Faculty of Forestry Internal Research Seed Grant Program
Call for Proposals
February 14, 2024

Goal:

To provide funds for clusters of researchers within the Faculty of Forestry to tackle large, applied multidisciplinary problems, to catalyze collaborations within the Faculty, and to lay the groundwork for larger projects funded by Tri-Council programs, UBC Grants for Catalyzing Research Clusters (GCRC), or other provincial or federal research funding initiatives. Funding through this program may also provide eligible co-funding for some external research grant programs.

Team composition:

The applicant team must include three or more faculty members including both junior faculty (especially new assistant professors) and more senior associate or full professors. Ideally, faculty members will be from more than one department within Forestry. It can also include one or two researchers from other units at UBC or external to UBC. We encourage participation by graduate students and postdoctoral fellows in these team efforts.

Potential types of projects:

1) ***Workshops:*** These multi-day workshops will involve UBC Forestry Faculty, graduate students and postdoctoral fellows coming together to share information and develop ideas for generating a synthesis paper or larger proposal addressing a major issue in forestry, conservation or wood products. Workshops should be open to interested faculty members and HQP. The budget could include a stipend for a few months for a postdoctoral fellow or student to do specific scientific tasks related to deliverables. The budget for these workshops would be up to $10,000.

2) ***Scientific meetings:*** These are larger initiatives that would bring in external collaborators and end users as well as UBC Forestry Faculty, graduate students and postdoctoral fellows to share information and develop a strategy for innovative work addressing major issues. As considerable travel for participants without access to other funds and meeting expenses for larger numbers of people would be involved, the budget for a meeting would be up to $20,000.

3) ***Proof of concept projects:*** These would be small-scale pilot studies to establish the potential for new methods or novel research directions. Funds would be provided for research services, research-related travel, minor equipment, and salaries for HQP. The budget for these projects would be up to $20,000.

Eligible expenses:

Eligible costs (using Tri-Council guidelines) include meeting expenses, travel for non-local team members, and stipends for graduate students, postdoctoral fellows or research assistants for short periods. Ideally, co-funding could be obtained from other sources (e.g., postdoctoral funding from MITACS, or in-kind travel and salaries to participants from partner organizations) to increase the scope of projects.

THE UNIVERSITY OF BRITISH COLUMBIA

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Application process:

Applications will be accepted in the spring of each year, with an additional fall competition if funds permit. The application form requires a two-page project description that includes a rationale, meeting or workshop plan or methodology, and a statement of significance and benefit to the Faculty. It also requires a concise budget, and a list of team members. Proposals should be submitted to Taraneh Sowlati, Associate Dean – Research and Innovation (ADRI, taraneh.sowlati@ubc.ca) who will chair the review committee. Proposals should be accompanied by a signed RPIF.

Review process:

Applications will be evaluated by a review committee including at least three Faculty members from at least two Departments; Faculty members who are on a team that is applying for the seed grant will not be in the review committee of that cycle. Reviewers will score proposals for the following five criteria:

1. **Quality and originality** of the project/workshop/meeting (a clear and novel project plan or novel methodology for Proof-of-Concept, not a reproduction of previous projects or existing meetings)
2. **Significance** of the project/meeting to the field/practice and benefits to the faculty (the potential for developing new avenues of multidisciplinary and collaborative research)
3. **Feasibility** of the project or meeting (can it be successful, is it achievable, are there potential barriers to achieving the outcomes, is the budget in line with the plan)
4. **Multidisciplinarity** (does the project or meeting tackle a complex problem that requires expertise from different disciplines and/or professions)
5. **Team composition** (do team members a) represent various disciplines/different departments b) jointly have the necessary background c) represent various career stages; and d) include students/HQP who will receive training)

The rating scale is from 1= does not meet minimum standards, 2= fair, 3= very good, to 4= excellent. All five criteria will be weighted equally. Proposals must meet minimum standards for each criterion to be funded.

Reviewers will submit their ratings to the chair, along with any notes about strengths and weaknesses. Total scores will be compiled before the adjudication meeting. During the meeting, reviewers can adjust their ratings based on the discussion. Top ranked proposals will be funded to the extent funds are available, to be determined by the chair. Funding decisions will be made within one month of the receipt of proposals.

Deliverables:

Projects must be completed and funds used within eighteen months. Requests for extension of the fund use have to be sent to the Associate Dean – Research and Innovation (Taraneh.Sowlati@ubc.ca) for approval. A short project report will be due eighteen months after the project start date. Acceptable deliverables include a report, a review and synthesis manuscript, a proposal to the UBC Grants for Catalyzing Research Clusters program, or a multi-investigator proposal submitted to a major funding program.