, using these headings, for each proposed sub-project; this allows the panel to consider project balance and how to recalculate funding requirements if one area is considered weaker than others. |

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| **3. Full Stage - Application Process & Review** |
| If invited, all applications should be submitted on the appropriate application form, with attention paid to the requirements for each section. Applicants should **not be Lead PI** on an application for more than one funding scheme within the Collaboration Panel at the same time. For example, an applicant for a Cross-Disciplinary Award would not be permitted to also apply for a Population, Translational Kickstart or Interlinking Award within the same call. This restriction is designed to reduce the number of applications the panel has to review, and encourage researchers to consider applications aligned to the right scheme at the right time in the research delivery timeline. Additional full stage application guidance is available on the ISSF website and will be supplied to you following the EOI stage feedback. |

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| **5. Submission Deadline** |
| All EOI applications should be submitted to [ISSFAdmin@cardiff.ac.uk](mailto:ISSFAdmin@cardiff.ac.uk). EOI’s can be received at any time and feedback will be provided within approximately a month of submission. Full stage applications will be by ‘invitation only’. Therefore, applicants should submit an EOI at least 2 months prior to Collaboration Schemes’ deadline. Submissions after this date will still be reviewed but applicants will be invited to the next panel. |