KTH-POSTECH Collaborative Research Seed Funding 2025/26

CRITERIA & GUIDANCE

What are the Collaborative Research Seed Funds?

- The funds are offered to support collaborative research projects. The funds' purpose is to catalyse new collaborations and to build international teams who are well positioned to apply for external research funding.
- Up to 100 000 SEK / 14,000,000 KRW is available from each university to each project with a Principal Investigator from that university. So the maximum possible award could be 14,000,000 KRW from POSTECH and 100 000 SEK from KTH.
- In 2025, a total of four projects will be selected for support, and the research fields will be open to all disciplines.
- The project period is from 1 December 2025 to 28 February 2027 (15 months).

Who are the Collaborative Research Seed Funds open to?

- Applications are open to the universities' staff, including Early Career Researchers, across all faculties and departments.
- Principal Investigator (PI): Each research team should comprise one Principal Investigator (PI) from POSTECH and one PI from KTH. Inclusion of students and other personnel is optional. PIs must be full-time faculty members at their respective universities.
- Co-Investigators (Co-Is) can hold any of the following roles:
  - Professor or equivalent
  - Associate Professor/ Reader or equivalent
  - Senior Lecturer/Principal Researcher/Principal Research Associate or equivalent
  - Lecturer/Senior Research Associate or equivalent
  - Post Doc/Researcher/Research Associate or equivalent
  - *Co-Is must have an open-ended contract or a fixed-term contract which lasts until at least March 2027. If an applicant has a fixed-term contract that does not last until March 2027 they can apply if their contract covers the dates in which the project is due to take place and have a co-applicant who is a university staff member with an open-ended contract. In this case, the co-applicant will be responsible for reporting outcomes to the panel.*
- There must be two or more researchers i.e. academic member of staff, post-doctoral researcher or PhD student, from each university on the project team.
- Applicants are not required to have a doctorate to apply. PhD students are not eligible to apply as the main applicant but can be involved as collaborators in a project.
- Honorary staff members are not eligible to apply as main applicants but may be co-applicants or contribute to the project. Honorary staff members cannot commit or authorise expenditure of university funds.
- In line with the universities' commitment to equality and diversity, we encourage applications from a range of backgrounds regardless of career stage, age, disability, ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, and religion.

What can be funded through Collaborative Research Seed Funds and when?

- Funds must be for a new activity (not activity that has already happened or that is, in substance, covered by other research funds). The new activity can build upon outcomes from a previous project.
- Proposals that can demonstrate follow-up and sustainability beyond the initial funding period are particularly encouraged.
- Activities for which the funds are allocated must take place before 28 February 2027.
- Proposals may include but are not limited to workshops (face-to-face and virtual), symposia, staff exchanges, research seminars/presentations and formation or development of a collaborative network.
- Each institution will pay funds directly to its researchers. Approval of expenditure will be governed by each university for the portion of funding provided.
- Each partner should pay its own costs and there can be no transfer of funds between institutions. For example, travel costs for POSTECH staff should be in the POSTECH budget, costs for subsistence for KTH staff should be allocated in the KTH budget, and so on.

Eligible costs	Ineligible costs

- Travel costs including flights, hotels and subsistence costs
- Directly incurred staff e.g. Research Assistant*
- Research costs including consumables
- Costs associated with organising workshops and meetings e.g. hiring venues, catering etc.

- Replacement research/teaching costs
- Directly allocated costs including applicants' time **
- Indirect costs/estates costs
- Equipment
- Scholarships
- Conference attendance
- Tuition fees
- Honoraria

*Directly Incurred costs are project-specific (i.e. they arise as a direct consequence of the project taking place). POSTECH cannot provide support for personnel expenses.
** Directly Allocated costs are not project-specific (i.e. they are incurred whether or not the project takes place), and are estimated at project level e.g. Investigator time, Technician time (where not directly incurred).

Sustainable International work in a time of changing mobility
- In line with Sustainable Travel approach, methods of remote collaboration are eligible for funding and encouraged where possible, within the limits of what is permissible by the universities' financial regulations and aligned with your own departmental guidelines.

Assessment of applications
- Applications will be assessed by a panel of senior academics from the two institutions. The application consists of the Application Form and supporting documents:

Applicants' details – affiliations from each institution with contact details
Principal Investigator information
Project team information

Research Proposal – details of the project
Title: of the Research Project
Abstract (project design and rationale): a brief description of the project.
Proposed Timeframe (project design and rationale): project dates, a project timeline and a description of the planned activities.
Collaborator complementarity and impact: A description of how the proposed activities combine mutual areas of interest and strength and the added value of this combined expertise. Include any corresponding deliverables, e.g. a publication, blog, a meeting, a report etc. Also include any involvement of early-stage/early career researchers and/or graduate researchers/PhD students and any direct anticipated benefits to those researchers themselves.
Capacity for future collaboration/funding: A description of the potential future collaborations and outcomes that will be possible as a result of having undertaken the current collaboration. For example, joint publications, joint supervision of graduate researchers, joint teaching, joint patent applications, joint reports to governments, joint funding applications etc.
Potential impact: The anticipated benefits of the collaboration to the faculty member's other active research projects and on strengthening the overall partnership between POSTECH and KTH. In addition, improvement and changes within/between the university/universities, the local community, wider society, country or globally.

Proposed budget
A breakdown of the cost of the activity e.g. RAs, flights, travel, hotels etc.

Support documents (Upload on the Application System)
Abbreviated Curriculum Vitae: (not more than 2 pages) of the PIs with a selected list of publications.
A letter of support: from your Line Manager or Head of Department to apply for the grant, including an explanation of how the project aligns with your Department/ Faculty's strategy. For POSTECH, after the principal investigator submits the application through the application system, all required documents must be submitted to the R&D Strategy Team via the POVIS system. Therefore, the application documents approved by the Head of Department via the POVIS system may serve as a substitute for the requested documents.

Communication feedback (Fill out on the Application System)
Confirmation of how you heard about this fund, this will help us to promote future funds.

Declaration and approval

Evaluation Criteria

- The panel will assess each proposal according to overall academic merit and the following criteria:

Project design and rationale (Abstract and Proposed Timeframe)

How clearly presented and justified is the basis for, and design of, the project? How do the proposed activities assist with establishing new and emerging research collaborations? **(20% of the evaluation score)**

Collaborator complementarity and impact

What is the added value of the new or emerging collaboration? How do the proposed activities combine mutual areas of interest and strength? What are the anticipated benefits of involving early career researchers and/or graduate researchers/PhD students? **(30% of the evaluation score)**

Capacity for future collaboration/funding

What is the potential for this project to foster ongoing collaboration, and through what mechanism(s)? How well does the proposed collaboration plan to access external funding? **(30% of the evaluation score)**

Potential impact

What desired outcomes do the planned activities set out to achieve? What are the anticipated benefits of the activities to local or international communities? **(20% of the evaluation score)**

Reporting After Project Completion

- All awardees must, as a condition of receiving an award under this call, complete a 3,000 words narrative report that describes the outcomes, nature of collaboration, project impact, trainee involvement and opportunities for future collaboration that evolved from their project.

The online application process

- All applications must be submitted through the **Application System** by the deadline, including the PDF format completed Application Form (Word template), CVs of both PIs, and supporting documents.
- Applications must be uploaded via the portal by 11:59 pm (BST), Wednesday October 15 (00:59 CEST, Thursday October 16) 2025.
- You should provide a breakdown of the costs you're seeking to cover in the relevant section of the application form. For travel costs, please include realistic estimates. We encourage you to build in some contingency for expense fluctuations. The institutions will be unable to cover any shortfall of your budget, for any reason including currency fluctuation. All expenses must be calculated according to the universities' policies.
- Only applications submitted via the online portal will be considered.

Timeline

- The deadline for applications is 11:59 pm (BST), Wednesday October 15 (00:59 CEST, 07:59 KST Thursday October 16) 2025.
- Applicants will be notified of panel decisions on November 15, 2025.
- The collaborative research project will start on 1 December 2025.
- All activity must be concluded by February 28, 2027.
- Award recipients will receive funds using the internal transfer processes in each university.

Queries

If you experience any problems making an online application, or have any questions about the Funds, please speak with your local contact:

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