Strategic Research Investment Fund (SRIF) 2019

Guidelines

Introduction

The Strategic Research Investment Fund (SRIF) aims to seed programs of work that align with strategic research priorities and enhance the research capabilities of James Cook University (JCU). Research supported by SRIF should have high potential to contribute to the diversification of income and demonstrate clear pathways towards sustainability. Successful programs will demonstrate the potential to leverage existing research capability to build new platforms and access or develop new opportunities.

In 2019, a total of $1M is available for investment through SRIF.

The fund is open to JCU staff in Townsville, Cairns and Singapore. Application is by way of a Program Business Case that provides clear objectives, measurable outcomes and criteria by which success of the program can be evaluated. The Program Business Case must include clear plans for sources of external investment in the program, including end-user investment and support.

Each program of work will be funded for up to 3 years, with a total maximum investment of $1M from SRIF for the duration of the grant. A maximum of $500,000 may be awarded in any single year of the grant.

The SRIF scheme is intended to seed programs that are able to demonstrate a clear path toward sustainability through accessing a number of potential income streams that are credible and verifiable, including end-user contributions, and/or support from external grants. Total return on investment in the SRIF program should be 3:1 (this can include both external cash and external in-kind returns).   Applications that can demonstrate an external cash component of at least 1:1 (ie. matching the SRIF investment) may be prioritised. In all cases, the program plan must demonstrate clear, achievable milestones and credible, verifiable outcomes. The SRIF scheme is not intended to provide funds to a program beyond three years, so the sources of support planned for sustained operation of the SRIF-seeded program beyond those three years must be clearly articulated.

Future years' allocations of funding for each program will be contingent on progress towards milestones and intended outcomes.

Eligibility

Chief Investigators on a program must be academic or research staff with a current employment contract at James Cook University.

Due to Australian Government, Research Support Program (RSP) regulations JCU Singapore Investigators cannot be the first Chief Investigator on a program.

Adjunct staff may be included as Associate Investigators.

A researcher can be included as a Chief Investigator in no more than two programs in a funding round and may not be a CI on more than two funded programs at any one time.

To be eligible for consideration SRIF programs must be endorsed by the relevant Dean of College before submission to the round.

How to Apply

Application to the scheme is via the Program Business Case Form in this document.

Submission Details

An eligible application consists of a completed Program Business Case Form, a budget spreadsheet and evidence of support saved as one (1) PDF emailed to JCUConnect@jcu.edu.au.

Closing Date

Applications must be submitted to Research Services by **COB 13 March 2019.**

Selection Criteria

Applications will be assessed against the following criteria:

1. **Proposed Program [50%]**

    a. Alignment with the Strategic Intent of the University, Division and College/Institute/Directorate

    b. Distinctiveness of the program as compared to other programs within or beyond JCU

    c. Demonstrable pathways to impact, such as economic, health, social, cultural and environmental impacts

    d. Measureable outcomes for significant advancement of research capabilities, excellence and impact

    e. Research investment strategy and plan - including plans for diversification of income streams and potential cash investment from end-users over time

2. **Program Team and Ability to Deliver [30%]**

    a. Track record of CIs' management of large projects, collaborations and teams. It is expected that Programs would include a diversity of CIs such as Early Career Researchers, Mid-Career Researchers and Professorial staff.

    b. Track record of CIs' productive engagement with end-users, collaborators and/or industry partners

    c. Track record of CIs' capacity to deliver high quality, fit-for purpose research

    d. Feasibility of the design and budget of the program in ensuring the program achieves its aims

3. **Benefit to James Cook University and End Users [20%]**

    a. Anticipated return on investment to JCU - including financial and non-financial benefits such as research income, research translation, commercial expectations, capacity building, student recruitment, and reputation (including consideration of obligations and outcomes of equity programs, such as SAGE)

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b. Anticipated benefits to end-users/partners

Budget Items Supported

SRIF funds may be used to support a program manager, postdoctoral and other research support positions, and support for capacity building activities. Specific direct research costs, such as research assistance, equipment, maintenance, consumables, travel and publication costs are also supported. It is expected that the budget has been checked by the relevant College/Division finance officer to ensure accuracy and appropriate resourcing for the Program.

It is expected that a Program Manager will be appointed to ensure that program milestones and outcomes are achieved.

Budget Items Unable to be Supported

SRIF funds are unable to support:

- Research towards a higher degree
- Conference or event travel
- Infrastructure Costs for basic facilities such as:
    - Accommodation (e.g. laboratory and office);
    - Access to film or music editing facilities;
    - Access to a basic library collection;
    - Standard reference materials or funds for abstracting services;
    - Provision of computers, including laptops (excluding access to high-performance computers or other specialised applications) and basic computing facilities such as printers, word processing and other standard software; and
    - Use of photocopiers, telephones, mail, fax, email and internet services.

Duration of Grant

The SRIF will fund a program for up to 3 years. Successful programs will be awarded an initial allocation of 1 year's funding with allocation of future years funding dependent upon externally generated income and/or end-user contributions and support in years 2 and 3 of the grant. Funding allocations for years 2 and 3 of the grant are also dependent on meeting the milestones and objectives of the proposal.

Assessment Process

Academic Divisions are encouraged to screen their Division's applications. Applications endorsed by the division, must be accompanied by commentary from the relevant DVC/s or Director/s Research Development on the alignment of the proposed program with the Division's strategic priorities.

Any applications subsequently considered by the Division of Research and Innovation (DRI) as not meeting the intent of the scheme will not be taken forward.

Applications which do meet the intent of the scheme, will be assessed by a panel chaired and appointed by the DVC R&I. The panel will include external members with relevant industry, research and investment expertise, supplemented by additional advice as required.

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Applicants will be expected to attend the Selection Panel meeting to outline their Program through a PowerPoint presentation (5 slides in 5 minutes) and field questions from the Panel.

The level of funding awarded to successful programs will be at the discretion of the panel. The panel also has the discretion to request further information or clarification from CIs on short-listed programs.

Appeals against the decisions of the panel will only be considered on the basis of process. The DVC R&I will have sole discretion in determining if an appeal is considered and the appropriate means of review.

Reporting

The format and frequency of reporting arrangements will be outlined in the Letter of Award to successful applicants.