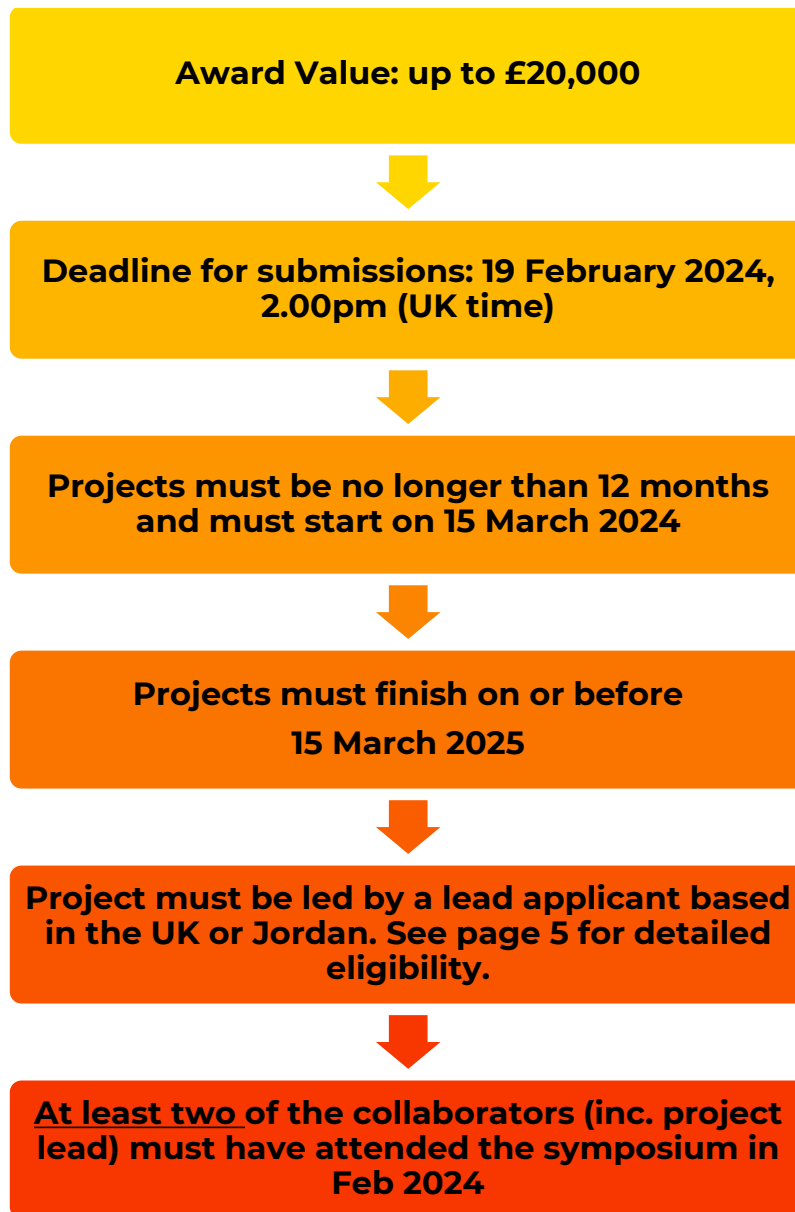# Frontiers Seed funding Application Guidance Notes

**Deadline:
19 February 2024, 2.00pm (UK time)**

**Send any questions to
frontiers@raeng.org.uk**

Seed funding overview

Award Value: up to £20,000

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Deadline for submissions: 19 February 2024, 2.00pm (UK time)

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Projects must be no longer than 12 months and must start on 15 March 2024

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Projects must finish on or before 15 March 2025

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Project must be led by a lead applicant based in the UK or Jordan. See page 5 for detailed eligibility.

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At least two of the collaborators (inc. project lead) must have attended the symposium in Feb 2024

This funding is a chance for groups of two or more Frontiers symposium participants to explore something new. The research must be interdisciplinary, pilot-stage and challenge-based.

The funding could support, but is not limited to, the following activities:
- Gaining preliminary data for a new project between two or more Frontiers symposium participants.
- Developing a further consortium or workshop between two or more Frontiers symposium participants, plus additional participants who did not attend the event.
- Acquiring data by supporting graduate students to work within the research groups of two or more participants.
- Developing a prototype or exploring a new partnership between two or more symposium participants.

Application and award process

Grant opens for applications: 8 Feb

Applicants work in collaboration with partners and their insitutions to agree details

Deadline for submissions: 19 Feb, 2pm UK time

Eligibility checks 19-20 Feb

Please keep time free on these dates in case we need to clarify eligibility questions

Applications reviewed and panel decides which will move forward

Contracts sent to successful applicants 29 February

Unsuccessful applicants notified

Deadline for contract signature (and due diligence forms if applicable) 9 March

Project begins and initiation report submitted by 14 March

Project Monitoring

Awardees submit reports via the Academy's Grant Management system. Example templates of the reports can be viewed online, but please note these are subject to change. More information regarding the reports will be shared if your application is successful.

Initiation report – by 14 March 2024

Progress report – 14 September 2024*

Final report – 14 April 2025

Follow-up report – 14 April 2026

Diversity policy and monitoring

The Royal Academy of Engineering is committed to diversity and inclusion and welcomes applications from all underrepresented groups. It is our policy to ensure that no applicant is disadvantaged or receives different treatment because of age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, gender and sexual orientation.

Before completing the application form, applicants are asked to complete a Diversity Monitoring Form to help the Academy monitor and assess its diversity and inclusion policy. It will only be used for statistical purposes with access restricted to staff involved in processing and monitoring the data. No information will be published or used in any way that identifies individuals. The Academy will retain personal information as per our Data Retention Policy in line with the General Data Protection Regulations 2018.

The information will be treated as strictly confidential, nonattributable and will not be seen by anyone involved in any selection processes. You will need to complete the diversity monitoring section before you can see the grant application form but can choose "prefer not to say" as responses.

In addition, in this round we ask all applicants to consider the impact of their proposed activities on people of different genders. This could include any measures you have put in place to ensure equal opportunities, any expected impacts on different groups, or any outcomes or outputs that you will measure disaggregated by gender. Please consider this all the way through your project planning, especially in the scoping stages, so that it is embedded from the beginning.

Eligibility

This funding is to promote a new collaboration between Frontiers symposium participants. The activities can involve non-symposium participants, **but at least two named applicants including the lead applicant, must have attended the symposium in February 2024.** In addition to this, the following criteria apply:

- The project team must include at least one collaborator from the UK and one from Jordan, one of whom will lead the project. Once this eligibility is met, the team may also include people from other countries.
- The project must be interdisciplinary.
- Efforts towards gender equity and equal representation will be looked upon favorably, including the appointment of project team members and the roles in the team. Projects must not harm gender equality, and where possible promote it (even when impacting gender equality is not the primary research or innovation objective). This will be considered in the application review.
- The project must meet ODA eligibility criteria, aim to address a real-world challenge, and demonstrate progress to at least one of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).
- Pre-existing collaborations are NOT eligible.

Lead applicant person specification:

- The application must be led by someone based in Jordan or the UK.

- The lead must be affiliated with an organisation or institution that can administer the funding on their behalf.

- They should be at an early- or mid-career stage, usually up to 20 years postdoc. As a guide, typically they will not yet have reached professorship. Consideration is always given to those who have taken a non-standard career path or career break.

- More established researchers can be involved in the project but will usually take an advisory position. We expect the lead applicant to be the researcher who will undertake most of the project work.

How to apply

The application form has **six main sections** and takes around one hour to complete if answers are composed offline and copied in, rather than composing as you go. We recommend this approach, to avoid accidental loss of data.

All applications must be submitted via the Academy's online application system at **https://grants.raeng.org.uk.** The lead applicant must first register with the system and provide some basic log-in details to create a profile.

Once logged in to the grant managemnt system, select 'Frontiers – seed funding'. There will be general instructions, and the application form in the following sections:

The **lead applicant** must provide a letter from a Research Grants Office (or similar) confirming approvals. Details on page 13. Due to the tight application timeline, you should begin this **as soon as possible**.

Applicant and institution details
Project details
Challenge details
Goals, objectives and outcomes
Budget
Support and declaration

At any stage in the process you can save and return to the application later. Questions can be answered in any order, so it is possible to skip sections and return later. **Make sure you save every page** as you go, to avoid losing work.

Things to consider

Equitable partnerships

The Academy is committed to promoting equitable practices in the design, delivery and dissemination of research and innovation projects. Some things to consider when designing and collaborating on your project:

- Ensure transparency by establishing a partnership agreement within the initial three months of your project.
- Account for the time required to build international partnerships, especially remotely, and build a generous timeline into your project.
- Think about whether your project includes a diverse set of perspectives.
- Think about how to embed equality into the division of labour in the project.

For further resources on equitable partnerships please visit the UKCDR Equitable partnerships resource hub and refer to the Global Code of Conduct for Research in Resource Poor Settings.

Interdisciplinarity

Interdisciplinary research is defined as "a mode of research by teams or individuals that integrates information, data, techniques, tools, perspectives, concepts, and/or theories from two or more disciplines or bodies of specialised knowledge to advance fundamental understanding or to solve problems whose solutions are beyond the scope of a single discipline or area of research practice."[1] The Symposium can support you to find collaborators from different disciplines by filtering by discipline on the networking page. Alternatively, speak to one of the Frontiers team for support.

Some things to consider when designing your project:

- Take time to learn the language of other disciplines, don't assume that your collaborators understand the language of your field.
- Take note of all the collaborators different expectations and motivations for the project, as well as how each collaborator would define 'success'.

Learn from previous Frontiers awardees!

The Frontiers programme has developed resources in collaboration with programme alumni, that cover diverse topics relating to how projects work best. Visit the Frontiers resource library to learn from those who went before you, from tips and tricks that enable remote research, how to get your project off the ground, and hoe to work across sectors, disciplines and cultures.

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[1] Committee on Facilitating Interdisciplinary Research, Committee on Science, Engineering, and Public Policy (2004). *Facilitating interdisciplinary research.* National Academies. Washington: National Academy Press, p. 2

Using Artificial Intelligence to draft your application.

The use of AI to draft your application is permitted, but we recommend you take care if you do so, and you must acknowledge it's use somewhere in the application. We recommend you follow these guidelines:

- You are responsible for all content in your grant application, so make sure that the application represents your own voice and ideas.
- Be rigorous in checking content generated by AI, and make sure you avoid any 'hallucinated' references or factual errors. These will be perceived as a lack of rigor by reviewers, which can impact the assessment.
- Do not solely rely on generative AI tools to write the application! While these tools may assist you, the application must primarily represent your own original work.
- Plagiarism is never acceptable: some AI tools use ideas from other human authors without proper referencing. Make sure you avoid this by checking that sources are appropriately attributed.
- If you use generative AI tools to draft your application, you **must** acknowledge the name of the tool you used, and tell us how you used it. For example:
  - "I acknowledge the use of [*insert AI system, version number and link*] to generate materials for background research / styling / proofreading."
  - "I acknowledge the use of [*insert AI system(s), version number and link*] to generate materials that were included within [*insert section titles*] in modified form."

Application questions

This section lays out all the questions you can expect to find in the application form.

1. Applicant and Institution Details

Question	Information
Please provide contact details of the lead, co-applicant(s)* and collaborators**	These are the details we will use to contact the lead applicants and collaborators. Make sure that you have permission to share these details, and that the lead applicant fits the eligibility criteria on page 5.
Team members (lead, co-applicant, collaborators) details	Provide details of all team members participating in the project, highlighting their expertise, discipline and project role or contribution. Make sure that the team fits the eligibility criteria on page 5. (Maximum 100 words per person).
CVs of the main applicants	Upload a CV for all named project team members. CVs should be no more than three pages long.
Lead applicant expectations	This question is for the lead applicant only. Please provide details of how you expect the grant will impact you: this may include your research capacity and/or building your skills and networks.

*Co-applicant – Typically attended the most recent Frontiers event

**Collaborators – Typically did not attend the Frontiers event

2. Project details

Please note that a final report, including a financial statement, must be submitted on or before 14 April 2025, one month after your project ends. Please ensure you leave time to complete this at the end of your project.

Question	Information
Project title	The essence of the research should be captured in the title and should be as informative as possible. Where applicable it should include the country or region that the project will primarily focus on. Ensure that the title is understandable to a non-specialist reader. (maximum 10 words)
Project abstract	The project summary should provide an overview of the interdisciplinary challenge you are addressing, a brief overview of your aims, activities, and the benefits of the research to be undertaken during the collaboration. Ensure that it is understandable to a non-specialist reader. (maximum 300 words)
Total project cost	This is the total value that is requested from the Academy. Any other contributions or in-kind provision can be detailed in the budget section. The value requested may be up to £20,000.
Start and end date	Please enter the start and end date of the proposed collaboration. The award must start on 14 March 2024 and end on or before 14 March 2025.
Is this a new collaboration?	Please confirm that this is a new collaboration, as pre-existing collaborations are not eligible.

3. Challenge details

Question	Information
Sustainable Development Goal(s)	Select the primary Sustainable Development Goal that your project will address. There is also the option to select a second and third goal if applicable. Explain how your project aims to address the Sustainable Development Goal(s) you have selected and why it is needed to address this goal(s). (maximum 400 words)
Identify the country that your project will primarily focus on (i.e. where the main impacts are intended to accrue).	You must identify **one** country to be the focus of the project. This should be where the impacts of your project will mainly accrue. This must be one of the following countries: **Africa**: Angola, Benin, Burkina Faso, Burundi, Central African Republic, Chad, Comoros, Democratic Republic of the Congo, Djibouti, Eritrea, Ethiopia, Gambia,

	Guinea, Guinea-Bissau, Lesotho, Liberia, Madagascar, Malawi, Mali, Mauritania, Mozambique, Niger, Rwanda, Sao Tome and Principe, Senegal, Sierra Leone, Somalia, South Sudan, Sudan, Togo, Uganda, United Republic of Tanzania and Zambia, Kenya, South Africa **Asia**: Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Bhutan, Cambodia, Lao People's Democratic Republic, Myanmar, Nepal, Timor-Leste and Yemen, Indonesia, Malaysia, Philippines, Thailand, Vietnam **Caribbean and Latin America**: Haiti, Brazil **Pacific**: Kiribati, Solomon Islands and Tuvalu **Middle East**: Turkey, Egypt, Jordan.
Please list any other countries or regions that your project will focus on.	This should take the form of a list, not an explanation. You may include countries other than those listed above. You can also indicate a region or, in very rare cases, the project may aim at global impacts. Bear in mind that while a successful project may have the potential to be rolled out in other countries, you should be as specific as possible about which countries this early phase of the project will **directly** benefit. Remember, being specific will count in your favour. (maximum 10 words).
How have you considered gender equality in the project or activity design?	In line with the UK Government's Gender Equality in Research and Innovation policy, all successful applications to this scheme must demonstrate consideration of the activities on gender. All funded activities will, and at a minimum, ensure that no harm is done to gender equity. To this end, please outline any specific gender considerations and implications for your proposed project. This could include any measures you have put in place to ensure equal opportunities, any expected impacts on people of different genders, or any outcomes or outputs that you will measure disaggregated by gender. (guide: 400 words).

4. Goals, activities, outputs, outcomes, impact

This section outlines the logic of planned activities and their impacts. The form includes a table matching the below, with space for short explanations. A clear framework helps reviewers assess the proposal. For more information, please refer to **this resource.**

Objective	Activities	Outputs	Outcome	Impact

Question	Information
Timeline of activities	Indicate when each activity will be taking place. (maximum 800 words).
Pictures and diagrams (optional)	Upload any pictures and/or diagrams related to your project as a single file.
Expected outcomes and impact	This section should explain the expected outcomes and impact more broadly. (Guide 300 words).
Measuring success	Describe how you will monitor the project and measure success. (maximum 400 words).

5. Budget

Question	Information
Cost breakdown	Provide a breakdown of the funding requested using the table in the application form. Allowable costs and funding guidelines are below.
Justification of costs	Give a narrative description of what resources are requested and why.

Cost and funding guidelines
- Please note that the funding provided by this scheme is not calculated on the basis of full economic costs.
- The totals may come to more than the maximum funding you can request under this scheme. Additional costs must be met by the participating institutions or other sources. If this is the case, please state the contribution to be made by each institution/source.
- The host institution(s) can include up to 10% of the grant as a contribution to project management, administrative and other running costs.

Travel accommodation and subsistence / consumables and equipment / other costs:
- There is no set limit on how much you can claim between the directly incurred cost headings.
- 'Consumables' include project-specific costs of small equipment, computer software licenses or publication costs. No single item may cost more than £10,000.

- Examples of 'other costs' are conferences and seminar fees.
- Exchanges can include breaks between visits, which should not be considered when calculating the requested funding.
- Small stipends, typically not exceeding 5% of the total grant, can cover expenses that enable people to engage in the project. This might include, for example, local community groups, indigenous people, women, young people, or students. It should not usually cover costs for project team members, which should be included as staff costs.
- Other necessary service provisions directly related to the project, such as translation or IT services, are eligible up to 5% of the grant.
- Subsistence costs should reflect the normal rates applied at the host institution/s. All other costs should be based on the best value option.
- Covid tests and quarantine accommodation costs are eligible if essential for travel (but must be minimised as much as possible).

Sometimes the proposed costs may need to deviate from these parameters. If this applies to you, please discuss eligibility with the Academy team, who can approve your plans on a case-by-case basis.

Staff costs:
There are separate headings for in-country staff costs and UK staff costs. This funding can include directly incurred staff costs for:
- Lead applicants, co-applicants and collaborators
- Research assistants and PhD students. The funding cannot cover any indirect costs or overheads related to staff costs.
- The funding cannot cover any indirect costs or overheads related to staff costs.

At the end of the project, any unspent funding awarded will be repayable to the Academy

Support and declarations

Lead organisation/institution/university declaration

The purpose of the declaration is to confirm that the application is acceptable in principle to the lead organisation/research institution/university, and that it has received all necessary internal authorisations.

The declaration must take the form of a letter on headed paper, signed by an authorised signatory (for example from the Research Grants Office or equivalent team responsible for administering grants) from lead applicant's institution/university. Digital signatures are allowed. We do not require a hard copy. The letter will be uploaded to the application form.

A summary of the terms that the declaration must contain is shown below – you may select organisation, research institution or university as applicable. The rest of the statement must use the **exact phrasing as stated.** Please copy this table directly into the declaration:

The applicant will be employed by the organisation/research institution/university for the duration of the award. **OR** The organisation/research institution/university commits to maintaining a relationship with the lead awardee such that the organisation/research institution/university will administer the grant funds on their behalf.	
The applicant and any co-applicant(s) will be given full access to the facilities, equipment, personnel, and funding as required by the application.	
The costs submitted in the application are correct and sufficient to complete the award as envisaged. Any shortfall in funding will be met by the organisation/research institution/university.	

At the end of the application form, you will be asked to confirm, via a declaration, that the information is accurate, the ideas are your own, that you have credited/cited any sources including AI tools you may have used, and that you understand the application will be shared with reviewers as part of the process. This is a simple tick-box question to confirm.

Once you have completed all sections, and pressed save on all the pages, a "submit" button will appear on the summary page. This is greyed out until all sections are complete. If you have comeleted and saved all sections but the button is still greyed out, please ask all your collaborators to save and complete all sections, and sign out of the system. Get in touch with the Frontiers team if you have any issues or questions about the form.

Assessment of applications

Applicants will be evaluated by a panel including Academy Fellows and experts from relevant disciplines. Each application will be checked for eligibility before being assessed by a minimum of two panel members, one of whom will have technical expertise in the application, and the other will be a general reviewer. The final outcome is decided by a Sift Panel made up of reviewers and Academy Fellows. Expect notification of the outcome by early March.

All applications will be assessed against the following criteria:

The impact on gender
The impact on gender is assessed during the eligibility checks, and marked as follows:
- Fail - Insufficient gender considerations, potentially negative implications that are not addressed.
- Pass - Neutral/will do no harm, with minimal gender impacts. All negative impacts have been addressed or mitigated. **OR** Expected gender equality benefits, comprehensive gender considerations and active mitigation.

*Note: Applications assessed as "failing" will have the opportunity to amend their response. If a "fail" assessment is still made after the chance to revise, the application will be rejected.

Progress towards one or more of the SDGs
- The aim of progress towards one or more of the SDGs is realistic and well-articulated.
- The challenge is well defined, and the project is designed well to address the challenge.

The research project quality
- The proposed research programme is good quality: this may include the vision, goals, interdisciplinary approach, pathway to impact, and dissemination plan.
- The applicants' research track record, proposed collaborative activities, and team complementarity are good quality.

The outcome and impact
- The potential benefits and impact of the project are clearly identified.
- The potential impact on an identified sustainable development challenge is evidenced.

Suitable and realistic budget
- A suitable and realistic budget is included, with a well-considered breakdown of the costs involved in the project.

FAQs and further questions

If you have questions about the application or assessment process, please email Frontiers@raeng.org.uk.

Visit our FAQs page to check answers for the frequently asked questions on Frontiers seed funding.