

# **The Water Institute Seed Grant Program Fall 2016 Request for Proposals**

*July 27, 2016*

## **Background**

The mission of the Water Institute is to facilitate collaboration, and to support excellence and innovation in inter-disciplinary water research and education. In support of this mission, and with incremental funding provided by the University, the Institute is pleased to offer seed grants to stimulate inter-disciplinary collaboration, to facilitate interaction with international authorities, to encourage new areas of research and to encourage the development of research proposals. A total of \$150,000 will be available for seed grants during 2016/17; with \$75,000 allocated for a Fall 2016 competition, and \$75,000 allocated for a Winter 2017 competition. A request for proposals for the Winter 2017 competition is anticipated in November 2016, with applications due at the end of January 2017.

## **Purpose**

Objectives of the Water Institute Seed Grant Program are to:

- Encourage researchers to collaborate across disciplinary boundaries;
- Catalyze the development of new, multi-disciplinary research teams, or to enhance collaboration in existing teams;
- Encourage inter-institutional, national and international collaborations;
- Encourage the development of research areas that are new to the University of Waterloo;
- Facilitate the transfer of specialized knowledge and expertise to the University of Waterloo;
- Position research teams for external funding success.

The expectation is that a project supported by seed funding will contribute to an application for external funding within two years.

## **Project Teams**

Project teams are comprised of a Primary Applicant and a minimum of one Co-Applicant, and are responsible for executing and reporting on the project.

The Primary Applicant must be Water Institute faculty member, or a University of Waterloo post-doctoral fellow.

Co-applicants can include Water Institute faculty members, other University of Waterloo faculty, or individuals external to the University from academic or non-academic institutions.

Co-applicants must include a minimum of:

- a) One Water Institute faculty member from a Faculty different from that of the Primary Applicant, or
- b) Two Water Institute faculty members from two Departments different from that of the Primary Applicant.

An individual may only apply as a Primary Applicant on one proposal per competition, but may be included as a Co-applicant or project participant on other applications within the same competition.

## Project Participants

In addition to the Project Teams, project participants could include additional Water Institute faculty members, other University of Waterloo faculty, graduate students, post-doctoral fellows, or individuals external to the University from academic or non-academic institutions. The inclusion of international authorities, and other relevant external partners, will be viewed favourably.

## Awards

A total of \$75,000 is available for the Fall 2016 competition. The maximum seed grant will be \$20,000, though requests for smaller amounts are encouraged. For successful proposals, Office of Research Cover Sheets will need to be completed and returned prior to funds being made available through a University of Waterloo account. The Primary Applicant will serve as the contact person for the grant, and will be responsible for arranging the disbursement of funds with the appropriate departmental administrator. Seed fund accounts will be open for one year from the date of initiation, after which time unspent funds will be returned to the Water Institute.

## Use of Funds

Seed grants can be used to support research development expenses associated with activities such as:

- Planning and hosting a meeting, workshop or symposium;
- Development of a major multi-year, multi-investigator project proposal for submission to an external funding agency.

## Application Format

Applications must be submitted using the Water Institute Seed Grant Proposal Form which is available electronically. The proposal form includes the following sections:

1. Project Title
2. Project Team and Participants
3. Project Description
4. Inter-disciplinarity
5. Relevance and Impact
6. Anticipated External Funding Opportunities
7. Budget
8. Project Metric(s)

## Application Deadline

Applications must be received electronically by 5:00pm EDT, **September 30, 2016**. Primary Applicants will receive acknowledgement of receipt within one week of submission. Late submissions will not be accepted.

Applications should be sent electronically in Word or PDF format to:

Mary Anne Hardy

The Water Institute

Email: [mahardy@uwaterloo.ca](mailto:mahardy@uwaterloo.ca)

Phone: 519-888-4567 ext. 32658

## Evaluation Process

The Executive Director of the Water Institute will Chair a selection panel comprised of faculty members nominated by the Institute's Strategic Planning Committee. The Chair and selection panel will review applications and determine award recipients. Any conflicts of interest will be declared in advance, and the reviewers will not participate in discussions or decisions related to applications for which they have a conflict of interest. Applications will be scored according to consistency with the evaluation criteria and preferences noted below, and will be declared either approved for funding or not-approved for funding. Approved applications will be ranked from highest score to lowest score and funds will be awarded as requested (to a maximum of \$20,000 per application), starting with the highest ranked application and moving down the list until all approved applications are funded or seed grant funds are depleted, whichever comes first. Primary applicants will receive written notice within 45 days from the submission deadline indicating whether or not the application was successful.

## Evaluation Criteria

Applications will be assessed against eligibility and project criteria as follows:

<u>Eligibility Criteria</u>	<u>Description</u>	
Project Teams	Co-applicants include a minimum of one Water Institute faculty member from a Faculty different from that of the Primary Applicant, or two Water Institute faculty members from two Departments different from that of the Primary Applicant.	yes/no

*If "yes", applications will be evaluated and scored on the following project criteria. If "no", applications will be disqualified.*

<u>Project Criteria</u>	<u>Description</u>	<u>Points</u>
Inter-disciplinarity	– Project teams and participants are inter-disciplinary in character, and the project topic combines several disciplines into one activity.	20
Relevance and Impact	– The proposed research aligns with the objectives of the seed grants program, and the Water Institute mission and vision. – The proposed research clearly indicates how it will address a significant challenge, and will demonstrate a positive impact. – Where appropriate, project teams and participants include external, national or international authorities.	20

<u>Project Criteria (cont.)</u>	<u>Description</u>	<u>Points</u>
Anticipated External Funding Opportunities	– Potential for additional or continued activity, including funding beyond the seed grant stage.	20
Budget	– Application clearly describes and justifies the use of the requested funds.	10

Applicants are encouraged to include:

- At least one early-career investigator (ie, started academic research career no more than 5 years ago) as a member of the project team;
- The participation of graduate students;
- The participation of government, civil society, private sector or industry professionals.

## **Requirements of Successful Applications**

### **Reporting Requirements**

Recipients of a Water Institute Seed Grant are required to report on outputs and outcomes resulting from the grant. Final reports should be concise and should, at a minimum, include the following information:

- Description of the project objectives and activities;
- Names and affiliations of the project team and of the project participants;
- Description and assessment of short-term project outputs (eg, knowledge transfer, international authorities, HQP) and (anticipated) project outcomes (eg, publications, proposals, funding);
- List of expenditures from the grant.

### **Acknowledgement of Support**

Successful applicants are expected to acknowledge the funding support of the Water Institute in any public announcements, presentations or publications related to their project.