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| ISSF3 Collaboration Panel: Interlinking Award Guidance for Applications |

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| **1. Background - Interlinking Awards (up to £145K)** |
| **IMPORTANT INFORMATION:** **To help balance our portfolio of projects and deliver on Wellcome Trust grant expectations, this Round G of ISSF3 will be the final launch of ISSF3 research focused schemes.** **ISSF3 was awarded in 2016 and will continue to operate as a programme until 2021. 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 remaining resources by this stage of ISSF3.** Following on from the College’s successful award of a third round of the Wellcome Trust Institutional Strategic Support Fund (ISSF), we are looking to fund excellent applications aligned to our Wellcome Trust ISSF3 Interlinking Awards. The Interlinking Award is a new 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.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. **ROUND G HIGHLIGHT NOTIFICATION –** All projects must be completed no later than 30th June 2021. No cost extensions will not be accepted for projects needing to exceed this date. |

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| **2. Application Guidance and Top Tips** |
| The application has different sections, which we use to evaluate your project and complete Wellcome Trust reporting requirements. **Please use the suggested word limit.**Lay Summary – This new section will be made available to external visitors to the Cardiff University ISSF3 website. Please write for a non-technical audience and ensure the importance of the activity is clear. For guidance on how to write lay summary, please click [here](http://www.dcc.ac.uk/resources/how-guides/write-lay-summary).Scientific Summary – Please provide a scientific summary outlining the main theme of the award, prior to highlighting the separate sub-themes / projects (labelling these as 1, 2, 3 and so on for clarity and alignment with the project outline section below). Please indicate the Lead PI and co-PIs for each project so we can understand who is working together to deliver the different projects. End by summarising the key scientific / societal step-change that will be enabled by establishing this new collaborative partnership.Project Outline(s) – Please provide information about each subtheme / project using a separate project outline section for each of these projects. Please use the requested headings: cross-disciplinary nature of the project, objectives, research plan, hypotheses, expected scientific outcomes and relationship to the other projects. Dissemination of these scientific outcomes will be one of the measures of success that we will report to the Wellcome Trust. **Please provide a timeline for delivery of key research tasks in an Appendix (e.g., Gantt Chart).** Collaborative Partnership – Given you are establishing a new research team, please tell us how you will work together in order to deliver this larger-scale interdisciplinary award and build a sustainable research network. Research 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. Equality and Diversity – As part of the Wellcome Trust award we are embedding monitoring of equality and diversity throughout all schemes and wish to learn more about application of equality and diversity with respect to any employment of staff, management of the project and data. Information you provide here will form part of our reporting around this area to the Wellcome Trust.Early Career Researchers – The Wellcome Trust ISSF3 funding creates the opportunity to catalyse and enhance the careers of our ECRS, and we are keen to learn more about how you will use your award to support these future research leaders. For example, what activities will you embed in the delivery of your award to enhance ECRs appointed on the projects, and how could the scientific outcomes provide support for their transition to independence? Justification of Resources – We often receive applications that pay cursory attention to finances, and many that ask for the full amount possible without any justification of this request. 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 project; this allows the panel to consider how to recalculate funding requirements if one project is considered weaker than others. Where finances are not sufficiently detailed, applications will not be considered at the relevant Panel.ISSF project association or resubmission - Within the ISSF programme we have specific rules from Wellcome Trust that prevent continuation funding. Within the programme we also aim to ensure that the portfolio of projects does not include double funding or overlapping projects (from overlapping project teams). This question aims to provide applicants with an opportunity to declare associations with other ISSF projects and submissions. If the idea or concept is similar to other ISSF projects of previous submissions, then please clarify how this new project is substantially different and occupies a separate niche. Within ISSF we welcome reformulations of previously submitted grants, however resubmissions should have responded in a significant and substantive way to the previous feedback. This question will ensure the panel are aware of the efforts you have made to position your project and respond to feedback. Please also ensure you are familiar with the eligibility criteria details surrounding applicants not being able to apply for another scheme in the same pillar grouping in the same round i.e. you cannot be a named PI in the same pillar in the same round.Peer Review – To support high-quality peer review, we are providing information about call deadlines well in advance to enable appropriate preparation of grants. We have requested information, therefore, about the individual who has peer reviewed your application, and a tick-box to ensure that School peer review and costing procedures have been followed. |

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| **3. Application Process & Review** |
| All applications should be submitted on the appropriate application form, with attention paid to the requirements for each section. Please note that additional information/appendices (beyond our requested timeline, see Project Outline) are **not** allowed and will be excluded from the application at review. Applicants should **not** exceed the permitted word count for each section (including table and figure legends); if they do, the application will not be considered at the Panel. Similarly, a lack of detailed justification of research costs will result in the application not being submitted to the Panel. 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. All applications will be reviewed by an experienced and representative panel of Cardiff University staff. For these panels we aim to ensure representation from across the College, both in terms of scientific expertise, diversity and seniority. Early career researchers may attend these panels as observers, and be provided with applications (in confidence) to help them learn more about grant reviewing processes.Alongside assessment of the scientific quality of the project, and potential to deliver sustainable external funding, the panel will be encouraged to consider alignment with the Wellcome Trust ISSF3 career framework and College research priorities. They will also consider the benefit to early career researchers of all applications (e.g., growing skills and capacity in key interdisciplinary research areas).Strategic decisions when applications are tied for funding will be made based on College research priority and consideration of current PI-held Wellcome Trust ISSF3 funding. Regarding the latter, we are keen that the Wellcome Trust Funds are used to the maximum benefit for the many talented researchers we have in the College, and researchers should consider carefully which schemes to apply for aligned to their research aspirations. Similarly, consideration of budgets can mean that the full requested amount of funding may not be awarded. |

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| **4. Governance and Panellists** |
|  Wellcome Trust ISSF Schemes are reviewed by separate panels aligned to career stage (currently Training, Consolidation & Independence, Collaboration and Public Engagement). The Interlinking Award is considered at the Collaboration Panel.Our panellists are all experienced at grant reviewing, with each panel including representation from both junior / senior researchers, as well as across all Schools in the College. Panellists undergo equality and diversity training to ensure as fair and transparent process of assessment.Panels provided recommended decisions which require ratification by the Wellcome Trust ISSF3 Board. Panellists are not allowed to provide information about outcomes from panel decision-making, similar to external grant reviewing panels. The contact for all queries relevant to applications, panels and outcomes is via ISSFAdmin@cardiff.ac.uk.Due to the high number of submissions to our Wellcome ISSF2 Panels it has not previously been possible for the College to provide detailed feedback to applicants. For ISSF3, we hope to ensure that early career researchers obtain feedback from applications to help them develop their skills in grant writing. This will be developed as we start to understand the demand for our dedicated early career researcher schemes, and how we might best enhance the opportunities for our more junior researchers. |

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| **5. Submission Deadline** |
| All applications should be submitted to ISSFAdmin@cardiff.ac.uk by **17:00 GMT, Monday 23rd March 2020.** Applications submitted after this time will **not** be accepted. All applications need to be subjected to the normal review and costings procedures within the submitting School. Please submit a Microsoft Word version of the application. Procedures within the submitting School. Please submit a Microsoft Word version of the application. |